Kryptonite Kiss

by SlightlyPsycho

Summary

As Batman and Superman, Bruce and Clark face countless obstacles together with great success. Fighting villains and saving the world is the easy part. But confronting their feelings for each other? That's the hardest obstacle of all.

Notes

Hey, everyone! This is my first Superman/Batman story, and I'm very excited to be sharing it. Hope you all enjoy!
It had been a long day at the office. Clark Kent trudged into his small apartment and flopped down on the couch, thankful for a moment of peace. At work, he barely finished his article before the deadline, and his boss had yelled at him repeatedly. It really wasn’t Clark’s fault though. He kept trying to do his job, but the city of Metropolis needed Superman many, many times.

First, there was a subway malfunction. Clark had to disappear from work and save hundreds of people before two trains crashed into each other. Then a large apartment building caught on fire. Then a supervillain came to town and wreaked havoc. Then there was a prison break. Then a little girl’s cat got stuck in tree. Honestly, Clark could’ve ignored that last one, but the little girl asked specifically for him. She wanted Superman to come save her cat. Eventually, he couldn’t stand listening to her cry anymore. He cursed himself for being such a big softie. It’s amazing that he didn’t get fired after disappearing from work so often.

At least, he didn’t have to save Lois today. She wasn’t even in Metropolis. Right now she was in Gotham for work.

“Help! Superman! Please help me!” Lois’s frantic voice called out to him.

“Not again,” he groaned. Damn super hearing.

At lightning fast speed, Clark changed into his Superman suit and zoomed out the window, flying towards Gotham.

Within seconds, Superman found his friend, Lois Lane, in a dark alleyway, surrounded by thugs. She was on the ground, panting, trying to catch her breath. The men had obviously been chasing her. One criminal pointed a gun at Lois and started shooting. Moving faster than a speeding bullet, Superman swooped Lois off the ground and carried her to safety. He set her down on the sidewalk next to her hotel.

“Thank you, Superman.” She smiled gratefully.

Superman smiled back, then quickly returned to the dark alleyway. He barely hit the thugs, knocking them all unconscious. Then he tied them together and flew them to the nearest police station. Police officers watched in awe as he dropped the criminals off and flew away.

In the sky, Superman hovered above Gotham, looking over the city that was so different from his own. Metropolis was bright, vibrant and full of friendly faces. Whereas Gotham was dark, seedy and quite…unfriendly. Hardly, anyone smiled here. Even the buildings looked unwelcoming with creepy gargoyles perched on several balconies. Superman was ready to get out of this horrible city and go home.

Right before he turned to leave, he heard the sound of a gun firing rapidly. Another crime was taking place. He couldn’t just ignore it. With a sigh, Superman flew towards the sound of gunfire.

The noise was coming from an abandoned warehouse next to the harbor. Superman hovered over the warehouse, using his X-ray vision to see inside. There were several men inside the warehouse, carrying large military-grade weapons. Next to the men, there were huge crates containing packages of a white powdery substance—mostly likely cocaine. They must be smuggling drugs into Gotham. Superman was about to swoop in and teach those drug dealers a lesson, when he heard the gunfire again.
A criminal was shooting up at the ceiling, screaming, “It’s him! It’s the bat!”

Soon all the men were panicking and shooting upwards. Superman glanced at the ceiling with his X-ray vision, but he couldn’t see anyone. The gunshots continued as Superman watched one criminal after another being thrown across the room like an invisible man was attacking them. Was it really the Batman? Superman watched in confusion. Why can’t I see him? Is he wearing lead? Clark had heard stories of Gotham’s Dark Knight, but he never met the man in person. Now his interest was definitely piqued.

Instead of trying to see the vigilante, Superman focused on hearing him. Inside the warehouse, there were many heartbeats. Most of them were terrified and erratic, except for one. One heartbeat was strong and steady like a melody. Superman listened to the melody while watching the criminals being beaten and disarmed with ease. This must be child’s play for Batman.

Some of the criminals dashed out of the warehouse, then Superman finally saw him. Batman leapt out of a second story window and used a grappling hook to swing in front of the fleeing criminals. Batman kicked a man in the face as he landed. Another man tried to shoot at him, but then Batman hurled a batarang into the barrel of the gun. When the weapon exploded, the criminal screamed as he crashed into the ground. The rest of the men were defeated by hand-to-hand combat.

During the fight, Batman manhandled the thugs like they weighed nothing, and moved with so much grace and precision. Every movement was planned. Every attack was effective. It was… impressive. Superman knew that Batman didn’t have any special powers. He didn’t have super-speed or super-strength. He was all intelligence and skill. It was fun to watch him fight. Most of Superman’s fights were pretty simple. He’d rush in and punch the bad guy. And that was it. Fight over. It was actually kind of boring. Batman had to work harder to win, that’s for sure.

After the last thug hit the ground, knocked unconscious, Batman crossed his arms and glanced up at the sky.

“Enjoy the show?” he asked gruffly.

Realizing that he had been caught, Superman blushed slightly and flew down. He landed on the ground in front of Batman and offered him a hand, hoping for a friendly handshake.

He smiled. “Hi, I’m Superman, and-”

“I know what you are.” Batman glared at his hand, refusing to take it. “What are you doing in Gotham?”

Superman blinked, taken aback by the man’s rudeness. Does this guy have any manners? Superman cleared his throat while lowering his hand. “I came here because a friend needed my help.”

“Lois Lane?” Batman presumed.

Superman gaped at him in surprise. “How do you know about Lois?”

“You save her almost every day.” Batman pulled out a grappling hook while police sirens wailed in the distance. “She should have enough material for her article. Take her and go back to Metropolis.”

The vigilante launched the grappling hook at a nearby building and retracted the wire, shooting himself up into the air. Batman landed on the ledge of the building then he ran and jumped onto the roof of an adjacent building.
Superman watched him for a moment before flying up to the roof and standing in front of Batman again.

Batman glared at him. “Get out of my way.”

“How do you know about Lois’s article?” Superman asked.

“While she’s in Gotham, it’s my business to know. Now move,” he snarled.

Superman took a step towards him. Then Batman immediately jumped back and rested his hand on his utility belt, ready to fight. Superman listened to the man’s heartbeat again, but this time it wasn’t calm and steady. Batman’s heart was racing like he was afraid...

Trying to ease the man’s fears, Superman held up his hands in a placating gesture. “I just want to talk.” He glanced back towards the warehouse, which was surrounded by police cars now. He smiled at Batman. “I saw the way you handled those drug dealers. You did a really good job.”

“Don’t patronize me.”

_Huh?_ Superman gave him a confused look. “I’m not.”

“I won’t warn you again,” Batman growled. “Get the hell out of my city.”

Superman sighed in frustration. “Can you please calm down? You don’t need to be scared of me.”

Batman’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “I am not scared of you, alien.”

“Well, you’re sure acting like it.” He used his X-ray vision again, but still couldn’t see through Batman’s suit. “You’re wearing lead, aren’t you? You researched me?”

“Hmph. Of course, I researched you. Ever heard of ‘know thy enemy’?” Batman quoted the Art of War.

“I’m not your enemy!” Superman argued, “We both fight the bad guys, don’t we?”

“Maybe people in Metropolis are that simple-minded, but I see you for the threat you are.”

“What?! I’m not a threat!”

“You’re a danger to the whole planet, alien.”

“Quit calling me that!” Superman snapped, losing his patience with the rude man. “I grew up here my whole life! Earth is my home! And I care about my city just as much as you care about Gotham!”

“Great.” Batman scoffed. “So, why don’t you go back to your city and get the fuck out of mine.”

Superman exploded with anger. “What is your problem with me?!”

Batman took a step away from the furious Kryptonian. “Stay back.”

“No!” Superman zoomed directly in front of Batman’s face, shouting, “What gives you the right to judge me?! I save hundreds, sometimes even _thousands_ of people each day! You’re just a crazy asshole in a bat costume!”

“Back off!” Batman yelled.
“Make me!” Superman yelled back, flying even closer to the vigilante’s face.

They were less than an inch apart when Batman yanked a piece of kryptonite out of his utility belt.

Overwhelming pain hit the Kryptonian all at once. Superman instantly fell to the ground, unable to fly. He was so dizzy. It seemed like the whole world was spinning. He glanced up at the green kryptonite in Batman’s gloved hand, and felt a jolt of panic. This lunatic was going to kill him! Superman tried to stand, but he was too weak. He dragged himself across the ground, trying to distance himself from the kryptonite. Batman walked slowly towards him and grabbed Superman by his hair.

Superman yelped in pain as Batman yanked his head back while holding the kryptonite close to his face.

“S-Stop,” Superman rasped. He felt like he was about to pass out. The pain was excruciating. The kryptonite was too close to him. It was too fucking close! He was going to die!

“You’re lucky I’m not a murderer.” Batman released his hair, letting Superman crash face-first into the ground.

“Stay out of Gotham. This is your final warning.” Batman walked away.

Superman heard the sound of a grappling hook, then the pain finally began to subside. Batman was gone and he had taken the damn kryptonite with him. Groaning, Superman sat up and coughed some blood into his hand.

“Son of a bitch!” Superman punched the concrete with his fist, leaving a large dent. “What an asshole!”

After resting a couple minutes, Superman cautiously hovered into the air and started flying home. As he left the city, he promised himself that he would never return to the hellhole known as Gotham.
Hey, everyone! Thanks for the comments and kudos! :)

It was 5:27AM by the time Batman returned to Wayne manor. It had been a long night. His muscles ached from exertion and he was covered in sweat. After peeling off the black Kevlar, Bruce took a quick shower, then laid down on his bed for a while, staring up at the ceiling. Even though he was exhausted, his mind was still racing. He had given Superman a clear warning. He hoped the alien would stay away, but Bruce knew to prepare for the worst.

He had started preparing ever since he learned of Superman’s existence. Batman needed to be ready. The Kryptonian was a threat. Superman could cause serious harm if he wanted to. He had too much power. And more often than not, power corrupts. Superman was like a ticking time bomb. Today he was a hero, but what about tomorrow? What happens when Superman decides that he’s above the law? What if he starts killing? Who could stop him?

Everyone seemed to blindly trust the alien, but Batman knew better. When the day came, he would be ready. He had weaponized kryptonite in several ways, and the kryptonite cell was almost completed. Superman may have special powers, but Batman knew he could outsmart the alien. One day, he’ll defeat Superman and throw him in a cage where he belongs. It was only a matter of time. As soon as Superman broke the law, Batman would take him down.

In half an hour, Bruce heard a familiar knock on his bedroom door.

“Master Wayne, breakfast will be ready in five minutes,” his butler announced from outside.

“Coming, Alfred,” Bruce grumbled as he sat up.

After pulling on a black robe, Bruce left his bedroom and staggered down the large staircase, towards the dining room. He hadn’t slept in 26 hours and he could feel his body dragging. Once he ate breakfast, he desperately needed some sleep.

As he entered the dining room, he purposely looked away when he passed by the large portraits of his parents. After all these years, it was still a painful reminder. Yet he refused to take down the portraits. Every day he needed to feel that stab of pain, the ache of losing them. That pain made him strong. It made him Batman.

His breakfast was already on a plate, waiting for him. Bruce sat down on a chair across from his ward. Dick Grayson was eating quickly, stuffing his face. The boy was only twelve. He has been living with Bruce for two years now, and he occasionally helped Batman as Robin. The kid still had a lot to learn.

Despite his age, Robin was a useful partner. But Batman still preferred working alone. He didn’t like endangering his ward. He was actually fond of the boy. They had so much in common. Both of them were orphans. They each lost their parents at a young age due to crime. That’s how Dick became Robin in the first place. Batman trained Robin, so they could work together to catch Tony Zucco, the man who killed Robin’s parents. Now, Zucco was behind bars and Robin had become
Batman’s pupil.

Dick swallowed a mouthful of pancakes and smiled. “Morning, Bruce!”

Bruce grimaced at the loud noise, then drank some tea. “Good morning, Dick.”

“You look like shit!”

“Language, Master Dick,” Alfred chastised him while refilling Bruce’s glass.

“Heh, sorry.” Dick grinned sheepishly before saying, “But you really don’t look so good, Bruce. You should’ve let me go on patrol with you last night. You know I can help you a lot more if—”

“You can’t patrol on school nights,” Bruce cut him off.

“Why not?” his ward complained.

“You need your rest, Master Dick,” Alfred chimed in. “Don’t you have an Algebra test today?”

“Who cares about that?” Dick turned to Bruce, imploring, “Just let me be home-schooled. I can take classes online. That way I can patrol with you every night.”

Bruce stated sternly, “We’ve been over this before. The answer is no, Dick.”

Dick huffed while crossing his arms. He sat in silence for a few minutes, pouting. Unfazed, Bruce simply drank more tea and ate his breakfast.

After a while, Dick finally broke the silence and asked, “So, what did I miss? Anything exciting happen last night?”

Bruce considered lying to spare the boy’s feelings, then decided not to. Dick had gotten on his nerves, and Bruce was feeling petty this morning.

“I ran into Superman.”

“What?!” Dick gaped at him with large, surprised eyes. “Superman was here?! In Gotham?!”

“Yes,” Bruce replied with a smirk.

“Aw, man! That’s totally unfair!” his ward whined. “I can’t believe I missed that! Superman is so cool!”

His smirk instantly disappeared. “Cool? You think that alien is cool?”

Dick rolled his eyes. “Come on, everyone loves Superman. Well, except for you. Because you’re weird.”

Bruce frowned. “If you say so.”

“So, did you guys team up?”

“What?” Bruce stared at the boy in confusion. “Why would I team up with him?”

“Uh, so you guys can beat up bad guys together. Duh.”

He sighed. “It’s not that simple, Dick.”
“Did you at least talk to him?”
“Yes, we…talked.”

Dick looked worried. “What did you do? Please don’t tell me you hurt Superman.”
“I may have exposed him to a little kryptonite, but he’ll live.”
His ward gasped in horror. “Oh, my god! Bruce, why would you do that?”
“He has no business being in Gotham,” Batman growled.
“But he’s Superman! He’s so nice.”
“He’s a threat.”
“He saved the world from Zod! Can’t you give him the benefit of the doubt?”
“No.”

Dick sighed in frustration, shaking his head. “You’re impossible. I feel sorry for Superman.”
“He’s a dangerous alien who needs to stay out of Gotham,” Batman seethed angrily. “He’s lucky I didn’t stab him with kryptonite.”
“Poor, poor Superman.” Dick stood and walked away, no longer listening.

Bruce scowled while Alfred was unperturbed as usual.
“I will drive Master Dick to school momentarily. Would you like more tea, Master Wayne?”
“No thanks, Alfred. I’m going to bed,” Bruce grumbled as he stormed out of the room.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, several journalists were rushing around the office, comparing notes and chatting loudly. Clark tried to ignore the noise as he sat at his desk, cradling his head in his hands. He was still recovering from last night. He has felt awful ever since Batman shoved a piece of kryptonite in his face. Clark actually coughed up blood. Batman was the first person to make him bleed in a long time.

Clark just didn’t understand how their encounter went so wrong so fast. He had really tried to be nice. But Batman seemed determined to hate his guts. For some reason, the vigilante was convinced that Superman’s a dangerous menace. That didn’t sit well with Clark. Part of him wanted to do anything possible to change Batman’s mind. While another part of him, motivated by self-preservation, wanted to stay the hell away from the man.

He grimaced, remembering the searing pain of the kryptonite. Perhaps it’d be better to just leave Batman alone. Let the asshole have Gotham. Superman had no interest in that horrible city anyway. He’d stay in his territory and Batman could stay in his. Problem solved.

“Kent, get your ass in here! I have a job for you!” Perry White yelled across the room.

“What now? With a sigh, Clark stood and headed into his boss’s office.

Perry was sitting behind his desk, typing something quickly on his computer. Then he glanced up
at Clark. “Kent, go home and pack your bags. You’re taking the next train to Gotham.”


“No, you ingrate! I’m sending you!” His boss snapped angrily. “Every time I send big name reporters like Lois Lane, some thug or perverted clown tries to kill them. I’m sick of it! So this time, you’re going.”

Clark raised an eyebrow. “So, you’re sending me because I’m expendable?”

“You’re a big guy, Clark. You look like you can handle yourself.” Perry crossed his arms on his desk. “Besides, I’m giving you a great opportunity here. You’re going to a Wayne fundraiser. Other reporters would kill for this gig.”

“Wayne?” The name sounded familiar. “As in Bruce Wayne?”

“The one and only.” Perry smirked. “Everyone loves reading about the billionaire playboy. Just get a few quotes from him, and if you’re lucky, he’ll start another scandal at the party.”

Clark frowned, unimpressed. “This doesn’t sound like real news.”

“Trust me, everything Bruce Wayne does is real news. Do a good job on this and maybe your article can make the headlines for once.”

Slightly offended, Clark swallowed his pride and complied, “Yes sir.”

SxB

A couple hours later, Clark returned to his apartment and packed a small suitcase. Then he headed to the train station. It would be much faster to fly. But to keep up appearances, he needed to travel as Clark Kent. At the train station, Clark sat down on a bench and stared the large clock on the wall. His train should arrive in about ten minutes. Tonight, he would sleep on the train and by tomorrow, he would be in Gotham. The fundraiser was scheduled for tomorrow night.

Clark waited in silence for a few minutes until he heard his cell phone ring. He glanced at the caller ID and felt a bittersweet ache when he saw Lois’s name. He liked Lois. He enjoyed talking to her. She has been his best friend ever since he started working at the Daily Planet. But things have become slightly awkward after she rejected him a few weeks ago…

Lois was in love with Superman, but not Clark. When Clark asked her out, she said no because she only sees him as a friend. She doesn’t know that Clark Kent is Superman, the hero she has a huge crush on… Clark considered telling her the truth, but at the same time, he had been hoping to find someone who could love both sides of him. He was hoping Lois could fall in love with Clark, who he truly was underneath the superhero act.

Lois was in love with her vision of him. She loves what Superman represents, what he symbolizes. He’s in love with a mask. She sees Superman as a shining hero of perfection, but in truth, he’s not perfect. He’s just Clark. And Clark isn’t good enough for her.

He hesitated for a few seconds before answering the phone.

“Hi, Lois.”

“Hey, Smallville!” She replied cheerfully. “I just got back to the office. But now I hear you’re leaving?”
“Yeah, Perry is sending me to Gotham for a Wayne fundraiser.”

“Well, be careful,” she warned. “I was in Gotham last night and I was nearly killed. Thank God for Superman. He saved me at the last second.”

Clark smiled. “I’m glad you’re okay.”

“Me too! For a while I was afraid that Superman wasn’t going to come, but then he came. Whenever I need him, he’s always there,” Lois said dreamily.

“I have a feeling your article is going to turn into Superman propaganda again,” he teased.

“It’s not propaganda! It’s fact! Superman is a hero. And he’s just a really great guy.”

“Uh-huh.”

“It’s the truth and the whole world needs to know.”

When Clark heard the train approaching in the distance, he said, “I’ve got to go, Lois. I’ll call you when I get home.”

“All right, Smallville. And don’t leave out any details. Everyone says Bruce Wayne throws the craziest parties. I wanna hear all about it!”

He chuckled. “Okay, Lois. Talk to you later.”

“Bye, bye!” She responded happily before hanging up.

After the call ended, Clark lowered the phone and stared down at the screen. He still liked talking to Lois, even though it was painful now. How did everything get so complicated? It was strange to listen to her fawning over Superman. All while knowing that she wasn’t truly in love with him. A break from Lois might be nice. He just wished that he was going literally anywhere else but Gotham.

Clark grimaced as he recalled Batman’s warning. He really hoped that he wouldn’t see the vigilante again. Batman was the opposite of Lois. While she was in love with an idealized perfect version of Superman, Batman was convinced that he was the scum of the Earth.

With a sigh, Clark ran a hand through his dark hair. Oh, well. He was going to Gotham as Clark Kent, not Superman. He wasn’t going there to fight crime. What are the odds of running into Batman at a stupid Wayne fundraiser?

Everything would be fine.
The Wayne Fundraiser

Chapter Notes

Comments are love <3

The next day, Clark arrived at Gotham’s grand central station. He left the train and walked to his nearby hotel. The accommodations weren’t the greatest. Perry was obviously being cheap with the travel expenses. In the hotel room, Clark sat down on the creaky bed and gazed up at the stained ceiling. Thankfully, he wouldn’t be staying here for very long. After the Wayne fundraiser, he’d take the first train out of here.

The hotel had terrible Wi-Fi, so Clark found a nearby coffee shop with free internet. All afternoon, he sipped coffee while researching Bruce Wayne on his laptop. There was a plethora of information about the billionaire online.

According to all the magazines, Bruce Wayne was the most eligible bachelor in Gotham. He’s an only child and the sole heir of the Wayne fortune. When Bruce was little, both of his parents were shot and killed right in front of him. It was horrible. Clark felt sorry for the man. It must’ve been difficult for Bruce to deal with, especially as a kid. Clark didn’t know what he would do without his Ma and Pa.

After the death of his parents, Bruce attended several different boarding schools until he graduated. Then he completely disappeared for a few years as a young adult. When he was 25, Bruce returned to Gotham and regained ownership of Wayne Enterprises. Ever since then, he has been a philanthropist playboy. Publically, he donated to several worthy causes. But his personal life was a mess. He has been involved in scandal after scandal. Now Bruce was 29 and he’s always seen drunk with models and escorts hanging off his arms. He seems like a total tool. A drunk womanizing jerk, who likes to throw his parents’ money around.

Clark couldn’t respect a man like that. He didn’t care how rich Bruce was. He should behave better.

Disgusted, Clark almost stopped reading, but then he found another article about Bruce’s ward. Two years ago, Bruce adopted a young boy named Richard Grayson. Richard’s parents had both been killed, and Bruce took the child under his wing.

Clark smiled to himself as he read the article. Maybe Bruce wasn’t such a bad guy after all. At least he was kind to other orphans.

SxB

That evening, Clark wore his best suit and headed to Wayne Tower. Outside, there was a large crowd of people. Spectators watched and paparazzi took photos while famous guests arrived in limos. Security was very tight around Wayne Tower. So far, Clark has already seen fifteen security guards. In a place like Gotham, it was probably necessary.

No one was allowed inside the building unless they were on an exclusive list and had some form of ID. Clark was only granted access because Perry had given him a press pass. Also, Clark’s name
was on the list. Security guards checked Clark’s ID three times until Clark started wearing his press pass as a nametag. Then the guards left him alone.

The fundraiser was taking place on the top floor of Wayne Tower. Using the elevator like a regular guest, Clark rose to the top of the tower and finally reached the extravagant ballroom. Chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and the room was decorated with expensive art and statues. People stood around, sipping champagne, or dancing to the live orchestra. Most of the guests were Gotham’s most famous residents. The room was full of politicians and celebrities. There were also some professionals like lawyers and doctors, as well as artistic types like models and actors.

Clark felt completely out of place. Even in his best suit, he was still under-dressed. All of the guests looked like they belonged on the red carpet. And, there were waiters everywhere, carrying champagne glasses and hors d’oeuvres on small plates. Clark had never been to a party this fancy before. Not in all 28 years of his life.

Standing in a corner, Clark watched the other guests as the night dragged on. He was still waiting for Bruce Wayne to arrive. The billionaire had a reputation for being late to his own parties. Sometimes he wouldn’t bother showing up at all. After standing around for an hour, Clark was starting to get impatient. He just wanted to get out of here and go home.

While he sulked, a waiter offered him a glass of champagne and Clark politely refused for the fiftieth time.

At exactly 10:30 PM, Clark heard the sound of a helicopter approaching. The other guests hadn’t noticed yet. Clark walked towards the large window that overlooked the roof terrace. A few minutes later, a helicopter landed on the terrace. Now everyone was crowded around the wall-length windows, chatting excitedly.

When Bruce Wayne exited the helicopter with two scantily clad women, the crowd cheered.

Clark was not impressed. He crossed his arms and waited while the billionaire stumbled into the ballroom. Bruce had a liquor bottle in his hand, and he was leaning on his two female companions for support as he walked.

“Welcome to Wayne Tower!” Bruce announced with a smirk. “Sorry, but I may have started the party without you.”

Several people laughed while a few of the older guests huffed, clearly offended.

There was a huge crowd around Bruce Wayne now. Apparently, everyone had something to say to the billionaire playboy. Clark stood off to the side and waited. He watched Bruce for a while, noticing the way the man swayed on his feet. If Wayne was really that drunk, why did he even bother coming? Did he want to make an ass of himself? This was a fundraiser for Christ’s Sake. The proceeds were supposed to help sick children.

Clark was tempted to leave. But then he saw Bruce catch a champagne glass that a female guest dropped.

“Oh, thank you! I’m so clumsy.” The blonde woman giggled.

Bruce Wayne smiled and said something flippant, before swaying on his feet again. But it seemed choreographed like he was stumbling around on purpose. If he was really that wasted, his reflexes would’ve been slower. He shouldn’t have been able to catch that falling glass…

His eyes widened as Clark came to a realization. Bruce Wayne wasn’t drunk. He’s pretending!
But why? Why would the rich playboy pretend to be drunk? It didn’t make any sense. Unless…he wasn’t really a playboy.

Clark focused on Bruce’s face, studying the man’s features. Bruce was definitely attractive. There was no denying that, and he was quite good at appearing drunk. While Bruce talked to his guests, Clark’s gaze wandered down to his mouth. That mouth looked familiar… Almost like- No, it can’t be.

Using his super hearing, Clark tried to focus on Bruce’s heartbeat. In the crowded room, it was difficult to distinguish from all the background noise. But then he heard it. That same strong melody he heard the other night when Batman was fighting in the warehouse. That same heartbeat…

Clark froze in shock. He couldn’t believe it.

Bruce Wayne is Batman.

That’s why he’s pretending to be drunk. The whole playboy thing is just an act! He’s really Batman, the masked vigilante. It makes sense. All of Batman’s gadgets must cost a fortune. Only someone like Bruce Wayne would have the time and resources to be Batman.

Clark remembered all the articles he read about the billionaire. Bruce’s parents were murdered. That must have been the reason why he became Batman in the first place. That’s why he’s so committed to protecting Gotham from crime. It all made sense!

Lost in thought, Clark almost didn’t notice Bruce staring back at him. Somehow, he had caught Bruce’s attention. Clark quickly glanced away, trying to act casual. He needed to get out of here. He was about to leave when Bruce Wayne suddenly left his adoring crowd.

Clark froze as the billionaire sauntered towards him. Batman definitely noticed him.

This isn’t good. Clark gulped nervously.

“Good evening,” Bruce smiled and stepped close to Clark, grasping the nametag clipped to his shirt.

“Clark. Kent,” he spoke deliberately as he stared up at Clark, his piercing blue eyes shining with intelligence. “Have we met before?”

“N-No, I don’t think so, Mr. Wayne.” He took a step back while offering a hand. “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“Call me Bruce.” Stepping forward again, Bruce took Clark’s hand, gently sliding his palm against his. It was more of a caress than a handshake. “And, the pleasure is all mine.” He smirked wickedly.

Clark gawked at him in confusion. Then Bruce unexpectedly reached towards his glasses, pulling them off Clark’s face. Clark felt a jolt of panic while Bruce gazed at him. Does he recognize me? Does he know?!

For a while, the billionaire fiddled with the eyeglasses, playfully putting them on and taking them off. “You look better without glasses, Clark. You should invest in contact lenses or LASIK.” He leaned closer and purred, “It’s a shame to hide your pretty eyes.”

Is-Is he flirting with me?! Blushing slightly, Clark stammered, “I, uh-”
Bruce laughed as he slid the glasses back on Clark’s face. “You’re a reporter, aren’t you? Do you have any questions for me?” He leaned forward, smiling again.

Why was this man so ridiculously handsome? Clark wasn’t usually attracted to men, but—My, god.

Clark cleared his throat, trying to get ahold of himself. Bruce knew exactly what he was doing. He was just toying with Clark, having fun at his expense. Clark wasn’t going to let him get away with it.

Smiling back, Clark replied, “Yes, actually, I do.”

“Ask away, Dimples.”

“What is your opinion of Batman?”

That definitely caught Bruce by surprise. He hesitated for a second, his smile fading. “Batman?”

“Yes, I’m curious.” Clark smirked, enjoying the other man’s discomfort. “As a famous resident of Gotham, what do you think of the Dark Knight?”

Bruce finally stepped back, retreating from Clark’s personal space. “Well, he’s a menace obviously.”

“But he protects Gotham.”

“He’s a vigilante. Gotham needs a real hero. Someone who works inside the law. Harvey Dent was that hero until he was killed,” Bruce said bitterly.

“And, what do you think of Superman?” Clark asked.

“Superman? He’s rarely in Gotham. Last time I checked…” Bruce stared at him accusingly.

“Yes, but do you think he’s a menace too? In many ways, Superman protects Metropolis the same way Batman protects Gotham.”

Bruce frowned. “I wouldn’t compare Superman to Batman.”

“Why not?”

“They’re not the same at all.”

“They both protect their cities,” Clark argued.

“Batman is a human vigilante. Superman is…something else entirely.”

“Your point?”

Bruce crossed his arms. “If Batman decided to go on a murderous rampage, dozens of criminals could die. If Superman went on a rampage, everyone on the planet could die.”

“So you think Superman is more dangerous?”

“Naturally.”

“I understand your concern, but Superman isn’t a killer. He tries to do good.”
Bruce sighed. “Good men can lose their way, Clark. I’ve seen it many, many times. All it takes is one bad day.”

Clark raised an eyebrow. “One bad day?”

Bruce spoke with a haunted expression on his face, “People change. Sometimes for the worst. Superman isn’t perfect. If he becomes a villain, the whole world will be in danger.”

“You don’t trust him…” Clark concluded sadly.

“Of course not.”

“Bruuuuce!” A scantily clad woman called out across the ballroom, waving at the billionaire.

Smiling again, Bruce patted Clark on the shoulder. “Let’s give politics a break. Enjoy the party, Clark. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have a Swedish model to attend to.”

Clark chuckled. “Of course, you do. Have fun.”

“Oh, I will.” Bruce winked as he walked away, back to his playboy persona.

Clark watched while Bruce approached the crowd. Soon, he was mingling with the other guests with a tipsy model latched onto his arm. It was difficult to imagine the silly playboy as Gotham’s Dark Knight. But that was the whole point of this charade. Bruce didn’t want anyone to suspect him, so he played the fool.

Recalling their earlier conversation, Clark seriously considered Bruce’s words. All it takes is one bad day. Something must have happened to make Batman so jaded. Did he really think people could turn evil so easily? And the way he talked about Harvey Dent was interesting… Clark had heard about Harvey Dent’s death in the news. People claimed that Batman had killed him, but Clark never believed it. To Bruce, Harvey Dent was a real hero. He was treating the man like a martyr. Didn’t Batman care about his own reputation?

What was Bruce thinking? Clark just wanted to understand.

Suddenly, the sound of gunshots rang out as a chandelier dropped from the ceiling, crashing onto the floor. Several guests screamed in terror while men wearing clown masks barged into the ballroom. Dammit. Clark hadn’t been paying attention. He should have sensed the criminals coming. Now he needed to leave the room without anyone noticing, so he could change into his Superman suit. He couldn’t fight these criminals looking like Clark Kent.

In the center of the ballroom, one man took off his clown mask, revealing a mess of green hair and a face covered in grease paint. Clark immediately recognized the villain even though he had never seen him in person before.

The Joker swung a shotgun over his shoulder and grinned as he approached the billionaire host. “Hey, Brucie baby! I think my invitation must’ve gotten, uh lost in the mail.”

He cackled madly.
The Joker

Chapter Summary

The Joker is being creepy. Bruce and Clark can't stop bickering.

Chapter Notes

Hi! Thanks for the comments and kudos! This chapter is a long one

*How? How did the Joker get inside?* Bruce had done everything possible to boost security. This shouldn't have happened. His mind raced as he scanned Joker and his goons. While the Joker was wearing his signature purple suit, the other clowns were wearing waiter vests and black bow ties. His usual caterer had canceled yesterday, and Bruce had to hire another company. The clowns had been the wait staff. They must've sneaked Joker inside.

“Brucie, Darling, don’t worry your pretty little head. You’ll wrinkle.” The Joker grabbed Bruce’s chin, forcibly tilting his head back.

The deranged clown was only centimeters away from his face. Bruce could smell the Joker’s rancid breath as he chuckled. “Did ya miss me, hot stuff? I missed you.”

Next to them, Hilda, the Swedish model sobbed loudly. The Joker released Bruce and turned towards the crying girl.

“What’s wrong, Sweetheart?” He grabbed her by the neck, pressing a switchblade against her skin. “Is it the scars? You don’t like them?”

“Please don’t hurt me!” Hilda cried hysterically.

“Bor-ring,” The Joker said with a sing-song voice. “You’re boring me, dear. Let’s put a smile on your face!”

The woman screamed in terror while Bruce shouted, “Joker!”

The Joker paused and glanced at him. Meanwhile two of his clown goons pointed their machine guns at Bruce, watching his every move. Bruce didn’t need his Kevlar to beat the Joker and his henchmen, but he couldn't expose his true identity. If the Joker ever found out, it would be Alfred and Dick paying the price.

“Do you have something to say, Brucie baby?” The Joker stalked towards him.

Bruce glared at the insane man, tightly clenching his fists. “Leave my guests alone. You came here to see me, didn’t you?”

“Oho!” The Joker snickered and clapped. “You see, Brucie. This is why I like you! You’ve got spine unlike these other piggies.”
Grinning madly, the Joker reached toward Bruce and raked a hand through his black hair before painfully wrenching his head to the side. Bruce gritted his teeth, struggling with the urge to fight back. He wanted to beat the Joker to a bloody pulp, but that’s what Batman would do. And right now, he was Bruce Wayne.

Scanning his surroundings, he counted three machine guns that were currently pointed at him. Even if he pushed the Joker away, one of his goons would shoot him. At least the homicidal maniac was focused on him, instead of his guests. Bruce glanced around the ballroom, searching for Clark Kent, but the journalist was nowhere in sight. As much as Bruce hated to admit it, Superman would be useful right about now.

“Are you ignoring me, Brucie? Look at me!” The Joker shook with anger as he shoved a blade inside Bruce’s mouth, threatening to slash his cheek. “C’mon, LOOK AT ME!”

Bruce reluctantly met the Joker’s gaze, staring into the two soulless pits surrounded by black greasepaint.

The Joker grinned, baring his sharp, yellow teeth. “That’s a good boy. Now, gimme a smile!”

In a split second, Bruce saw a flash of blue. Then the Joker flew across the room, crashing into the wall. Meanwhile all of the clown’s henchmen suddenly collapsed on the floor, unconscious, dropping their weapons. The machine guns were all pieces of scrap metal now, twisted into impossible angles.

Bruce blinked in surprise as the flash of blue sped past him again, causing a gust of wind that shook the chandeliers.

A second later, the blur stopped.

Superman stood in front of Bruce while the surrounding guests gasped and pointed in awe. But the Kryptonian didn’t pay any attention to the crowd. His blue eyes were trained on Bruce.

In a flash, Superman was suddenly standing even closer to him. Caught off guard, Bruce stumbled back. Superman’s speed was dizzying. How was Batman supposed to handle that on the battlefield?

Then Superman reached toward him, about to touch his face. Bruce flinched distrustfully. With a sigh, the alien lowered his hand.

“Are you okay?” Superman asked, looking worried.

“I-” His lips stung when he talked. Bruce wiped some blood off his bottom lip. The Joker must’ve cut the inside of his mouth. “I’m fine.”

“Good.” Superman smiled with relief.

The sound of police sirens echoed from the streets below.

“The cops are here. I’ll take care of the Joker,” Superman announced before he zoomed across the room and grabbed the Joker by his ankle.

Then Superman quickly flew away while the Joker laughed hysterically, dangling upside down in the air. Soon, the Joker’s laughter faded into the distance. Everyone in the ballroom cheered. Guests hugged each other, crying in relief. No one had died. At least not in the ballroom.
“Bruce?” The Swedish model placed a hand on his shoulder. “Are you alright?”

He shrugged her hand off and stormed away. He left the ballroom and headed down a long hallway. Then he pressed a button, hidden behind a statue. Suddenly, the wall opened and Bruce entered a secret room, shutting the wall behind him. A few seconds later, he could hear a crowd of policemen on the other side of the wall, trampling towards the ballroom.

In the secret room, Bruce opened a safe, then took out an extra bat suit. He quickly changed into the black Kevlar and pulled on his cowl and cape. Then he climbed out a window and used his grappling gun to swing away onto a nearby building.

Running from rooftop to rooftop, Batman rushed away from Wayne Tower, heading in the direction Superman had flown.

When Batman spotted a flash of blue in the sky, he knew what to expect now. He stopped running and waited on the roof. With a gust of wind, Superman abruptly appeared in front of him, hovering in the air.

“Hey, Batman,” the alien greeted him with a friendly smile.

“Where is the Joker?” Batman demanded.

“At Arkham Asylum where he belongs.”

“Good. You can leave now.”

“What?” Superman gaped at him, looking offended. “But I just helped you!”

“I didn’t ask for your help. Gotham is my responsibility, and I warned you to stay away.”

“Seriously?” Superman snapped. “Would it kill you to show a little gratitude?!”

“I can handle the Joker on my own.”

“If you could handle it, then I wouldn’t have stepped in.”

Furious, Batman clenched his fists and growled, “I am fully capable of protecting my city, Clark. You can’t even protect your own identity. Your disguise is a pair of glasses. How do people in Metropolis not recognize you? Are they really that stupid?”

“You’re so petty!” Clark yelled in frustration. “You’re just mad because I saved you, Bruce.”

Batman felt a spike of anxiety as he immediately reached for his utility belt.

In a flash, Superman snatched both his arms, stopping him. “Whoa, Calm down. There’s no need to whip out the kryptonite.”

Bruce struggled against the alien’s hold in vain. It was infuriating. He was using all his strength, trying to break free, but it made no difference! Compared to Superman, he was a fucking ragdoll. Right now the Kryptonian could do whatever he wanted, and Bruce couldn’t stop him.

“How did you find out?” Batman snarled. “My suit is lined with lead.”

“I know, but I can hear through the lead.”

“Explain.”
“I recognized your heartbeat.”

*My heartbeat?* He blinked in surprise, then thrashed in Superman’s grip. “Fucking alien! Let go of me!”

Clark sighed. “If I do that, you’ll try to stab me with kryptonite.”

“You know me *so* well.”

Superman released him and snatched his utility belt. “I’m sorry, but I can’t let you have this.”

“Keep it.” Batman crossed his arms. “I have stockpiles of kryptonite.”

“I’m sure you do,” Superman said wearily. “Look, I understand that you don’t trust easily. You’ve seen good men turn bad, and my power scares you. I get it.”

*I’m not scared of you.* Batman glared at him in silence.

“But I’m just asking you to give me a chance,” Clark implored. “Let me prove to you that I’m trustworthy.”

“And how would you do that?”

“I think we should work together.”

Batman scoffed, “That’s not happening.”

In the distance, there was a sudden explosion by the docks, then a large building burned brightly. Superman focused on the burning building, then gasped in surprise.

“What? It’s the Joker again! But I just brought him to Arkham ten minutes ago!”

“Did you see him being locked up?” Batman asked critically.

“Well, no. But I handed him off to some guards.”

“You *handed* him off? Do you have any idea how incompetent those guards are? Of course, the Joker is free again!” Batman yelled.

Superman raised his hands in a placating gesture. “I’m sorry, okay? Just calm down. I’ll help you catch him.”

“No, the Joker is my problem. Give back my belt,” he demanded.

Superman glanced at the utility belt thoughtfully, then hide it behind his back. “Only if you agree to let me help you.”

“No. Hand over the belt.”

“Agree to work together, or I’ll fly you far away from here and stop the Joker by myself.”

Batman glared at him. “You wouldn’t dare.”

“You look like you could use a vacation.” Superman suddenly grabbed onto him and hovered into the air, lifting Bruce off the roof. “I’ve heard Hawaii is nice this time of year.”

“Put me down!” Batman punched and kicked to no avail. As they flew higher, he panicked and
finally caved in. “Okay, fine! You alien bastard!”

Superman grinned. “We can work together?”

“Yes…”

“That’s great!” The alien flew back down and set Bruce on the roof.

“My belt,” Batman grumbled.

Without any hesitation, Superman happily handed over the belt. Batman snatched the utility belt and opened a pocket, checking on the kryptonite. A green glow emitted from the rock, illuminating Bruce’s face and cowl. He glanced at Clark threateningly.

Superman let out a nervous laugh. “Please don’t stab me.”

“Don’t make it so tempting.” Batman closed the pocket, concealing the kryptonite. Then he fastened the utility belt around his waist and took out his grappling gun.

Batman was about to fire the grappling gun and swing away when Superman suddenly grabbed him again. The Kryptonian flew through the sky above Gotham, carrying Bruce bridal style in his arms. Batman bristled, feeling incredibly uncomfortable.

“What are you doing?”

“It’s faster this way.” Superman zoomed forward.

Wind rushed all around them as they sped across the sky. They were high above the nearby buildings. When Bruce glanced down, he tensed anxiously. If Superman dropped him, he would probably die. A fall from this height would kill him. Concerned for his safety, Batman latched onto the alien tightly.

Clark chuckled, holding the other man closer to his chest. “It’s okay, Bruce. I got you.”

Pressed against Clark’s muscular chest, Bruce felt his face heating with a blush. Thankfully, the cowl was hiding it.

“Why is your heart racing?” Superman asked, sounding confused. “Seriously, Bruce, I’m not going to drop you.”

“Idiot,” he muttered under his breath.

“I heard that.”

“Good, I was counting on it.”

Superman smiled while shaking his head. “You’re so snarky.”

“And petty, apparently.”

“At least you’re not an alien bastard.”

Bruce actually smirked, calming slightly. “True. It doesn’t get worse than that.”

Clark laughed.
As they approached the docks, Batman scanned the area. Next to the harbor, there was a large warehouse on fire, and in front of the burning building, the Joker was waiting with a hostage and a pile of dead bodies. It was difficult to see through the smoke.

“Is anyone inside the warehouse?” Batman asked.

“No, but the Joker has a kid with him,” Superman answered. “She can’t be older than fourteen.”

_Damnit._ As they flew down, Batman could see the hostage more clearly. It was Barbara Gordon, the commissioner’s daughter. The Joker was holding a gun to her head, and there were four dead cops on the ground. Batman surged with anger as he recognized a couple of the deceased officers.

As soon as Superman landed, Batman leapt away from the alien, prepared to fight.

The Joker cackled. “Oh, my! Batsy! Are you and Supes an item now? Should I be jealous? What does he have that I don’t? It’s the tights, isn’t it?” The Joker whistled suggestively. “It really leaves nothing to the imagination.”

“Joker, let the girl go!” Batman roared.

“Hmm. Well, let me think about it… Nope, I don’t wanna.” The Joker cocked the gun while Barbara yelped fearfully.

In a flash, Superman zoomed towards the Joker and crushed the gun with his bare hands. Then he grabbed the Joker and hovered in the air, dangling the criminal upside down again.

Meanwhile Barbara quickly dashed away, stumbling on her feet. She almost tripped when Batman caught her arm and steadied her.

“Get out of here and call your father,” he ordered.

The girl nodded and hurried away.

“Oh, not this again.” The Joker complained as he swung back and forth, upside down. “Supes, stop being a home-wrecker! Batsy and I have something special.”

“Home-wrecker?” Superman raised an eyebrow.


Suddenly, he heard an explosion. Batman turned around to see flames erupting from a building on the other side of the city.

The Joker laughed hysterically. “I’m just getting started, Bats. I planted bombs all over Gotham. I wonder which one will go off next. Don’t ya just love surprises?”

“Superman, get rid of the bombs,” Batman ordered. “I’ll deal with the Joker.”

“I’m on it!” Superman quickly flew away, dropping the Joker.

The Joker crashed onto the ground, then casually stood up, dusting off his purple suit. He grinned as Batman stormed toward him.

“Heya, Batsy! So, you and Supes. Who wears the pants in that relationship? I’m curious.”
Batman punched the Joker in the face. Then the clown stumbled back, laughing. Furious, Batman grabbed onto the collar of the Joker’s shirt. Right before Batman could hit him again, the Joker slipped a needle out of his pocket and stuck it in Bruce’s arm, between two plates of Kevlar. Batman punched him and jumped back, holding his arm. His mind raced anxiously. What the hell did the Joker just drug him with?

The Joker laughed as he ran away. All around him, Bruce could see shapes moving in the shadows that looked like bats. He instantly remembered the time he fell into a well as a child, surrounded by bats in the dark. He remembered the fear.

Scarecrow’s fear toxin! Batman quickly took the antidote out of his utility belt and shot it into his other arm. The shadowy hallucinations disappeared as Batman ran after the Joker.

He chased the Joker through the shipyard, zigzagging around large steel shipping containers. Batman used his grappling gun to propel himself on top of a container, then he leapt down, tackling the Joker to the ground. The Joker laughed as Batman grabbed him and slammed him face-first against a shipping container.

Reaching inside his utility belt, Batman pulled out steel restraints, which he used to lock the Joker’s hands behind his back. He had seen the Joker escape from handcuffs many times before, so he had special heavy-duty restraints just for the clown.

The Joker craned his neck to stare at Bruce, grinning with blood on his teeth. “Ah, this is how I like it. Just me and my Bats. It’s a shame Superman was in the way earlier. He’s not allowed to play with you anymore.”

Batman flung the Joker to the ground, growling, “What do you mean?”

“I meeeeeeann…I’m changing his position in our game.” The Joker had a dangerous gleam in his eyes.

Bruce recognized that look. The Joker was planning something.

Batman punched the Joker and slammed him against the shipping container again. “Leave Superman alone. This is between you and me.”

“Oh, I would leave him alone, but Batsy Darling, you’re the one who brought him. And he had his hands all over you,” The Joker complained. “You know how I feel about sharing, Bats. I. DON’T. Like. It. So now Superman has to pay.”

“I won’t let you kill him.”

“Kill him?” The Joker laughed. “I don’t wanna kill Superman. Honestly, I don’t think I can. But you know what I can do, Batsy?” He hissed viciously, “I can give him a really really bad day. Heheheh. I can turn him into an agent of chaos. Take all of his goodness and corrupt it. Like a Harvey Dent on, uh super steroids.” He snickered. “Can you imagine, Bats? Superman descending into madness. The whole world would burrrrrrn. I’m getting all hot and bothered just thinking about it.”

Batman furiously hit the Joker and snarled, “Leave Superman out of this!”

“Heeeheh. I can turn him into an agent of chaos. Take all of his goodness and corrupt it. Like a Harvey Dent on, uh super steroids.” He snickered. “Can you imagine, Bats? Superman descending into madness. The whole world would burrrrrrn. I’m getting all hot and bothered just thinking about it.”

Batman furiously hit the Joker and snarled, “Leave Superman out of this!”

“Do you think Supes has a main squeeze? Maybe a pretty little thing like Rachel? You remember Rachel, don’t you? She was a blast! Eh heh heh.”

He slammed the Joker against the steel wall again, choking him. “You will stay away from
Superman and anyone he cares about. I won’t let you corrupt him!”

“You know Arkham can’t hold me,” the Joker rasped. “I’ll get out then I’m gonna pay Supes a little visit.”

“Stay away from him!” Batman surged with anger as he punched the Joker several times and threw him to the ground.

The Joker rolled on the ground with his arms still restrained behind his back, laughing. “What are you going to do? Kill me? Are you finally going to break your precious rule?”

Batman glanced to the side and spotted a crowbar, leaning against a shipping container. He grabbed the crowbar and stormed towards the Joker.

“I won’t kill you, but I can cripple you,” Batman threatened.

The Joker cackled. “Oh, you tease!”

Batman swung the crowbar down, hitting the Joker’s legs. Enraged, he swung the crowbar again and again until he heard bones shatter. The Joker howled with laughter.

SxB

Zooming through the sky, Superman flew towards the ocean, holding a ticking bomb in his grasp. Right before the bomb went off, Superman hurled the explosive into the distance, towards the sea. The bomb exploded in the ocean, spraying water up into the air.

Superman let out a sigh of relief. *That should be the last of them.*

True to his word, the Joker had planted bombs all over Gotham. Superman had found explosives in hospitals, parks, hotels and even the mayor’s house. At least the city was safe for now. Dealing with the Joker all the time must be tiring for the Dark Knight. Superman wondered how Batman was doing.

He shut his eyes, focusing on the sound of Bruce’s heartbeat. Batman was still at the harbor. Was he having trouble with the Joker?

Worried, Superman quickly flew to the harbor and found Batman in the shipyard. His eyes widened in shock as he saw the vigilante swinging a crowbar at the Joker. The clown was restrained on the ground, unable to protect himself, while Batman brutally attacked the Joker’s legs, breaking his bones.

“What are you doing?! Stop!” Superman flew down and snatched the bloody crowbar away. He yelled at Bruce, “The Joker can’t even defend himself! What the hell is wrong with you?!”

Batman glared at him while the Joker let out a raspy laugh. The sound of police sirens approached in the distance. Soon, the cops would come here and find the Joker. With his broken legs, the insane clown definitely wasn’t going anywhere.

“We need to talk.” Superman angrily grabbed Bruce and flew away.

They zoomed through the air across Gotham, then Superman dropped the vigilante on the roof of a building. Batman landed gracefully and crossed his arms. Then Superman stood in front of him, frowning.
“Why did you do that to the Joker?” he demanded.

Batman huffed, explaining, “It was necessary. I had to buy us some time to prepare.”

Superman blinked in confusion. “What?”

“In about six months, the Joker will be healed. Then he will come after you.”

Clark shrugged. “The Joker can come after me all he wants. I’m not worried. He’s just a man. He’s not strong enough to do anything to me.”

“It’s not the Joker’s strength that you need to worry about. It’s his mind,” Batman warned. “You have his attention now. You have to be careful. Do not underestimate him.”

“Okay… I’ll watch out for him. But you really didn’t need to break his legs. I can take care of myself in a fight.”

Bruce sighed in frustration. “You don’t understand. The Joker doesn’t want to fight you. He wants to corrupt you.”

“Corrupt me?” Clark raised an eyebrow. “Look, I know you’re paranoid. But there is nothing the Joker can do that would turn me into a psycho, okay? You can trust me.”

Batman was silent for a moment, then he reached toward his utility belt. Reacting quickly, Superman snatched the vigilante’s hand, stopping him.

He gave Clark an annoyed look. “I wasn’t reaching for the kryptonite.”

“Oh, sorry.” Superman released his hand.

Batman reached inside the belt and pulled out a small bat-shaped communicator. He handed the device over to Clark. “The Joker will come after you. It’s only a matter of time. When you’re in trouble, call me.”

Clark’s eyes widened in surprise as he stared at the communicator, smiling. “Wow. I…I thought you hated me.”

“I’m not offering you help because I like you. I can’t let the Joker corrupt you.”

His smile faded. “Right, because I’m a dangerous alien.”

“Exactly.” Batman turned and started walking away.

“Bruce.”

He glanced over his shoulder at Clark.

“You…You can call me whenever you need help too. Just say my name and I’ll come. I promise,” Clark swore.

“That won’t be necessary.” Batman fired his grappling gun at an adjacent building.

While Bruce swung away, Clark sighed and held up the bat-shaped communicator, studying it.
At the Daily Planet, Clark walked into the main office, heading towards his desk. It had been a week since the Wayne Fundraiser and Clark had submitted his article to Perry yesterday. So far, he hasn’t heard back from his boss yet. Hopefully, Perry approved of the article.

Sitting down at his desk, Clark casually checked his work email on his computer.

“At the Daily Planet, Clark walked into the main office, heading towards his desk. It had been a week since the Wayne Fundraiser and Clark had submitted his article to Perry yesterday. So far, he hasn’t heard back from his boss yet. Hopefully, Perry approved of the article.

Sitting down at his desk, Clark casually checked his work email on his computer.

“Hey, Clark!” Cat Grant walked over and tossed the newest issue of the Daily Planet on his desk. “Great job on the article. I loved it.”

Huh? Clark grabbed the newspaper, glancing at the front page. His eyes widened in shock. His article was on the front page of the Daily Planet. This has never happened before! Clark grinned proudly.

Jimmy Olsen rushed over to Clark’s desk too. “Yeah, it’s awesome! I just read it.”

“Thanks,” Clark replied happily.

“Kent, get in here! I need to talk to you!” Perry called from inside his office.

Clark quickly stood and headed into his boss’s office. Just as he entered, Perry’s phone rang. His boss answered the call while Clark stood in front of his desk, waiting patiently. Perry argued on the phone for a couple minutes before angrily hanging up.

“You wanted to speak to me, sir?” Clark smiled nervously.

“Kent, this article you wrote.” Perry held up today’s issue of the Daily Planet. “It’s pure gold! All of the Wayne fangirls love it! And let me tell you, that boy has a lot of admirers. The whole city of Gotham is practically in love with him. Keep up the good work.”

“Thank you, sir!” Clark beamed.

“I wanna see more juicy Bruce Wayne stories. From now on, whenever I need someone in Gotham, I’m sending you.”

Clark’s smile faded somewhat. “Uh, that’s…great.”

“Now, get back to work!” Perry ordered before busily typing on his computer.
“Yes, sir.” Clark left his boss’s office and headed back towards his desk.

He sat down at his desk with a sigh. He was glad that his article was receiving so much praise. But now it seemed like he would be visiting Gotham way more often. Clark knew Bruce wouldn’t like it. The vigilante may threaten him with kryptonite again. Or maybe he wouldn’t…

Clark reached into his pocket and took out the bat-shaped communicator. He held the device in his lap, staring at it. Batman had actually offered to help him. Bruce wanted to protect him from the Joker. Of course, Superman didn’t need any protection, but still… It’s the thought that counts. Clark smiled. Batman couldn’t hate him completely, right?

“Hey, Smallville.” Lois sat down at the desk next to his.

He quickly hid the communicator in his pocket. “Hi, Lois.”

She grinned with a mischievous glint in her eyes.

Clark gulped. “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“I read your article.”

“And?”

Her grin widened. “You totally have a crush on Bruce Wayne.”

“What?!” Clark felt his face flush with embarrassment. “No, I don’t!”

She laughed. “Yes, you do.”

“No, I don’t,” he argued

“Do I have to cite my evidence?” Lois held up a copy of the Daily Planet and began reading Clark’s article out loud. “What started as a lovely evening turned into a nightmare when the Joker and his goons crashed the Wayne Fundraiser. All of Gotham knows the Joker. The criminally insane mass-murderer has been terrorizing the city for years. His name has become synonymous with chaos and death. In the ballroom, all the guests cowered in fear, except for one man. Bruce Wayne showed incredible bravery that night.”

Raising an eyebrow, Lois glanced at Clark

“What?” Clark defensively crossed his arms. “Bruce Wayne was brave. I didn’t make that up.”

She continued reading, “When the Joker threatened to slash a young woman’s face, Bruce Wayne selflessly called attention to himself. He said, ‘Leave my guests alone. You came here to see me, didn’t you?’ This display of courage excited the Joker. Next, the insane killer shoved a blade in Mr. Wayne’s mouth and threatened him. But Bruce Wayne didn’t even flinch. He bravely stared the Joker down with his steely blue eyes.”

Lois chuckled and smirked at Clark. “His steely blue eyes? Really?”

“Okay, you can stop reading now.” Clark looked away, blushing.

With a sigh, she dropped the newspaper on her desk. “It sounds like Bruce Wayne is a good guy. But you barely mentioned Superman at all, and he’s the real hero. He’s the one who beat the Joker and took him away.”
Clark shrugged. “Everyone expects Superman to act like a hero. I wanted to give Bruce Wayne some credit.”

“Because you have a crush on him?”

“No!” he protested.

Lois laughed and turned towards her computer, typing. “Whatever you say, Smallville.”

SxB

After work, Clark returned to his small apartment and flopped down his couch. He yanked off his tie while kicking off his shoes. It was only 8:30 PM, but he was exhausted. Perry was already expecting another great article from him, and he had to disappear from work a few times to perform his duties as Superman. Lex Luthor has been causing more trouble lately. The crooked businessman was a constant pain in his side.

Clark took off his glasses and tiredly rubbed his eyes. He wondered how Batman was doing. Were any villains bothering him today? Clark glanced down at his glasses as he remembered Bruce’s remarks at the fundraiser.

“You look better without glasses, Clark.” Bruce purred, “It’s a shame to hide your pretty eyes.”

Blushing again, Clark jumped off the couch and paced around the room. He did NOT have a crush on Bruce Wayne! Lois was wrong. She had no idea what she was talking about.

How could Clark possibly like Bruce?! The man was so cold and grouchy. He was only 29, but he acted much older! He had no faith in people and he was completely jaded. Not to mention, he was incredibly rude and ungrateful. Bruce hasn’t thanked Clark once! Even though Clark helped him and saved Gotham from exploding.

Clark huffed angrily as he sat down on the couch again.

He definitely didn’t like Bruce. That petty, snarky man. He recalled some of Batman’s threats, then felt himself smirk. As much as he didn’t want to admit it, Bruce was actually kinda funny. And that look on his face when Clark carried him bridal style… It was priceless!

Clark burst out laughing. It was fun to get under Bruce’s skin. He would be lying if he said he didn’t enjoy the Dark Knight’s company. Batman was so interesting. Clark never knew what to expect from him. The vigilante was full of surprises.

He took out the bat-shaped communicator again, studying the device. This was the biggest surprise of all. Bruce gave Clark a way to call him if he ever needed help… Bruce cared enough to do that. Clark broke into a smile.

This wasn’t a crush. Lois was totally, totally wrong! Clark just wanted to befriend Bruce. There was nothing strange about that. They’re both heroes. They have common goals and interests. They should be friends.

Clark held up the communicator and curiously pressed a button on the side.

Within seconds, he heard Bruce’s voice coming from the communicator.

“What’s wrong?” Batman demanded gruffly.
Clark blinked in surprise and replied, “Oh, uh, nothing. I was just checking in.”

“The Bat-Comm is for emergencies.”

“You call it the Bat-Comm?” Clark giggled. “That’s so cute.”

“Clark,” Bruce growled.

“Heh, sorry.” Clark smiled nervously. “So, have you seen my article?”

“Yes, it’s everywhere.”

“Do you like it?”

“You made me sound like a hero,” he grumbled.

“Well, you are one,” Clark said happily.

“…That isn’t how I want the public to see me.”

“Oh, right. Your playboy image.” Clark winced, feeling guilty. “Did I screw that up? I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine. Just don’t write about me again.”

“Okay…” He agreed reluctantly before asking, “So, how are you doing?”

Instead of an answer, all he heard was static.

“Bruce? Bruce, can you hear me?” Clark stared at the Bat-Comm for a second, then realized what happened.

*He hung up on me!*
Just a Heartbeat Away

Chapter Summary

Clark misses Bruce. Lex Luthor is an evil buttface.

Chapter Notes

Thanks for commenting! <3

Two months have gone by. Two whole months since he talked to Bruce.

With a sigh, Clark laid down on his bed, staring up at the ceiling. It was late at night and he was alone in his apartment. His job at the Daily Planet and being Superman have kept him busy as usual. Nothing out of the ordinary has happened. Clark saved Metropolis a few times and got yelled at for missing work. Just the usual routine.

He glanced at the Bat-Comm. The bat-shaped device was on top of the nightstand next to his bed. He kept the Bat-Comm close by at all times. Just in case Bruce called.

Ever since Bruce hung up on him, Clark hasn’t used the communicator. Like Batman said, it was for emergencies. And Clark didn’t want to piss off the grumpy vigilante again.

Shutting his eyes, Clark focused on his super-hearing, trying to locate a familiar heartbeat. Miles away in Gotham, he could hear the strong steady melody of Bruce’s heart. His heart was beating 65 times a minute, which meant he was calm. He was safe.

Smiling to himself, Clark listened to the heartbeat for several minutes. Every night for the past two months, he would fall asleep to the sound of Bruce’s heart. It was reassuring. That steady rhythm meant Bruce was okay.

Clark slept peacefully.

SxB

In the morning, Clark headed off to work. At the Daily Planet, he sat down at his desk and typed on his computer for a few hours, working on his newest article. A few times, he took a break and talked to Lois. She praised Superman as usual, still oblivious to Clark’s other identity.

During lunch, Clark ate in the break room with Cat and Jimmy. At one o’clock, Clark returned to his desk, where he researched some statistics for his article. He was getting so much work done today. It was great. Clark leaned back in his chair, smiling. Then he glanced over at Lois’s desk. She still hasn’t returned from her lunch break. Where was she?

Slightly worried, Clark listened for her heartbeat, trying to locate her. He listened for a couple minutes, but still couldn’t hear her. Clark felt a pang of anxiety. Lois’s heartbeat was missing! He had to find her!
Clark hurried into a nearby bathroom, locked the door, and changed into his Superman suit. Then he flew out the window, zooming across the sky. Clark hovered high above Metropolis and shut his eyes, concentrating on his super-hearing. Still nothing! He couldn’t hear her.

Superman flew around the city, searching for Lois. He should be able to hear her! Why couldn’t he hear her?! Clark was starting to panic. Lois was his friend, his best friend. Was she dead? No! No, she can’t be dead! If someone attacked her, she would’ve screamed for help. Clark would’ve heard!

Hurtling across the sky, Superman scanned the city of Metropolis, looking for any clues. Lois has to be around here somewhere. She couldn’t have gone far. She’s been missing for less than an hour. Clark frantically flew around, searching. Then he came to a stop in front of the LexCorp building.

Of course, *LexCorp*. Luthor must’ve taken her.

Using his x-ray vision, Superman scanned the large skyscraper, trying to find Lois. There were hundreds of LexCorp employees inside the building, but still no sign of Lois. When Superman scanned the basement floor, he noticed a blind spot. In the basement, there was a room encased in lead. He could also hear the electronic whirring of sonic disruptors. The machines must be canceling out the sound of Lois’s heartbeat!

Clark flew down to the first floor of the building and burst through a window. LexCorp employees yelped in surprise as Clark zoomed past them. Tearing apart metal, he pried into the elevator shaft and flew down to the basement.

He raced towards the lead-encased room and kicked down the door. Inside, he found Lois in the center of an empty room, tied to a chair and gagged. In a flash, he ran towards her and removed the gag from her mouth.

“Superman, it’s a trap! Run!” Lois yelled.

Suddenly, a green mist shot out of the walls, pouring into the room. The mist was full of tiny green crystals. *Kryptonite dust!* Clark coughed, struggling to breathe. The kryptonite stung his lungs like a thousand needles. He quickly untied Lois and turned to leave. Clark staggered a few steps forward until he collapsed on the floor.

The whole room was spinning. There was green kryptonite dust everywhere. Clark hunched over, groaning in agony. He was in excruciating pain, and he felt so weak. He couldn’t move.

Lois rushed to his side, cradling him in her arms. “Superman!”

“Go. Hurry,” he whispered.

“I can’t leave you to die!” She cried. She tried to lift him, but she wasn’t strong enough.

Clark could barely breathe. Everything was becoming blurry. The pain was too much. He was going to pass out. He needed help. He needed…

His hand shook as he reached in his pocket and pulled out the Bat-Comm. Clark fumbled with the communicator, pressing the button on the side.

“Bruce,” he rasped.

Everything faded to darkness.
SxB

His whole body ached. It hurt to breathe. Grunting in pain, Clark opened his eyes and studied his surroundings. He was strapped to a table, inside a cold metallic room. Steel restraints were locked around his ankles and wrists. He tried to break free, but couldn’t. He was still too weak.

Clark coughed, wincing in pain. With every breath, he could hear himself wheezing. No matter how much he tried to breathe in, it was never enough. He wasn’t getting enough air.

Familiar footsteps clicked on the tile floor as Lex Luthor approached the table. The bald man was wearing his signature black business suit and tie.

“About time you wake up.” Luthor stood over Superman, smirking. “I wanted you to be conscious for this.”

“Luthor!” Clark furiously struggled against the restraints.

“You have been a thorn in my side for too long, Superman. Today I will finally rid myself of you.” Luthor held up a piece of kryptonite.

Clark cringed, grimacing.

“I always found it ironic. How a tiny green rock could destroy the strongest man on earth.” Luthor cruelly lowered the kryptonite, pressing it against the fabric of Superman’s suit.

Overwhelming pain ripped through him as Clark screamed.

Suddenly, the kryptonite was pulled away, then Lex Luthor stumbled back.

Clark’s vision was blurry again, but he recognized the black bat suit. Batman had come. Gotham’s Dark Knight stormed towards Luthor and punched the bald man in the face. Luthor fell to the floor while Batman pummeled him mercilessly.

Bruce…

Clark smiled before he passed out again.

SxB

In the cockpit, Bruce sat in the captain’s chair, piloting the Batplane. Next to him, Clark was limply leaning to the side, buckled in the passenger seat. The alien was still unconscious, wheezing as he breathed. The kryptonite had caused some serious damage, especially to Clark’s lungs. He sounded like someone with asthma. His airway was partially obstructed, probably due to inflammation.

As soon as Bruce received Clark’s call, he had flown to Metropolis. He had traced the Bat-Comm to LexCorp, and knew it was a true emergency.

Breaking into LexCorp had been easy. Since the company used a lot of Wayne Tech for security, Batman knew exactly how to hack their computer system. Once inside the building, Batman had easily defeated any guards while he searched for Superman. Along the way, he had found Lois Lane locked in a room. Batman had released her, then she told him everything that happened. How Luthor lured Superman into a trap and ambushed him with kryptonite dust…

Lois was safe now. Batman had cleared a path for her escape, before continuing his search. When
he had finally found Superman, the situation was much worse than he had anticipated.

He frowned as he remembered the sound of Clark screaming. Lex Luthor had been seconds away from killing him.

Batman angrily tightened his grip on the plane’s steering wheel. He had blood on his gloves after the beating he gave to Luthor. Let’s see if he tries this shit again. Next time, Bruce will break bones if Luthor pulls the same stunt. Batman wasn’t as forgiving as the jolly care-free alien.

In the passenger seat, Clark stirred and barely opened his eyes.

“W-Where am I?” He groaned, then glanced at Batman. “Bruce?”

“We’re going to Gotham,” Bruce explained as he piloted the plane. “Your lungs could be permanently damaged. I need to run tests.”

Clark smiled, looking deliriously happy. “You came…” He rasped before slipping out of consciousness.

While he slept, Bruce stared at him for moment, feeling mildly annoyed. Was it really that amazing that Batman kept his word and came to help?

“Hmph. Of course, I came.”
Clark slowly opened his eyes. He was laying on a bed inside a fancy room that he didn’t recognize. Sunlight shined though the window next to the bed, illuminating the room. Clark basked in the warm glow, feeling the sun empower him. He still felt weaker than usual, but he knew his strength was returning.

Rolling on his side, Clark glanced at the other side of the room. There was an old man dressed like a butler standing next to the bed.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Kent. How do you like your eggs?”

“What?” Clark stared at the old man in confusion.

“Scrambled, over easy, or poached?”

“Uh, scrambled is fine.”

“Very good, sir. I will return shortly with your breakfast.”

Before the old man could leave, Clark sat up and asked, “Wait, who are you?”

“Oh, how rude of me.” The old man bowed slightly. “My name is Alfred Pennyworth. I am the Wayne family’s butler. You may call me Alfred. It’s a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Kent.”

“Oh, thanks.” He glanced around the posh bedroom. “So, I’m at Bruce’s house?”

“You are at Wayne Manor, yes.” Alfred corrected him. “I will inform Master Wayne that you are awake. He would like to speak with you.”

Clark nodded. “Sure. Thanks, Alfred.”

“You are most welcome, Mr. Kent.” Alfred smiled with a twinkle in his eye. “If I may be blunt, sir, Master Wayne doesn’t have many friends. I am elated that he has your company. Feel free to stay as long as you like.”

The butler promptly turned and walked away, leaving Clark alone in the room. Clark grinned to himself happily. Alfred seemed to think that he was Bruce’s friend. Is that what Bruce told his butler? Clark’s grin widened. This meant Batman doesn’t hate him, right? He even brought Clark to his home.

Kicking off a couple blankets, Clark climbed out of bed. When he stood, he felt slightly dizzy, but it quickly went away. He was still doing much better than he was before. At least he wasn’t in any pain, and he could breathe easily.

Clark looked down at the clothes on him, studying the black silk pajamas. Someone had taken off
his Superman suit and dressed him. Did Bruce—? Clark blushed as he imagined Bruce’s hands all over his body, caressing his skin. Damn. Why couldn’t he be awake for that? It wasn’t fair!

He heard a familiar heartbeat as Bruce entered the room. The billionaire was wearing an expensive suit and tie, but his hair was disheveled and he had dark circles under his eyes like he hadn’t slept in days.

“You’re up.” Bruce walked toward him. “How are you feeling? Is it still difficult to breathe?”

Without thinking, Clark quickly pulled the other man into a hug. Bruce froze while Clark enveloped him in his arms.

“I feel much better.” He held Bruce close, nuzzling his hair. “Thank you, Bruce. Thank you for everything.”

Bruce pushed Clark away and cleared his throat, looking embarrassed. “You helped me with the Joker. We’re even.”

Clark smiled. “Sure, we’re even. So, what happened while I was out?” His eyes widened as he remembered. “And Lois! What happened to Lois?”

“She’s safe. I freed her.”

Listening for her heartbeat, Clark heard Lois back in Metropolis, at the Daily Planet. “Oh, good.” He let out a sigh of relief. “Thanks again, Bruce. I mean it.”

Instead of answering, Bruce simply shrugged and looked away, obviously still uncomfortable.

“So, how long have I been asleep?” Clark asked.

“Two days.”

“Seriously?” He blinked in surprise. “Wow, I’ve never slept that long before.”

“You were exposed to a lot of kryptonite, but it seems your body healed itself.”

“Yeah, I feel so much better now,” he agreed happily.

“You can return to Metropolis then.”

Huh? Clark hesitated. He wasn’t in any hurry to leave. He wanted to spend more time with Bruce. “Actually, I don’t know if I can fly that far yet. My powers are still weaker than usual.”

“Oh. Well, in that case…I suppose you can stay here until you’re well enough to travel,” Bruce offered reluctantly.

“Thanks, Bruce.” He moved in for another hug, but Bruce jumped back, avoiding him.

Clark laughed nervously. “Sorry. You aren’t much of a hugger, are you?”

Bruce glared at him. “You just figured that out?”

Before Clark could respond, the door swung open and Alfred entered the room, carrying a tray of food. The butler noticed the flustered expression on Bruce’s face and smirked.

“My apologies, Master Wayne. Am I interrupting something?”
“No,” Bruce growled as he stormed out of the room.

Unfazed, Alfred set the tray of food on the nightstand. “Here is your breakfast, Mr. Kent. Though given the time of day, lunch may have been more appropriate.”

“Thanks, Alfred.” Clark sat down on the bed and placed the tray in his lap.

His mouth watered as he stared at the perfectly cooked scrambled eggs, sausage, and French toast on his plate. It all smelled delicious. His stomach growled, reminding him that he hasn’t eaten in two days.

“You’re welcome, Mr. Kent.” Alfred left the room while Clark hungrily wolfed down the food.

After he finished eating, Clark exited the bedroom and wandered down the hall until he found a large staircase. He headed down the stairs while scanning his surroundings. Wayne Manor was a huge historic building, decorated with expensive paintings and rugs. The place had a timeless quality. As if nothing has been moved or changed in several years.

On the first floor, Clark strolled across the main corridor and entered the dining room. On the wall, Clark noticed two large portraits of a man and woman who both resembled Bruce. Clark felt a pang of sympathy as he recognized the couple. Thomas and Martha Wayne. Bruce’s parents. The vigilante still had their portraits up, where he could see them every day.

“Hello, Mr. Kent,” Alfred greeted him as he entered the room.

“Where’s Bruce?”

“He left, sir.” Alfred explained, “Master Wayne has to attend a business meeting. He should be home in a couple hours.”

“Oh, okay.” Clark sighed, feeling disappointed.

Suddenly, a dark-haired boy dashed into the room. Then he rushed toward Clark, grinning excitedly. “Hi!”

Clark raised an eyebrow. “Hi?”

“You’re Superman!” The boy squealed.

He blinked in confusion, then glanced at Alfred.

“Master Dick saw your suit in the laundry room,” the butler explained.

“Oh.” Clark stared at the kid again, recognizing him from the news. The boy was Richard Grayson. Bruce’s ward.

“Don’t worry, Mr. Kent. I won’t tell anyone,” Dick promised. “I totally understand secret identities. I have one too.”

After thinking for a moment, Clark understood. “I see. You’re Robin.”

“Yep, that’s right! I’m Batman’s partner,” the kid announced proudly.

“How old are you?”
“Twelve.”

Clark frowned, crossing his arms. “And Bruce lets you fight dangerous criminals?”

“Well, not on school nights.”

“…Okay.” *Great parenting, Bruce.* Clark couldn’t help but feel annoyed. Batman doesn’t like teaming up with Superman, but he has no problem with a twelve-year-old tagging along. How did that make any sense?

“You’re like my favorite hero!” Dick claimed excitedly. “Well, aside from Batman, of course.”

Clark chuckled. “Thanks. Don’t let Bruce hear you say that.”

“Oh, Bruce needs to chill. You’re awesome! This is your first time here, right? Do you want a tour? I can show you around.” The enthusiastic kid grabbed onto Clark’s arm and dragged him out of the dining room.

SxB

The tour took almost an hour. Dick Grayson brought Clark to every single room in Wayne Manor and showed him multiple trap doors and secret entry ways. The kid talked nonstop the entire time, telling Clark all about the manor and life in general. He talked about Tony Zucco, how he lost his parents, meeting Bruce, and becoming Robin.

It was obvious that he looked up to Batman. Dick wanted to be just like the vigilante and make him proud. The kid trained as Robin every day. He showed Clark a few summersaults and spinning kicks. Clark was actually impressed. Now he understood why Batman let the boy tag along on patrol. The twelve-year-old had skills, and he was smart as a whip.

Around 4 PM, Alfred left the manor to go pick up Bruce from his business meeting. Once the butler was gone, Dick yanked Clark into the study, then pressed a hidden button on a statue. Suddenly, a bookcase flipped around, revealing a secret entryway.

“Now, it’s time for the real tour! Come on.” Dick rushed into the secret entryway and slid down a pole.

Curious, Clark followed the boy, flying down the secret passage.

At the bottom of the passageway, there was a large dark cave with fluorescent lights and computer screens on the walls. *Wow.* Clark scanned the area, seeing various gadgets and vehicles. The Batmobile was on a circular platform in the middle of cave. He approached the sleek vehicle, admiring it.

“Welcome to the Batcave!” Dick announced loudly as his voice echoed.

Clark looked around, spotting more high tech equipment. “This is so cool.”

“I know, right?!” Dick grinned. “But don’t tell Bruce that I brought you down here. He’ll get mad.”

For the next hour, Clark wandered all around the Batcave while Dick explained all the gadgets to him. Bruce must have spent millions of dollars on all of this stuff. It was ridiculous how many contraptions he had. He even had a Batsubmarine. Clark wondered how often Bruce even used that.
When they walked past an ordinary spray can on a podium, Clark asked, “What’s that?”

“Oh, that’s the Shark Repellant Bat Spray.”

He gave Dick a confused look. “The what?”

“Don’t ask.” Dick laughed and hurried to the other side of the cave. “Do you wanna see the Batcopter?”

“But, he already has a Batplane. Why does he need a helicopter?”

“Because it’s cool.”

Clark chuckled while shaking his head. He was starting to think that Bruce just liked to collect high tech toys.

While they walked across the Batcave, Dick glanced at the Batcomputer, then came to a halt. On the large computer screen, there was a live recording of a car in the driveway, approaching Wayne Manor.

“It’s Bruce! He’s back. Come on!” Dick grabbed Clark’s arm and yanked him into an elevator.

They took the elevator up to the study on the first floor. Then Dick hurried down the main corridor and opened the front door, heading outside. Clark followed him outside, wanting to see Bruce again.

Alfred parked the car in front of Wayne Manor and stepped out to greet him. “Hello, Mr. Kent. I’m afraid Master Wayne won’t be able to accompany you for dinner. He fell asleep on the ride home.”

“Oh, not again,” Dick crossed his arms, complaining, “And, he always nags me about getting more sleep.”

Staring through the car window, Clark could see Bruce in the backseat, fast asleep.

“This happens a lot?” he asked.

“On occasion,” Alfred informed him. “Master Wayne has barely slept for two days. He rarely left your side, Mr. Kent.”

“Really?” Clark’s eyes widened, then he glanced at Bruce through the car window again. He stayed by my side…

While he slept, Bruce was leaning to the side with his neck in an awkward angle. It didn’t look comfortable. He should be sleeping in bed, not in the backseat of a car. Clark quietly opened the car door and reached inside. He unfastened Bruce’s seatbelt and gently scooped him up, lifting him out of the car.

Still asleep, Bruce’s head lolled against Clark’s shoulder while Clark held him in his arms.

“Where’s his bedroom?” Clark asked.

Dick gaped at them, obviously in shock. “Oh, uh, I’ll show you.”

The boy led the way inside while Clark followed, carrying Bruce bridal style. Moving carefully, Clark hovered up the stairs, trying his best not to wake the vigilante. If Batman knew what was happening, he would probably throw a fit and threaten Clark again. As they flew, Clark glanced
down at Bruce’s serene sleeping face and smiled. This was worth the risk.

Once they reached the room, Clark gently placed Bruce on the bed, then pulled a blanket over him. They were alone now. Dick was waiting in the hallway, giving them privacy. Smart kid.

Clark kneeled beside the bed, staring at Bruce. He looked so much younger when he was asleep. Reaching forward, Clark brushed a strand of hair out of his face. His hair was surprisingly soft. And, without all the Kevlar, he seemed smaller, less bulky. He actually looked really…cute.

Swallowing hard, Clark quickly stood and turned away. *Cute?* He thought Bruce Wayne was *cute.* His heart fluttered as he gazed down at Bruce again. There was no denying it now. Lois was right. Clark had a crush…

He was so screwed.
Like Kicking a Puppy

Chapter Summary

Bruce is rude, then does some self-reflection.

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the comments and kudos! I'm having so much fun writing this. LOL

Opening his eyes, Bruce immediately realized two things at once. First, he was laying in bed inside his room. And, secondly, he couldn’t remember how he got here. Bruce quickly sat up, feeling paranoid. The last thing he remembered was a boring business meeting, then walking to his car. He must’ve fallen asleep while Alfred was driving again.

Bruce glanced down at his state of dress. He was still wearing the same suit he had worn to the business meeting, but someone took off his tie and removed his shoes. To make him more comfortable?

The door swung open, then Alfred entered the room, holding a tray. “Good evening, Master Wayne. Are you feeling more rested? I brought you some tea.”

“Alfred…” Bruce asked worriedly, “How did I get here?”

The butler casually set down the tray on the nightstand. “I drove you home, sir.”

“I know that. But how did I get in bed?” Bruce grabbed the cup of tea and took a sip.

Alfred smirked, looking amused. “Oh. Mr. Kent was kind enough to carry you over the threshold.”

Bruce almost choked on the tea. “He…what?!”

That bastard carried me again?!

Bruce angrily slammed the cup down on the tray.

“Mr. Kent is a kind man. I quite like him. Master Dick likes him too. So play nice,” Alfred advised sternly.

“Where is he now?”

“In the Batcave, sir.”

“What?!” Bruce jumped out of bed, demanding, “Who let him down there?!”

“Master Dick has been an excellent host during your absence. He gave our guest a thorough tour of the property.”

“Guests aren’t allowed in the Batcave. Dick knows that!” Bruce yelled furiously.
“Clark Kent isn’t an ordinary guest, sir. He shares your…unconventional hobby.”

“Batman isn’t a hobby,” he growled.

With a sigh, Alfred said, “Of course, not, Master Wayne. It’s a lifestyle. And, one that Mr. Kent can understand. It would be wise to ally yourself with him.”

“He’s a threat.”

“A threat who you trusted enough to leave unsupervised in your own home?”

Bruce crossed his arms, silently fuming. Though he hated to admit it, Alfred had a point.

“I understand why you are cautious, Master Wayne. But Mr. Kent is far too fond of you to be a threat.”

He blinked in confusion. “What?”

“You heard me, sir. Now if you’ll excuse me, I need to finish preparing dinner.” Alfred turned and left the room.

Bruce stood alone in the bedroom for a moment, considering what Alfred had said. Too fond of me? What the hell? He ran a hand through his hair, feeling frustrated.

Did Alfred really expect him to trust the alien? Trust was a dangerous thing. A foolish thing. Bruce was already being lenient by allowing Clark to stay in the manor. Letting him inside the Batcave was too far.

Bruce stormed out the room and headed downstairs to the study. He pressed the hidden button on the statue, causing the secret passageway to open. Then he slid down the pole toward the Batcave.

Inside the Batcave, Dick was sitting in front of the Batcomputer, typing on the keyboard. On the large screen, there was a list of criminals that Batman had collected Intel on. Clark stood next to Dick, listening to the boy talk.

“And that one’s Scarecrow.” Dick pointed to a profile on the computer screen. “You have to watch out for him because he’ll drug you with something called fear toxin. It makes you hallucinate.”

As Bruce approached them, Clark instantly turned around to face him. The alien must’ve heard him coming. A few seconds later, Dick glanced to the side and finally noticed Batman.

“Oh, hey, Bruce.” The boy grinned sheepishly. “Did you have a nice nap?”

“Dick, what were you thinking?!?” Bruce snapped. “You know no one’s allowed down here!”

“I-I know. I’m sorry.” Dick fidgeted while guiltily lowering his gaze.

Glaring at the boy, Bruce was about to berate him further. Then Clark interrupted him.

“But don’t be mad at Dick. It’s my fault. I knew this area was private, but I still came here and—”

“Shut up, Clark. I wasn’t talking to you.” Bruce cut him off.

Clark frowned, looking offended.

Suddenly, Alfred’s voice was on the intercom, announcing, “Dinner is ready, Master Wayne. And,
Master Dick, let Mr. Kent know that he is invited.”

Gritting his teeth, Bruce scowled at the intercom speaker on the wall. First, Dick was insubordinate. And now, Alfred was undermining him. The alien should be thrown out of the manor, not invited to dinner!

“Uh, let’s go eat. Come on, Mr. Kent.” Dick hurried to the elevator while Clark followed.

SxB

At the dinner table, Clark sat down next to Dick. Then Bruce approached the table and sat across from them. Clark shifted nervously in his chair while the vigilante glared at him. Soon, Alfred arrived and set down plates of food in front of them.

For a couple minutes, they all ate in silence, the air heavy with tension.

Then Dick glanced at him and asked, “So, what do you do when you aren’t being Superman?”

“Oh, I’m a journalist.” Clark smiled, thankful for the distraction. “I work for the Daily Planet.”

“Don’t you miss a lot of work?” The boy asked.

“Yes, unfortunately. My boss is probably angry with me right now.” Clark did not look forward to returning to work. He had disappeared for three days without any warning. Perry was going to be pissed.

“That sucks.” Dick claimed, “Bruce is lucky. He doesn’t have a real job. He just sleeps through business meetings and lets Lucius Fox run everything.”

“Dick,” Bruce growled.

The kid shrugged. “What? It’s true.”

Now, Bruce looked even more infuriated. Clark gulped nervously.

Alfred walked past him with a pitcher. “More tea, Mr. Kent?”

“No, thank you,” he muttered.

They sat in silence again until Dick spoke up, “I heard what happened with the Joker. You guys teamed up, right?”

“Yes…” Bruce answered grumpily. “But not by choice.”

“What do you mean?” Dick asked.

Bruce glared at Clark like he expected him to respond.

Clark explained reluctantly, “I, uh, may have told Bruce that I would fly him to Hawaii and leave him there if he didn’t let me help…”

“Oh, my God!” Dick burst out laughing. “That’s hilarious!”

While the boy laughed uncontrollably, Bruce seethed with anger. He glared at Clark as he violently cut his steak apart with a knife. This wasn’t good. The vigilante may try to stab him again. Clark watched anxiously, prepared to flee if necessary.
When Bruce had been asleep, he seemed so cute and cuddly. Now he looked downright murderous. *What did I do wrong?* Clark lamented inwardly. *Why is he so angry at me?!*

Eventually, Bruce stopped scowling at him and glanced out the window. Curious, Clark gazed out the window too, and spotted the Bat Signal illuminating the night sky.

“Let’s go, Robin.” Batman stood and ordered, “Clark, stay here.”

Bruce and Dick rushed out of the room.

*SxB*

For a while, Clark sat alone in the dining room. Then he pattered around the manor, wandering in different rooms. He knew that Batman felt territorial about Gotham. The vigilante wouldn’t want his help. Clark flopped down in a chair by the fireplace, feeling bored. He glanced at a clock hanging on the wall. Bruce and Dick have been gone for almost thirty minutes now. Clark wondered how they were doing.

Shutting his eyes, he focused on his super-hearing until he located Bruce’s heartbeat. The normally steady rhythm was faster than usual. Was Batman in trouble?

Worried, Clark jumped to his feet and hurried out of the room. He headed down the main corridor, trying to remember where the laundry room was supposed to be. After searching through a couple rooms, he found Alfred waiting in a hallway.

“Are you looking for this, Mr. Kent?” Alfred held up the Bat-Comm and the Superman suit on a hanger.

Clark grinned. “Thanks, Alfred.”

He grabbed his suit and the Bat-Comm, then flew away. Zooming down the hall, he quickly changed into his Superman outfit midair and put the Bat-Comm in his pocket. Within seconds, Clark was soaring in the sky above Wayne Manor, heading towards the inner city of Gotham.

Listening Bruce’s heartbeat, Superman flew to an abandoned factory on the edge of town. Outside the old brick building, Robin was fighting a couple of mafia gangsters, using a bo staff. When the gangsters charged at him, the boy expertly evaded their attacks with a back flip. Then he whacked them both with his bo staff, knocking them on the ground.

The two goons scurried away while Robin glanced up, noticing Superman in the sky.

The boy happily flailed his arms, “Hey, did you see that?! Pretty cool, right?!”

Superman chuckled. “Yes. Good job, Robin.”

The kid beamed proudly while Clark listened for Bruce’s heartbeat again. The Dark Knight was inside the factory, and his heart was racing fast. Busting through a window, Superman quickly flew into the abandoned building.

In the back of the factory, he found Batman fighting Killer Croc. The scaly green villain had Bruce cornered against a wall. Batman was struggling to push Killer Croc away while the monster snapped his jaws, trying to bite off Bruce’s face with his razor sharp teeth.

With lightning fast speed, Superman yanked Killer Croc off of Bruce and hurled the villain through a brick wall. A second later, Killer Croc emerged from the rumble and charged at Batman again.
This time Superman punched the scaly villain, hard.

Crashing into the ground. Killer Croc laid at the bottom of a large hole. He was still breathing, but no longer conscious.

Clark walked toward Bruce, offering him a hand. “Are you okay?”

Batman slapped his hand away and hissed angrily, “I was about to taze him.”

“What?” He gave Bruce a confused look.

“Before you got in the way, I was about to taze him!” Batman yelled, revealing the taser in his grasp. “You don’t think I can fight my own battles?!”

“No! I was just trying to help.”

“I didn’t ask for your help!” Batman shouted furiously.

On the other side of the factory, Robin ran towards them, calling out, “Whoa, just calm down-”

Batman ignored the boy, still berating Clark, “Do I look like Lois Lane to you?! Do you think I need you to swoop in and save me?!”

Superman nervously backed away. “N-No, not all. I just thought-”

“You didn’t think! And you didn’t listen to me!” Batman stormed toward him, shouting. “I told you to stay behind! But you just do whatever you damn well please!”

Robin grabbed onto Bruce’s arm, holding him back. “Come on, Superman just wanted to help-”

Batman snarled hatefully, “If you’re well enough to interfere with my fight, you’re well enough to fly home. Get out of my city. Now.”

His heart sank as Clark realized that it didn’t matter what he said or did. Bruce was determined to hate him, and Clark had been stupid to think he could ever change that.

“I…I’m sorry,” he muttered sadly before disappearing in a flash.

SxB

On the drive back to Wayne Manor, Robin refused to talk to Batman. His ward was obviously angry at him. After they entered the Batcave, Bruce parked the Batmobile, then Dick immediately jumped out, stomping away.

With a sigh, Bruce stepped out of the Batmobile and took off his cowl. “Dick, listen-”

“No! You listen for once.” Dick turned around, complaining, “Superman didn’t deserve to be treated like that. You completely overreacted! I think you hurt his feelings. What if he never comes back?”

“He shouldn’t come back. This isn’t his city.”

“Argh!” Dick yelled in frustration, “You’re such a jerk!”

The boy ran into the elevator and left, leaving Bruce alone in the Batcave.
For a couple hours, Bruce worked on the Batcomputer, gathering more Intel on various criminals. Killer Croc was in jail now, and the Joker was still in Arkham Asylum, recovering from his last beating with a crowbar. He shouldn’t be able to walk for at least four more months.

Around 2 AM, Bruce left the Batcave and walked up to his room. He peeled off the Kevlar and took a shower, then he laid on his bed, but couldn’t fall asleep. Heading downstairs, Bruce poured himself a glass of scotch and sat down by the fireplace.

He sat alone in the dark until Alfred approached him and sat in the chair next to him.

“Master Dick is quite upset. He told me what happened,” Alfred said sternly. “You should be nicer to your friends, Master Wayne.”

“That alien isn’t my friend,” he grumbled.

“Well, Mr. Kent treats you like one. Perhaps it’s time you do the same.” Alfred stood and walked away.

Alone again, Bruce sighed and held his face in his hands. He kept replaying what had happened in his head, over and over. He couldn’t stop thinking about that sad expression on Clark’s face. It made Bruce feel oddly guilty. Like he just kicked a puppy…

Maybe Dick was right.

*Did I overreact?*
Apologies

Chapter Summary

After a call for help, apologies are made.

At the Daily Planet, Clark sat his desk, typing on his computer. It seemed like he had been working nonstop all week. When he had returned to work on Monday, Perry was understandably pissed off at him. His boss had threatened to fire him multiple times. Clark was on very thin ice. He couldn’t afford to disappear for days again. He’d lose his job.

Now Clark was trying to prove his worth and appease Perry by doing a lot of extra work around the office. He had stayed late at the office every day this week. After Clark finished his newest article, he leaned back in his chair with a sigh.

He still had the Bat-Comm in his pocket. Just in case Bruce called him. Although, Clark highly doubted that would happen. Bruce hated him…

Clark sighed again.

“Okay, I’ve had enough!” Lois banged her hand on her desk, then turned in her chair to face Clark. “What’s wrong, Smallville?”

“What?” He stared at her in confusion.

“That’s the hundredth time you’ve sighed today,” she complained. “What happened that’s so awful? Did someone break up with you?”

Clark sadly looked away and sighed.

Her eyes widened in surprise. “Oh, my God. Clark, I’m sorry. I didn’t even know you were dating someone.”

He shrugged. “We weren’t dating. I was just…hoping we could be friends.”

“Who is she?” Lois asked.

“Uh…” Clark answered hesitantly, “You don’t know her. She’s from Gotham.”

“Oh. Yeah, long distance relationships are hard. What’s her name?”

“Bruc-Brucinda.”

Lois raised an eyebrow. “Brucinda?”

“Yeah. Brucinda.”

“What a unique name.”

“Yes, it’s…Polish,” he lied lamely.
“Uh-huh.” She didn’t sound convinced.

Clark turned back to face his computer, sulking. “It doesn’t matter anyway. She’ll never speak to me again.”

“Aw, I’m sorry, Smallville,” Lois said with sympathy. “You know I’m here if you need me.”

Smiling slightly, he replied. “I’m fine, Lois. Thanks.”

Around 8:30 PM, Clark returned home, late from work. He entered his small apartment and kicked off his shoes. Heading to the kitchen, he grabbed a frozen dinner from the fridge and heated it in the microwave. Then he sat alone on the couch and ate in silence, feeling depressed.

He remembered all the great food Alfred had cooked, and the way Dick always had something to say. Then he recalled Bruce’s furious snarling face and sighed. Clark had been so stupid to think they could ever be friends…

After taking a shower, Clark laid down on his bed and stared up at the ceiling. Unable to sleep, he tossed and turned several times. Every 30 minutes or so, he’d glance at the clock next to his bed. Now, it was 12:47 AM and he still couldn’t fall asleep.

He shut his eyes, trying to sleep once again.

“Clark?” He suddenly heard Bruce’s voice. “Clark, can you hear me?”

Jumping out of bed, Clark rushed to the Bat-Comm. The communicator was inside a pair of pants, lying on the floor.

Clark quickly grabbed the Bat-Comm, answering the call. “Yes, Bruce, I’m here. What’s wrong?”

“Can you recognize Dick’s heartbeat?” he asked unexpectedly.

“What? Is he missing?”

“Can you sense him or not?!” Bruce demanded with panic in his voice.

Clark had never heard the vigilante sound like this before. Batman sounded so desperate and…scared.

“Yes, I can find him,” Clark promised. “It’s okay. I’ll come over right now.”

In a flash, he changed into his Superman suit and zoomed out the window. Hurting across the sky, he flew to Gotham as fast as possible, then headed to Wayne Manor. Using a secret outside entrance, Superman flew into the Batcave and landed in front of Batman.

Bruce was dressed in his full Batman garb, complete with cape and cowl.

“Well, can you hear Dick? Where is he?” Bruce asked curtly.

Focusing on his super-hearing, Clark could hear Dick’s heartbeat on the other side of Gotham. The boy’s heart was beating at a slow steady rate as if he was asleep.

“I can hear him. I think he might be unconscious.”
“Lead me to him.” Bruce hurried toward the Batmobile.

“It’ll be faster if we fly,” Clark reminded him.

“You’re right. Fine,” Batman surprisingly agreed, then marched toward Superman.

He froze in shock when Bruce stood behind him and wrapped his arms around Clark’s neck.

“Go. Now,” Batman ordered.

“Uh, okay.” Superman hovered in the air, then zoomed out of the Batcave.

As they flew through the sky, Clark could feel Bruce’s breath on the back of his neck. It was like Batman was hugging him from behind, with both arms wrapped snuggly around Superman’s neck. Smiling to himself, Clark enjoyed the closeness. Bruce’s body was laying on top of his. It was a comfortable warm weight.

Soon, they reached a run-down water filtration plant. Superman could hear Robin’s heartbeat inside the building. He landed on the ground, then Bruce released him and stepped to the side. Ripping the metal door off its hinges, Superman entered the water filtration plant with Batman following him.

Inside the filthy building, there were several mafia gangsters and a short fat long-nosed man wearing a top hat. Clark instantly recognized the fat man from the news.

The Penguin shouted at the goons, “It’s Batman! Shoot him!”

All the gangsters quickly turned and aimed their guns at Batman, firing their weapons. In a flash, Superman immediately stood in front of Batman, deflecting all the bullets. Then Superman zoomed around the room and destroyed all the guns with his bare hands.

Instead of joining the fight, Batman rushed past all the criminals. He headed towards Robin who was laying in a corner, restrained with fishing wire. Bruce kneeled beside the unconscious boy and untied him. The Dark Knight was obviously more concerned about his ward than the battle. Did he expect Superman to handle it?

The Penguin aimed his umbrella at Batman, about to shoot him. Reacting quickly, Superman snapped the umbrella in half and threw the nasty villain across the room. Scanning the area, Clark found a large spool of fishing wire on the floor. He grabbed the wire and zoomed around all the criminals, tying them up. Once they were all restrained, Superman flew away while holding the wire, dangling all the criminals in the air.

With lightning fast speed, Superman zoomed through the sky towards the nearest Gotham police station. He dropped all the restrained criminals on the curb, then he flew back to the Penguin’s hideout.

By the water filtration plant, he found Batman standing outside, carrying Robin in his arms. The boy was still out cold. Bruce looked worried.

“I’ll fly you both back home,” Clark offered.

Bruce nodded silently.

SxB
At Wayne Manor, Dick was laying in his bed now, unconscious. He still hasn’t woke up. Bruce sat in a chair, beside the bed, watching his ward sleep. It was all his fault. Bruce blamed himself. Earlier in the day, he had an argument with Dick, then the boy left and went on patrol alone. Normally, Robin would have a tracking device in his clothes, but he removed it, so Batman couldn’t find him.

For hours, Batman had searched for the boy. Eventually, he had returned to the Batcave and waited for Robin to come home. But he didn’t come. Then Bruce had realized that something must’ve have happened. It terrified him. For a while, he had thought Dick might be dead. Bruce had been so desperate that he actually called Superman.

Batman glanced over his shoulder. The Kryptonian stood behind him, next to the doorway. Clark had a concerned expression on his face. Obviously, he was worried about Dick too…

Bruce guiltily looked away. His argument with Robin had been about Superman again. Dick wanted Bruce to apologize to the hero, but he had been too stubborn to admit he was wrong. Then Dick had run away and… This was all Bruce’s fault.

Soon, Alfred entered the room and sat down in a chair, on the opposite side of Dick’s bed.

Bruce stared at the boy’s sleeping face. He knew what he needed to do, but it wouldn’t be easy for him.

He stood. “Alfred, let me know when he wakes up.”

“Of course, Master Wayne,” Alfred replied.

Bruce walked toward the exit and glanced at Superman. “Clark, we need to talk.”

“Okay.” Superman looked nervous as he followed Batman out of the room.

They walked downstairs, then used a secret elevator to travel down to the Batcave. Exiting the elevator, Bruce walked across the dimly-lit cave while Clark followed him. Eventually, Bruce stopped and turned around to face the Kryptonian.

Superman was staring at him as if he expected Batman to yell at him.

With a sigh, Bruce removed his cowl and set it down on a counter. He knew what needed to be said, but he was struggling with the words.

Swallowing his pride, he finally gazed up at Superman and said, “Clark… Thank you.”

Clark looked surprised as he smiled. “Y-You’re welcome.” Then he hurriedly explained, “Listen, I’m sorry for butting into your fight the other day. I only interfered because I thought you were in real danger, I swear.”

“I know. I overreacted.”

“What?” Superman gaped at him in confusion.

Bruce sighed. “I know I’ve been hard on you, Clark. When I first heard about you, you just seemed too…”


“Perfect.”
His blue eyes widened in shock.

“It made me suspicious,” Bruce admitted. “In my experience, usually when something seems too good to be true, it is. And, I…misjudged you. I’m sorry.”

For a second, Clark stared at him in awe, then he suddenly wrapped his arms around Bruce.

Clark held him close, squeezing him tightly. “Thank you, Bruce. You have no idea how happy this makes me.”

Bruce bristled in the embrace, but he remained silent and he didn’t push Clark away. They stayed in this position for far too long. Was Clark ever going to let go? Bruce could feel his face heating with a blush.

Then Clark finally released him, grinning happily. “Does this mean we’re friends now?”

“It means…you’re allowed in Gotham.”

“Good enough for me!” He stepped toward Bruce, trying to hug him again.

Bruce shoved him away. “No more hugging.”

“But, *Bruce*,” Clark whined.
Coffee Breaks

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark hang out and drink coffee

It was a cold night in Gotham. Superman soared across the sky, lured by the sound of a familiar heartbeat. For the past few weeks, Clark had visited Gotham several times. He came almost every day. Whenever he had any free time at all, he would race over here to see his favorite vigilante.

Soon, he found Batman in an alleyway, fighting a group of thugs. Clark knew how much Bruce hated being interrupted during battle. So, Superman sat down on a nearby rooftop and waited patiently.

In the alley, Batman threw a batarang at one assailant while kicking another man in the face. Obviously, the thugs were no match for Gotham’s Dark Knight. Clark smirked, enjoying the show.

But then, a white van suddenly drove into the alley. More thugs jumped out of the van, joining the fight. Batman was extremely outnumbered now. However, that didn’t seem to matter. Batman was easily beating the shit out of them.

Still sitting on the rooftop, Superman called out, “Hey, are you almost done?!”

“Almost!” Batman yelled as he flung someone into a wall.

The fight continued for a couple more minutes until there was only one thug left. Panicking, the last gangster pulled out a gun and shot at Batman.

In a flash, Superman zoomed into the alley and stood in front of Bruce. The bullet bounced off Clark’s chest, falling to the ground. Superman glared at the gangster as he fearfully backed away.

“I can take it from here.” Batman headed past Superman, storming towards the gunman.

The thug froze in terror. Then Batman punched him, and the thug collapsed on the ground, out cold.

Down the street, the sound of police sirens approached, becoming louder and louder. Batman quickly pulled out his grappling gun and propelled himself to the top of a nearby roof. Then he ran and leapt onto an adjacent rooftop. Superman simply flew next to him.

SxB

After his nightly patrol, Bruce drove back to the Batcave and parked the Batmobile. When he stepped out of the vehicle, Clark was already standing in front of him, holding two cups of coffee. The Kryptonian must’ve flown back to the cave and waited for him.

Smiling happily, Clark handed him a cup of coffee. “Hey, Alfred made coffee. It’s really good.”

Bruce took the cup and walked toward the Batcomputer. He sat down in front of the computer and took a sip of coffee. “Yeah, it’s good.”
“Yep, told you so.” Clark suddenly appeared next to Bruce, and sat down beside him. “So, what are you working on tonight?”

Typing on his computer, Batman answered, “I’m gathering Intel on Falcone.”

“The mob boss?”

“Yes, I was fighting his men earlier. I thought I had finally driven Falcone out of town, but now he’s back.” Batman typed quickly, enabling his hacking software as he searched through Falcone’s private email.

“What are you doing now?”

“Hacking into Falcone’s bank account.”

Superman gasped. “You can do that? Isn’t that illegal?”

Bruce gave him a blank look. Seriously?

Clark laughed embarrassedly. “Heh, right. Forget I said anything.”

After Bruce located all of Falcone’s passwords, he hacked into the mobster’s bank account. Falcone had a million dollars in the account, undoubtedly from dealing drugs and weapons. Batman needed to send a message to Falcone, and let the bastard know that he could never profit off crime in Gotham.

With a smirk, Batman transferred all the money out of the account and donated it to a children’s hospital.

“Aw, Bruce, that’s so sweet,” Clark praised him. “Now that money can do some good. You’re really awesome with computers. I only know how to use Microsoft Word. I could never hack into anything.”

Bruce stared at him silently, then asked, “Do you want to learn how?”

“Really? You’ll teach me?” Clark grinned. “That would be great!”

For about an hour, Batman explained the basics of hacking, using examples and demonstrating different techniques. He even hacked into the LexCorp server, showing Clark every step to get behind Luthor’s security. He figured that knowledge would be most useful for Superman.

In midsentence, Bruce glanced over at Clark, then he paused. Superman was leaning over on the desk, fast asleep. Did he even learn anything? With a yawn, Batman leaned back in his chair and turned off the hacking software. He was feeling fairly tired as well.

Bruce shut his eyes, resting for a moment.

SxB

In the morning, Alfred used a secret elevator to enter the Batcave. Then he walked across the dimly-lit cave, searching for Bruce.

“Master Wayne?” Alfred headed towards the Batcomputer and froze when he spotted two bodies.

In front of the computer, Bruce and Clark were sitting next to each other, leaning over the desk. They were both asleep, only inches away from each other and still wearing their suits and capes.
Alfred smiled to himself as he watched the two young men. He had no idea how Bruce could still deny being Clark’s friend. They were having sleep-overs now.

Alfred chuckled quietly. It warmed his heart to see Bruce with a real friend.

Even though he was grown, Alfred always worried about him. Whenever Alfred looked at Bruce, he could still see the scared lonely boy, standing by his parents’ graves and facing the world alone. Struggling against injustice alone… Bruce needed a companion, a friend. Of course, he had Alfred and Dick, but he needed something else. Someone like Clark. Someone who could stand by his side as an equal and protect him.

Alfred approached the sleeping duo and tapped Clark on the shoulder. “Mr. Kent, it’s morning.”

Clark awoke, looking dazed. “W-What?”

He sat up and looked around until he noticed Bruce. Then Clark couldn’t tear his eyes away as he gazed at Bruce’s sleeping face.

“It’s nearly seven. Do you have anywhere you need to be?” Alfred asked.

“Oh, yeah.” Clark nodded. “I have work in an hour.”

“You are welcome to eat breakfast here, Mr. Kent.”

“Thanks, Alfred.” He smiled.

Still leaning over the desk, Bruce finally stirred and opened his eyes.

“Good morning, Master Wayne,” Alfred greeted him. “It’s time for breakfast. Mr. Kent will be accompanying you.”

“Okay.” Bruce yawned as he sat up. Then he pulled off his cowl and rubbed at his eyes, revealing a mess of disheveled dark hair.

Clark smirked. “You aren’t a morning person, are you?”

“Shut up, Clark.” Bruce stood and stumbled on his feet.

In a flash, Clark shot up and grabbed Bruce’s arm, steadying him. “Whoa, easy there. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. It’s just early,” he grumbled.

“Do you need me to carry you?” Clark teased him.

“No.” Bruce huffily stomped away.

“Are you sure? It’s no trouble at all. I don’t mind.”

“I said no, Clark.”

Clark snickered as he followed Bruce.

SxB

A couple nights later, Superman flew back to Gotham in the early evening. It was only 7:30 PM,
and Batman wasn’t on patrol yet. Clark zoomed across the sky to Wayne Manor, then flew into the Batcave, using the outside entrance. Inside the cave, he could hear Bruce and Dick talking to each other.

“Come on, let me go on patrol with you,” Robin whined.

“No,” Batman answered gruffly.

“Are you still mad at me? I said sorry like a hundred times! I promise I will never take off the tracking device again or go patrolling alone.”

“You could have died, Dick.”

“I know, and I’m sorry. You can’t ground me forever.” Robin sighed in frustration. “Can you at least spar with me? I want to train.”

“I’m busy.”

“Oh, come on, please,” Dick begged dramatically.

Walking across the dimly lit cave, Clark could see them as he approached. Bruce was sitting in front of the Batcompter while Dick stood next to him, still whining. They were both were dressed for patrolling, in their suits and capes.

Eventually, Dick noticed Clark and waved excitedly. “Hey, Superman!”

“Hey,” he replied happily.

Bruce glanced over his shoulder. “Good timing. You can spar with Clark.”

“What?!” Dick gaped at him in shock.

“Uh…” Clark hesitated. “I don’t know if that’s a good idea, Bruce.”

“Yeah,” Robin agreed. “Sparring with you is already really hard, but sparring with Superman… Are you kidding me? There’s no way I could win.”

“Dick, one day, you’re going to face enemies who are stronger and faster than you. Are you going to forfeit without even trying?” Batman scolded the boy.

Robin gazed at Superman thoughtfully. “Well…I guess if I can use kryptonite-”

“Whoa, hey, no kryptonite,” Clark complained.

With a smirk, Bruce said, “Hit Clark one time and we’ll say you won.”

“Just one time?” Dick asked.

“Yes. Do you think you can handle that?”

His ward nodded, looking determined. “Yeah, I can do it.”

“Good. Now let me work.” Facing the computer again, Batman started typing.

SxB

For almost an hour, Robin chased Superman all around the Batcave. Whenever Dick tried to attack
him, Clark would zoom out of the way. Sometimes Clark would even hide in corners of the cave, forcing the Boy Wonder to search for him. A few times Dick came close to touching Superman right before he’d disappear in a flash. It was obviously frustrating the kid, but he never gave up.

Meanwhile Bruce was still sitting in front of the Batcomputer, working on something. Every now and then, he’d glance over his shoulder and watch Robin run back and forth, chasing Superman. Then Batman would smirk and continue working.

Now, Robin was using his bo staff, trying to hit Superman. Dick leapt through the air, swinging his staff. Clark easily caught the bo staff and flung it aside. Still holding onto the staff, Robin flew through the air and crashed into a wall.

Clark gasped and rushed over to the kid, feeling guilty. “Oh, no! I’m sorry. Are you okay?”

Dick was laying on the floor, groaning. Worried, Clark kneeled next to him.

Suddenly, the boy sat up and bopped Superman on the forehead.

Clark blinked in surprise.

Then Dick happily jumped up, celebrating. “Yes! I won!”

_He tricked me…_ Clark felt slightly annoyed during Dick’s victory dance.

“Good work, Robin.” Batman smirked again.

_SxB_

Around midnight, Dick had gone to bed. Bruce and Clark were alone in the Batcave now. They sat together, drinking coffee. So far, it was a quiet night in Gotham. The Bat signal hadn’t been used once. Normally, Bruce would be patrolling anyway, searching for something to do. But he knew if something important happened, Commissioner Gordon would let him know. Superman would probably let him know too if he heard anything.

Relaxing in his chair, Bruce decided that he’d go on patrol later, after Clark left. He sipped his coffee, enjoying the rare moment of peace.

Without warning, Superman jumped out of his chair. “I have to go.”

In a flash, the hero disappeared. Bruce stared at the empty chair for a moment, frowning. _What the hell?_ Did something happen? Was Gotham in trouble?

Batman stood and rushed toward the Batmobile. Before he could sit down in the vehicle, Clark suddenly appeared in the Batcave again. He was back in his chair, drinking coffee. Bruce slammed the car door and walked toward Superman.

“What happened?”

“An apartment building was on fire in Metropolis. Some people were trapped inside,” Clark explained.

“Oh.” Bruce sat down next to him. “You could hear it?”

“Yeah. I always know what’s going on in Metropolis.”

“Do you listen to other cities?”
“Sometimes Smallville…and Gotham,” he admitted.

“How far away can you hear? What’s the limit?” Bruce asked.

“If I wanted, I could hear everything on the planet. But I choose not to.”

“How?”

For a moment, Clark was silent with a solemn expression on his face. “Because it’s too loud…and horrible. I have to tune it out or else I’d go insane. There’s just so much screaming. Thousands, millions of people, all screaming at once.”

Clark sighed, looking distraught. “Every second of every day, there is always someone crying for help, and it’s impossible to save everyone. If I became Superman full-time and did nothing else, maybe I could save them all… But then I’d have to give up being Clark Kent. And I don’t think I’d be myself anymore.”

Bruce felt a surge of concern. That somber expression didn’t belong on Clark’s face. It was wrong… He’s meant to be smiling.

“You help plenty of people,” Bruce reminded him. “No one expects Superman to solve all of the world’s problems.”

“Some people do…” Clark muttered sadly.

“Well, they’re idiots,” he snapped. “Just live your life. You have nothing to feel guilty about.”

Clark stared at him in surprise, then smiled. “Thanks, Bruce.”

That’s better. Bruce nodded and drank more coffee, relieved that the smile was back.
Chapter Summary

Bruce gets the flu.

Chapter Notes

I've been sick all week, and I'm currently taking antibiotics. Bleh. Anyway, that inspired me to write this chapter. Lol (I have to return to work tomorrow, so the updates will come a bit slower.)

When Bruce woke up in the morning, he felt horrible. His throat was sore, his whole body ached, and he felt feverish. He knew exactly what was wrong. It was the flu…

About a week ago, Dick had come home from school, sick with the flu. All of the kids at his school were passing it onto each other. Damn, germy children. For a week, Dick had mostly stayed in his room, and Bruce had tried to avoid the sickly boy, so he wouldn’t catch the illness.

Obviously, that hadn’t worked. Bruce still caught the flu. Wonderful… And it was a Saturday. Something always happened on Saturday night in Gotham. How was Batman supposed to go on patrol tonight?

Rolling on his side, Bruce stayed in bed for a couple more hours. He needed to rest and get over this sickness as soon as possible.

Eventually, Alfred entered the bedroom and found him. Then the butler left and returned with a thermometer and some medicine. After Bruce stuck the thermometer in his mouth, Alfred took out the device and read the temperature.

“You have a 101 degree fever, Master Wayne. I highly recommend staying in bed. It seems you caught the flu.”

“Yes, I know,” Bruce groaned.

Standing in the doorway, Dick watched guiltily. “Hey, Bruce. I’m sorry I got you sick.”

Bruce scowled at the boy while Alfred said, “It’s quite alright, Master Dick. These things happen, and this is hardly the first time Master Wayne has fallen ill. Over the years, I can recall numerous occasions.”

Alfred handed Bruce a glass of water and a couple pills. “This medicine should reduce the fever, Master Wayne. And, remember to drink plenty of fluids.”

He nodded silently then swallowed the pills.

SxB
Around noon, Clark sat alone in his apartment. He was so bored. It was a Saturday, so he didn’t have work, and everything was calm in Metropolis at the moment. There were no major disasters or evil supervillains today. He wondered what Bruce was up to. The nocturnal vigilante should be awake by now.

Deciding to visit his friend, Clark quickly changed into Superman suit and flew out the window. He zoomed across the sky towards Gotham, listening to Bruce’s heartbeat. The normally steady rhythm sounded a little off today.

At Wayne Manor, Clark landed on the balcony next to Bruce’s bedroom. The curtains were drawn, but he could hear Bruce inside the room. Clark knocked on the balcony door and waited.

In a couple minutes, Bruce finally opened the door and glared at him. The vigilante looked pale and he had a sheen of sweat on his forehead.

He grumbled with a hoarse voice, “What do you want?”

Worried, Clark rushed into the room. “Bruce, what’s wrong? You don’t look so good.”

“I’m sick. It’s the flu. Go home.” Bruce staggered back to his bed and flopped down on the mattress, laying on his side.

“Oh, no.” Clark sat in a chair next to the bed. “I’m sorry you aren’t feeling well. How long have you been sick?”

“Just today,” he croaked. “Go home, Clark. I’m contagious.”

“I can’t get the flu.”

“Oh… Right, alien biology. Lucky you.”

“I can stay and take care of you,” Clark offered.

“That’s not necessary. I have Alfred.”

“But Alfred can get sick, and I can’t. You don’t want Alfred to get sick, do you?”

“Of course, I don’t want Alfred to get sick,” he huffed in frustration.

“Then it’s settled. I’m going to stay and nurse you back to health.”

“Oh, God…” Bruce groaned as he turned away, acting melodramatic. “Why is this happening to me?”

Clark giggled. “Very funny, Bruce. You’ll see. I’ll make a great nurse.”

In response, Bruce groaned again and hid underneath his blanket.

All day long, Clark sat in the chair next to Bruce’s bed with only a few short breaks. After he had decided to stay, he had flown back to Metropolis to pack some belongings. Now Clark had a suitcase on floor next to his chair, and he was wearing civilian clothes. He was prepared to stay at Wayne Manor all weekend if necessary.

A couple hours ago, Clark had spoken to Alfred and the butler agreed to pass on his duties. Now
Clark was officially in charge of taking care of Bruce until he was healthy again. Alfred seemed happy with the development.

Bruce didn’t seem too thrilled though. The vigilante was in a very grumpy mood today, but Clark didn’t let that deter him. He was determined to stay by Bruce’s side.

While Bruce laid in bed, Clark wandered around the room and found a TV remote on a dresser.

“Hey, do you want to watch some TV?” he suggested.

Bruce made a noncommittal grunt.

Taking that as a yes, Clark sat down once again and turned on the large flat screen TV, hanging on the wall. For a few minutes, Clark flipped through the hundreds of channels. Then Bruce reached over and snatched the remote from him.

Bruce changed the channel to a local news station. There were two reporters discussing Gotham’s crime rate and how many people have been murdered this past year. Then they started talking about the Joker. Clenching his fists, Batman angrily watched the television.

The news was obviously upsetting him, so Clark stole the remote and changed the channel.

“Let’s watch something happier.” He searched through several channels until he found a romantic comedy called ‘Must Love Dogs’. “This looks cute. Let’s watch this.”

Bruce grimaced. “Do we have to?”

“Oh, come on. Maybe you’ll like it.”

An hour later, Clark was engrossed in the silly movie, watching happily and laughing. Meanwhile Bruce was scowling at the TV. He clearly hated the film, though Clark couldn’t understand why. The movie was so sweet. It was a love story with cute fluffy dogs in it.

By the end of the movie, Bruce was asleep again.

SxB

When Bruce opened his eyes, the bedroom was dark and the chair beside his bed was empty. He breathed a sigh of relief. Clark had finally left. It was ridiculous how much that man was fawning over him. Bruce didn’t need all the attention. He wasn’t an invalid or some little kid. He just has the flu. Why did Clark have to make such a fuss? It was embarrassing.

Sitting up, Bruce turned on a light switch. He was actually feeling a bit better already. His fever was gone, and he wasn’t sweating anymore. But his throat was still sore and he felt worn-out. It would take a few days for him to fully recover.

He glanced out the window and saw the Bat Signal illuminating the night sky. Commissioner Gordon was asking for help. Gotham needed Batman. Bruce jumped out of bed, then felt a wave of dizziness. He leaned against the wall before he could fall over. Shit…

Bruce knew he was too sick for this, but Gotham needed him. He could soldier through it. Batman had fought enemies under worse conditions.

Once the dizziness subsided, Bruce left the bedroom and headed down the stairs towards the study. He was about to open a secret passage to the Batcave when he heard Clark’s voice.
“Bruce, where are you going?”

He turned around to face Clark. The Kryptonian was standing in the doorway, watching him with crossed arms.

“Gotham needs me,” he rasped.

“Oh, no, not tonight.” Clark approached him and grabbed his arm. “I’ll take care of it. Just go back to bed.”

Bruce glared at him. “The Bat Signal is up. I have a responsibility to-”

“I’ll take care of it. You need to rest.” He lightly tugged on Bruce’s arm. “Come on, let’s get you back in bed.”

When Bruce refused to move, he sighed. “Look, I understand that Gotham is yours, but you’re too sick to be Batman right now. Let me handle everything until you’re feeling better. I’ll keep your city safe, I promise.”

For a while, Bruce silently gazed down at the floor until he muttered, “Fine.”

Clark smiled, looking relieved. “Good. Now, come on. Go back to bed.” He tugged on Bruce’s arm again. “Don’t make me carry you.”

Bruce bristled at the threat and stomped away.

After heading upstairs, he entered his room and sat down on the bed. When he gazed out the window, he could see Superman flying in the sky towards the inner city of Gotham. It was probably for the best. He hated to admit it, but Clark had been right.

Soon, Alfred walked into his room, carrying a tray of food.

“I brought your dinner, Master Wayne.” He set the tray on the nightstand. “How are you feeling?”

“The fever’s gone.” Bruce grabbed a bowl of soup off the tray and started eating. The warm broth felt good on his throat.

“Mr. Kent has been very helpful today,” Alfred said with a smile.

“Too helpful,” Bruce grumbled.

“In any case, I hope you’ll thank him, Master Wayne, considering I raised you to have proper manners,” the butler nagged before walking away.

SxB

Flying all around Gotham, Superman stopped 27 robberies, 14 rapes, and 11 murders. At the end of night, the Gotham Jails were full. Batman should be proud. Smiling to himself, Superman flew back to Wayne Manor and landed on the balcony. He entered Bruce’s bedroom and found the vigilante asleep in bed.

Clark changed out of his Superman suit, then sat down in the chair by Bruce’s bed. Gotham had been crazy tonight. He was so glad that Batman didn’t go on patrol. Luckily, he had caught Bruce trying to sneak away. Clark had been eating dinner with Dick when he heard Bruce’s heartbeat in the study. He knew the stubborn man had been on the way to the Batcave.
Clark shook his head with a sigh. It was really frustrating. How stubborn Bruce could be. At least Clark managed to talk some sense into him. Batman needed his rest.

Stirring slightly, Bruce opened his eyes and gazed at Clark. “You’re back. Gotham-”

“Gotham’s nice and safe,” Clark reassured him.

Bruce nodded, then he was silent for a moment. “Clark…”

“Yeah?”

“Thank you.”

Clark blinked in surprise, then insisted, “Oh, it was no trouble, really. If I was too sick to protect Metropolis, I’m sure you would do the same for me.”

“I would,” Bruce agreed.

Clark grinned happily.

“You’ve done more than enough for me, Clark. Go home. You don’t have to stay here all night.”

“Nope.” He crossed his arms. “I’m not going anywhere until you’re feeling better.”

Bruce sighed, looking weary. “At least get some sleep.”

“Oh, I’m fine. I can stay up. I don’t have work tomorrow.”

Unexpectedly, Bruce scooted to the farthest side of the bed, creating a large open space. “Go to sleep. There’s enough room for you.”

Clark gaped at him in shock. He felt like his brain just short-circuited. Is Bruce really suggesting…?

Clark looked at the open space on the bed. There was plenty of room. It was a huge mattress.

He swallowed nervously. “O-Okay.”

Climbing into bed, Clark laid down next to Bruce. There was a fairly sizable gap between them, but Clark’s heart was still pounding. He was actually in bed with Bruce Wayne. Never in his wildest dreams had he ever thought this would happen.

He was wide awake now, too aware of the other man’s presence. On the other hand, Bruce fell asleep quickly. Clark watched the steady rise and fall of his chest as he slept peacefully. Minutes slowly ticked by. Then Bruce moved in his sleep, rolling to the center of the bed, brushing up against Clark.

His breath caught in his throat as he stared at Bruce. Their faces were so close now, and Bruce was leaning against him. Clark felt a sudden urge to hold the other man, but feared Bruce’s reaction. It was worth the risk though. Moving carefully, Clark wrapped an arm around Bruce.

When Bruce stirred slightly, Clark tensed. Oh, no. Did I wake him?

Luckily, Bruce didn’t open his eyes. Instead he snuggled closer to Clark and continued to sleep soundly.

Oh, my God. He’s cuddling me! Clark smiled, deliriously happy.
Warm… Bruce felt very warm and his pillow was breathing. Confused, he opened his eyes, then he realized his position. His head was resting on Clark’s chest, and Clark had his arms wrapped around him. *What the hell? How did this happen?!*

He panicked and tried to sit up, but then Clark squeezed him tighter to his chest. Bruce could feel his heart racing as he blushed. Now he was stuck in the embrace. Clark was holding him too tightly. He couldn’t slip out of the Kryptonian’s grasp. To free himself, he would have to wake Clark up…

Bruce felt his face flush ever more. If Clark woke up, that would lead to a very awkward conversation. Bruce never should’ve offered to share the bed. Now what the hell was he going to do?

In the darkness, Bruce laid still for a while, enveloped in Clark’s arms. Eventually, his heart rate slowed as he calmed down. Actually, this position wasn’t so bad. Clark was warmer than any blanket, and he was a comfortable pillow.

It’s been such a long time since anyone held Bruce in their sleep. Nothing like this has happened since…*Rachel.* Bruce remembered her smiling face and felt the ache of losing her. He hasn’t had a serious relationship since she died…since the Joker killed her.

Nestling closer to Clark, Bruce shut his eyes and fell asleep against the reassuring warmth.

---

When the warmth disappeared, Bruce awoke. Clark was sitting in the chair next to the bed again, watching him closely. Bruce sat up and rubbed at his eyes. He was still sick, but he felt a lot better than he did yesterday.

Clark was fidgeting anxiously. “H-Hey, Bruce. Did you sleep well?”

“Yeah.”

“Oh. That’s good.” He smiled guiltily.

Bruce looked at him, trying to understand his odd behavior. Why was Clark acting so weird? Then Bruce realized the problem. Clark thought Bruce didn’t know what happened last night. He thought Bruce slept through all the…cuddling.

Blushing slightly, Bruce looked away. He considered confronting Clark about last night, but decided against it. A conversation like that could *change* things… And, it was easier to pretend it never happened.

It was better to say nothing.

---

A week later, Bruce was alone in the Batcave, sitting in front of the computer. He had completely recovered from the flu. It was a relief to be healthy again. He had patrolled Gotham tonight as usual, and Robin had tagged along. Now Dick was asleep inside the manor while Bruce continued to work.

Bruce typed on the Batcomputer, hacking into the LexCorp server. Then he leaned back in his
chair, drinking coffee. Clark hadn’t visited in a few days. Lately, the Kryptonian had been behaving strangely. He would stand too close and stare at Bruce for long periods of time without saying anything. Sometimes, he would even hide and try to watch Bruce in secret.

It was concerning. But Bruce didn’t know what to do, besides ignoring it.

With a sigh, Bruce resumed his work. He searched through LexCorp’s recent business transactions, then noticed something troubling. Luthor was acquiring more kryptonite. *Much* more kryptonite. The bald bastard must be planning to attack Superman again.

Batman needed to take a trip to Metropolis.
Trust

Chapter Summary

Batman steals kryptonite, then there’s a misunderstanding.

After stopping a bank robbery, Superman flew back to the Daily Planet. He entered the building through a bathroom window and quickly changed into his business suit and tie. Then he put on his glasses and hurried through the main office, back to his desk.

Clark sat down with a sigh. He had so much work to do, and he was behind. His duties as Superman had kept him busy all morning. Typing on his computer, Clark worked on his newest article for a while. But he was having trouble focusing. Lately, he hasn’t been sleeping well...

He hadn’t seen Bruce in four days. Clark wanted to visit the vigilante, but he couldn’t stop thinking about that night…when he had slept with Bruce in his arms. He wanted to hold Bruce again. If he could, Clark would sleep next to the other man every night.

Leaning back in his chair, Clark sulked for a few minutes. When they shared the same bed, Bruce had been unconscious the whole time. He didn’t even know what happened. Clark could tell him, but…that probably wouldn’t end well. Bruce may yell at him, or get angry.

The last time he was in Gotham, Clark had considered talking to Bruce about it. But he didn’t know what to say. Clark had watched Bruce from afar for almost an hour, trying to gather enough nerve to say something. Then Bruce had noticed him watching. He probably thought Clark was a stalker now.

Feeling discouraged, Clark hid his face in hands. Why was this so hard? Why couldn’t he just tell Bruce how he felt?

Suddenly, he noticed the sound of familiar heartbeat. **Bruce?!**

Clark jumped out of his chair and looked across the office. The elevator doors opened, then Bruce stepped out along with Perry and a few corporate executives. As soon as Bruce Wayne entered the room, a large crowd formed around him. It seemed like everyone wanted a chance to talk to him.

**What is he doing here?** Clark watched as the popular billionaire greeted several people.

Lois stood next to Clark and smirked. “Look, it’s your crush.”

Blushing, Clark quickly shushed her, “Be quiet.”

“Why don’t you say hello to him?” Lois waved while calling out, “Hey, Bruce!”

“What are you doing?!” He grabbed her hand, lowering it.

Across the room, Bruce turned his head and looked past the crowd. When he saw Clark, he smiled.

“Oh, my.” Lois snickered. “He recognizes you. You must’ve made an impression.”
“Lois, please stop.” Clark felt his face flush even more.

“Am I embarrassing you?” She chuckled as she grabbed his tie, straightening it. “Your suit is a mess. Come on, you want to look good for Brucinda.”

“You know…” He gaped at her in surprise.

She raised an eyebrow. “Really, Smallville? You thought I wouldn’t figure that out?”

Soon, Bruce walked across the office, approaching them. The billionaire smiled charmingly.

“Clark Kent, long time no see. And you must be Lois Lane.”

“That’s me.” Lois was still struggling with Clark’s tie. “Smallville, how did you manage to do this? Your tie is ruined.”

“Let me see.” Bruce possessively snatched the tie from her.

He undid the tie, then straightened Clark’s collar. Swallowing hard, Clark watched as the other man fixed his tie. Clark was in shock. He couldn’t believe Bruce was doing this…in front of everyone. Glancing to the side, he noticed a crowd of people staring at them.

Once Bruce finished fixing the tie, he grinned brightly. “There. That’s better.”

Clark’s eyes widened as he gazed at Bruce, mesmerized.

Standing next to them, Perry cleared his throat impatiently. “Uh… Mr. Wayne, our meeting.”

“Right.” Bruce leaned closer to Clark, smoothing out his tie. “See you later, Clark.”

Then Bruce sauntered away, following Perry back to the elevator. They left, traveling to another floor of the building.

Meanwhile Clark stood in place, unable to move. Did that really just happen? He felt stunned. Lois looked surprised too.

“Wow. Brucinda is such a flirt.”

“Lois, stop,” he complained.

SxDB

A few hours later, Clark was still at his desk, sitting in front of his computer. He had a deadline today and a pile of work he needed to finish. But he couldn’t concentrate. He kept listening to Bruce’s heartbeat. The famous billionaire had left the Daily Planet, but he was still close by. Still in Metropolis…

Why was Bruce in Metropolis? He hardly ever leaves Gotham. What was going on?

Clark wouldn’t be able to focus until he found out. Leaving his desk, he headed across the office towards the bathroom. Then he locked the door, changed into his Superman suit, and zoomed out the window. Hovering high above Metropolis, he listened to Bruce’s heartbeat and flew to the city’s most expensive high-rise hotel.

Superman landed on the balcony and entered Bruce’s hotel room. There was a suitcase on the bed and steam coming from the bathroom.
“Bruce?” Clark walked across the fancy room. “Bruce?”

“What?” Bruce stepped out of the bathroom, with only a towel around his waist. He had obviously been taking a shower. His hair was still wet and drops of water were sliding down his bare perfectly-toned chest.

Clark froze, gawking at him. *Oh, my god.* That chest, and those legs… His gaze wandered all over Bruce’s body, enjoying the view. If only that towel wasn’t in the way…

Bruce smirked. “My eyes are up here, Clark.”

“Uh…” Clark blushed as he quickly looked away. Dammit! Get ahold of yourself! He felt so embarrassed. Now Bruce thought he was a pervert.

Clenching his fists, Clark demanded, “What are you doing in Metropolis?”

“You come to Gotham all the time. Aren’t I allowed here?”

“Of course, you are. But why were you at the Daily Planet? What’s going on?”

With a sigh, Bruce walked to a nearby sofa and sat down. “It’s just business, Clark. I own a company, remember.”

“So, there’s nothing wrong?”

“No.”

“Okay, good.” Clark relaxed a bit, feeling relieved. “How long are you going to be in town?”

“I’ll probably leave early tomorrow morning.”

Without thinking, Clark suggested, “We should do something tonight.”

“Like what?”

“Well, I can show you some places in Metropolis. Maybe take you to dinner?” Clark tensed, realizing how that sounded. It sounded like a date.

*Oh, God. Did I just ask him out?! What is wrong with me*?! Clark looked away, panicking.

“Okay,” Bruce replied.

He blinked in surprise, unsure if he heard correctly. “Okay?”

“Yeah…”

They stared at each other for a moment.

“G-Great, I’ll pick you up at eight.”

“Alright.” Bruce shrugged.

Rushing out the room, Clark flew away, grinning madly to himself.

SxB

At the docks, Batman hid on the roof of a warehouse. Luthor’s shipment of kryptonite was
supposed to arrive in Metropolis an hour ago. Now it was almost 7 PM. The boat was late. Bruce 
watched the harbor impatiently.

This was the real reason why he had come to Metropolis. He needed to steal this shipment of 
kryptonite from LexCorp. When he had spoken to Clark earlier, he lied because he didn’t want 
Superman to tag along. If Clark knew what was happening, he would insist on helping. And, it was 
too dangerous to bring the Kryptonian here. The kryptonite would weaken him.

It was better for Batman to handle this alone.

Eventually, a large ship came across the harbor toward the docks. After the ship stopped, dozens 
on LexCorp employees started unloading crates from the ship. Then a limo parked nearby and Lex 
Luthor stepped out, surrounded by bodyguards. Luthor walked to one of the crates and ordered an 
employee to open it.

After the crate was opened, Luthor reached inside and grabbed a piece of green kryptonite, 
inspecting his merchandise. Then Luthor ordered his goons to load up the crates.

For next ten minutes Luthor’s men loaded the crates of kryptonite into the back of a large armored 
truck. Meanwhile Batman watched from the shadows, waiting for the right moment to strike.

Once the crates were loaded, Luthor’s men shut the back door to the armored truck. An employee 
headed towards the driver’s seat of the truck while Luthor walked back to his limo. They were all 
preparing to leave. It was time.

Batman reached inside his utility belt, then hurled a smoke bomb to the ground. A large cloud of 
smoke erupted from the device, reducing visibility. All of the LexCorp employees were caught by 
surprise as they coughed and stumbled through the smoke. During all the confusion, Batman 
jumped down from the warehouse roof, then punched and kicked his way toward the armored 
truck.

He stole the keys and rushed into the driver’s seat of the armored truck. Then he quickly drove 
away, taking all the crates of kryptonite with him. As the smoke cleared, Luthor’s men began 
shooting at the armored truck with machine guns.

Batman stomped of the gas pedal, fleeing the docks as quickly as possible. While driving, he broke 
into the truck’s console and ripped out the vehicle’s GPS. Then he glanced out the window and 
spotted a few black SUVs, chasing him. Luthor’s men were right behind him, still shooting.

Reaching inside his utility belt again, he grabbed a few flash grenades and threw them out the 
window. The grenades exploded, causing a blinding flash of light. One of the SUVs flipped onto its 
side, and the other two SUVs crashed into it.

Batman continued to drive away, escaping the scene.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Clark was still sitting at his desk. He had finished his newest article. Now he 
was just proof-reading it, before emailing it off to Perry. While he worked, Lois grabbed a nearby 
chair and sat down by his desk.

“So, you and Brucinda…”

“Stop calling him that.” Clark stayed focused on his computer. He needed to finish his work, so he 
wouldn’t be late for his date with Bruce.
Lois snickered. “You know he was totally jealous when I was fixing your tie.”

Clark finally glanced up at her. “Really? You think so?”

“Oh, yeah. You have a real chance with him.”

Smiling happily, Clark focused on his computer again.

“Honestly, I was kind of surprised at first, but I get it now,” Lois admitted.

“What do you mean?”

“I thought you only liked women, but I can understand why you’d make an exception for Bruce Wayne. He’s prettier than most girls.”

Clark burst out laughing. “Don’t say that in front of him.”

She smirked. “Why? Does Brucinda have a temper?”

“Oh, you have no idea.”

“Well, don’t let him run all over you, Smallville. Show him who’s boss.”

“Oh…” That’s not happening. Clark glanced at the clock. It was almost 8 PM. He needed to hurry. Clark quickly emailed his work to Perry, then stood. “I have to go.”

“What’s the rush? Do you have a date with Brucinda?” She teased.

“Maybe,” Clark confessed while grabbing his coat.

“Good for you. Go get him, tiger!”

“Thanks, Lois.”

With a smile, Clark rushed out of the office, heading to the elevator. He descended to the first floor and hurried down the street to the fancy hotel. In the hotel lobby, Clark listened for Bruce’s heartbeat, then froze.

Bruce wasn’t in the hotel. He was on the outskirts of Metropolis.

Confused, Clark walked into the hotel lobby’s restroom and swiftly changed into his Superman suit. Then he zoomed out of the hotel and soared across the sky, heading towards the familiar heartbeat.

Superman flew to the edge of town, then he spotted the Batplane, parked in a dark field. Bruce was dressed in his full Batman garb and he was carrying crates from an armored truck and loading them into the Batplane.

As Superman approached, he felt weaker and weaker. He landed on the ground next to the plane and used his x-ray vision to look inside the crates. Kryptonite… All of the crates were full of kryptonite. Is this why Bruce came to Metropolis? For kryptonite?

Clark’s heart dropped as he felt a stab of betrayal. Bruce was still collecting kryptonite. After everything that’s happened, he still didn’t trust Superman…

Clark felt a surge of anger. It hurt. Knowing that Bruce thought so little of him. Still didn’t trust
him…

Clenching his fists, Superman snapped, “Do you really need that much kryptonite?”

After loading the last crate, Batman turned around, noticing the Kryptonian. “Clark, I can explain-”

“After everything we’ve been through, you still see me as a threat?!” Superman yelled, “You don’t trust me!”

“Clark-”

“It’s not fair! You’re so paranoid! Why can’t you trust me?!”

“Clark-”

“No matter what I do, it’s not good enough! To you, I’m just the big scary alien! You hate the fact I’m stronger than you! It terrifies you!”

“Clark, SHUT UP!”

Superman finally shut his mouth, listening.

Batman growled, “I only have this kryptonite because I stole it from Lex Luthor.”

Clark gaped at him in shock. “You—You mean… You stole it to protect me?”

Instead of answering, Batman angrily stormed away. “I’m going back to Gotham. Don’t follow me.”

While Bruce flew away in the Batplane, Superman stayed on the ground, watching him leave.

Clark felt like such an asshole.

SxB

In the Batcave, Bruce carried all the crates of kryptonite to a lead-encased storage room. Then he sat down in front of the Batcomputer and yanked off his cowl. With a sigh of frustration, he hid his face in hands. He was angry, but he understood why Clark had reacted the way he did. Those crates had a lot of kryptonite…

Damn it. Bruce went to Metropolis to help Clark, not to pick a fight with him. That idiot.

When Bruce felt a gust of wind, he knew Superman had flown into the cave. Bruce turned around in his chair.

“Hey, Bruce…” Clark stood in front of him, looking guilty. “I’m sorry for yelling at you. I was being stupid.”

“Incredibly stupid.”

“Yeah. I’m sorry.” Clark bowed his head, gazing down at the floor. He looked pitiful.

Bruce sighed, forgiving him. “It’s fine, Clark. It’s understandable that a plane full of kryptonite would bother you.”

“It’s doesn’t bother me.”
Bruce gave him a skeptical look.

“I mean it did, but then I thought about it,” Clark explained. “And if anyone has to have kryptonite, I’d want it to be you. I really hope that you don’t ever need to use it, but I’m actually glad you have kryptonite. Just in case I turn evil, or lose my mind, or something weird happens…”

Clark seriously met his gaze. “I want you to be able to protect yourself. I want you to feel safe.”

Irritated, Bruce shot out of his chair and marched toward Superman. When he reached for his utility belt, Clark flinched. Then Bruce suddenly took off the belt and flung it across the room. Now he was completely weaponless. Defenseless. Vulnerable to any attacks.

Bruce crossed his arms as he declared, “I don’t need kryptonite to feel safe, Clark.”

*I trust you, idiot.*

Clark’s eyes widened in surprise, then he smiled. He looked so relieved. His light-blue eyes were glistening like he was about to cry.

“Bruce… Thank you.”
The Joker could walk again… Batman had heard the news from Commissioner Gordon. Apparently, the Joker was mostly healed and walking around inside his cell at Arkham. Now it was only a matter of time until he escaped from the asylum.

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, watching the security footage of every exit from Arkham Asylum. He knew the Joker would escape soon. Batman needed to be prepared. He had been monitoring the asylum for days now, waiting for the Joker to make his move.

Months ago, the Joker had threatened Superman. And, unfortunately, the psychotic clown was a man of his word. Once he escapes, Clark would be his first target…

Bruce anxiously watched the live security footage, unable to look away. He has barely slept in days. He couldn’t relax, knowing that the Joker was up and moving again. No matter what, he had to protect Superman from the Joker. Batman had seen the Joker ruin good men before. He couldn’t let that happen to Clark. Not his Clark.

“Hey, Bruce.” Dick entered the cave and walked towards him. “Can you do me a favor?”

“I suppose.” Bruce glanced at the clock on the computer screen, then ordered, “It’s late. Go to bed. You have school tomorrow.”

The boy sighed. “I know. Just hear me out first.”

“Fine. What do you want?”

“Well, you know that my birthday is this Sunday, right? I was wondering if we could have a party. Nothing big. I just want to hang out with you, Alfred and Superman.”

Bruce shrugged. “Alright. Invite him then.”

“Yeah, about that...” Dick asked hesitantly, “Can you invite Superman for me?”

“Why can’t you do it?”

“Well, you see him more often. Also, he can’t say no to you.”

Bruce blinked in surprise, then looked away embarrassedly. “That’s not true.”
Dick laughed. “Are you kidding me? He’s crazy about you. I bet he’d swallow kryptonite if you told him to.”

Feeling uncomfortable, Bruce sat in silence.

Dick sighed again and pleaded, “Can you please just invite him for me? Please?”

“Fine,” he grumbled.

SxB

On patrol, Batman sat on the roof of a building, using binoculars to watch the outside of Arkham Asylum. Two more days have passed, and the Joker still hadn’t tried to escape. What was the clown waiting for? He must be planning something.

Frustrated, Batman set the binoculars down. His eyes stung from lack of sleep. He needed to rest, but he was too worried. Every time he tried to sleep, he’d think about the Joker’s threats. He has to protect Superman from this psychotic evil bastard.

Bruce suddenly remembered his promise to Dick. Oh, right. The party.

He needed to invite Clark, but he hadn’t seen the hero in person for a while. Reaching into his utility belt, Bruce took out the Bat-Comm and called Superman.

“Clark, can you hear me?”

“Bruce!” Clark’s frantic voice came from the communicator. “Is something wrong?! Are you okay?! Is Dick okay?!”

Bruce sighed. “Everything’s fine, Clark. Calm down.”

“Oh, good!” Clark paused for a moment. “So… What’s going on? Do you want me to come over? Why are you at Arkham Asylum?”

He’s listening to my heartbeat again. Bruce realized as he answered, “I’m on patrol, and no, you don’t have to come here. I just need to ask you something.”

“Oh, okay.” He giggled. “But isn’t the Bat-Comm for emergencies?”

“It is…” Bruce admitted. Suddenly, he felt foolish for calling.

“Hey, I’m just messing with you!” Clark said cheerfully, “I’m so glad you called. I missed you.”

Bruce blushed underneath his cowl. “…Alright.”

“So what did you need to ask?”

“Dick’s birthday is on Sunday, and we’re having a small party for him. He insisted on inviting you. Don’t feel obligated to come. If you’re busy-”

“I’d love to come!” Clark squealed excitedly.

Bruce was taken aback for a moment. “Okay.”

“What time should I come over?” he asked.
“Around noon is fine.”

“Cool! I’ll be there.”

“Thanks.” Bruce smiled. “It’ll make Dick happy.”

“…It makes you happy too, right?”

He furrowed his brow in confusion. “What?”

“Seeing me again.”

Bruce swallowed nervously, then noticed the Bat Signal in the night sky.

“I have to go.” He hung up.

---

On Friday, Clark was at the Daily Planet, sitting at his desk as usual. He couldn’t wait for Sunday. He’d finally see Bruce again! Clark had planned to visit his favorite vigilante earlier in the week, but he had been so busy as Superman. He had saved Metropolis from exploding at least five times this week. Thankfully, things have finally calmed down.

Clark smiled happily to himself. He was so glad Dick invited him to his birthday party. Now Clark could hang out with Bruce all day long on Sunday. He just needed to bring a present for the kid. Clark had no idea what to buy.

“Hey, Lois.” He glanced over at her desk.

“What is it, Smallville?” Lois was still typing on her computer.

“What present would you buy for a thirteen-year-old boy?”

She shrugged. “I dunno. A football or some video games. Why are you asking?”

“I’m going to a birthday party.”

“For who?”

“…Dick Grayson,” he said reluctantly.

Lois looked confused. “Why does that name sound familiar?” Her eyes widened as she gasped. “That’s Bruce Wayne’s kid! You’re going to his kid’s party?”

“Yeah.”

“Wow.” She smirked. “Way to go, Smallville. Brucinda must be serious about you.”

“You…You think so?” Clark felt hopeful.

“Yeah, duh.” Lois laughed. “Oh, you’re so lucky. I wish I had a billionaire boyfriend.”

“We aren’t actually dating,” he admitted.

“Well, you better ask him out then.”

“I just want to be friends with him.”
Lois raised an eyebrow, giving Clark a skeptical look. “Hmph. Yeah, right.”

SxB

When Bruce opened his eyes, he could see a single ray of light coming through the drawn curtains. The bedroom was dark, but it was obviously sunny outside. How long had he slept? His lack of sleep must’ve finally caught up with him. Last night, after patrol, he had conked out early.

He sat up in bed and glanced at the clock on his nightstand. It was almost 3 PM. *Shit.* Today was Dick’s birthday, and he had slept through most of it. Bruce quickly jumped out of bed and got dressed. Then he headed downstairs.

As he walked, he could hear voices coming from the study. Bruce headed towards the study and glanced inside the room. Dick was sitting on the couch, laughing. Meanwhile Clark was wearing Batman’s cowl and cape.

Clark dramatically swooshed the cape aside and spoke with deep gravelly voice, “I am vengeance. I am the night. I am *Batman.*”

Dick clapped happily. “Oh, my God! That sounds just like him.”

Annoyed, Bruce marched into the room. “Clark, what the hell are you doing?”

“N-Nothing!” Clark quickly yanked off the cowl.

Dick snickered. “Bruce, he does a really good impression of you.”

“I do not sound like that.” Bruce snatched the cowl and cape away while Clark smiled guiltily.

Then Alfred walked into the study, announcing, “Since you are now awake, Master Wayne, we can begin Master Dick’s birthday party. I have prepared a meal for you all.”

Dick bounced off the couch and walked towards the butler. “You’re eating with us too, Alfred.”

“Of course, Master Dick.” Alfred deliberately glanced at Bruce. “I must admit I am famished after the long wait.”

Bruce sighed. “Sorry, Alfred. You could have woken me up.”

“You needed the sleep, Master Wayne. You have been running yourself ragged.” The butler strolled away, along with Dick.


“Nothing’s wrong, Clark.” Bruce walked out of room with the Kryptonian following him.

“I can help you patrol Gotham if you aren’t getting enough sleep,” Clark offered.

“I don’t need any help. It’s fine.”

“But-”

“I said it’s fine,” Bruce cut him off.

SxB
In the dining room, they all ate together. Alfred’s cooking was delicious as usual. Clark had missed that too. He ate happily while talking to Dick and Alfred. Bruce was mostly silent. Even though he had slept in, he still looked exhausted. It worried Clark. He knew something important must be happening in Gotham that’s keeping Batman up all night.

Clark wished Bruce would talk to him about it, so he could help… But Bruce was very stubborn.

After they ate some birthday cake, Dick started opening up his presents. The boy had multiple gifts from Bruce. The billionaire had splurged on his ward. Bruce had bought him various video games, a new smart phone, an iPad, a new wardrobe for school, and a new bo staff. Robin was excited about the bo staff. He liked all the expensive electronics too.

Now Clark was feeling inadequate about his own gift. He wasn’t rich like Bruce. His gift was really cheap… He had followed Lois’s advice and bought a football.

When Dick opened Clark’s present, he looked a little surprised. Then the boy held up the football and smiled politely. “Thanks, Mr. Kent.”

“You’re welcome,” he said sheepishly. “You know you can call me Clark.”

“Thanks, Clark.” Dick grinned. “Do you want to play? We can all throw the ball around.”

Bruce huffed, “You don’t even like football.”

“Don’t be rude,” Dick hissed at Bruce, then smiled at Clark again.

Soon, Clark was outside with Dick and Bruce. Wayne Manor was surrounded by large fields and gardens. There was plenty of open space to play in. For someone who doesn’t like football, Dick was pretty good at it. He would run and do flips in the air before catching the ball.

Meanwhile Bruce would throw the ball as far as he could, trying to make it more difficult for his ward to catch. It seemed like Batman and Robin were using the game as a training exercise. Clark was perfectly content to watch, but then Dick threw the ball to him.

Without thinking, Clark grabbed the football, then he heard a loud pop. He had broken the ball.

“Oh, no! I’m so sorry! I’ll buy you another one!” Clark cradled the destroyed football, feeling horrible. First, he bought a cheap gift, then he broke it.

At least Dick didn’t look upset. The kid was laughing hysterically while Bruce had an amused expression on his face.

SxB

Around 9:30 PM, Dick had gone to bed. Now Clark was alone with Bruce in the Batcave. Bruce was wearing all of his Batman attire, except for the cowl. He sat in front of the Batcomputer, working on something while drinking coffee. His cowl was on top of the counter, next to the keyboard.

Clark wandered around the Batcave, looking at all the strange machines and gadgets. Every time he came down here, he always he found something new. After putting around for a while, he sat down next to Bruce.

“I had a lot of fun today.” Clark smiled.
Batman nodded and continued working. “Dick appreciated you coming. You made him happy.”

“What about you?”

Bruce gave him puzzled look.

“Are you happy I came?” Clark asked hopefully.

“I’m happy that Dick is happy.”

Clark sighed, feeling disappointed.

Bruce crossed his arms. “What do you want me to say, Clark?”

“Do you even like me, or are you just tolerating me?” he asked seriously.

Bruce’s eyes widened in surprise. Then he stood and started walking away. “I don’t understand where this is coming from.”

Using his super speed, Clark suddenly appeared in front of Batman. “Are we friends, Bruce?”

“I don’t have friends.”

“Oh, bullshit,” he complained. “Alfred is your friend. Dick is your friend. Commissioner Gordon is your friend.”

“What’s your point?”

“I want us to be friends,” Clark admitted sadly.

Bruce hesitated and looked away, muttering, “...Okay.”

“What?” Clark gaped at him.

“I said okay. We’re...friends.”

“You mean it?”

“Yes.” He looked embarrassed.

Grinning excitedly, Clark pulled Batman into a tight hug and lifted him off the floor, spinning him around. “This is great!”

“Put me down!” Bruce yelled.

“Sorry.” He set Bruce back on floor, but didn’t let go, still hugging him. “I’m just so happy.”

Clark held him close, nuzzling his hair. Bruce didn’t push him away, but his heart was pounding fast. His heart hardly ever raced like this.

“You can let go now,” he muttered.

Clark finally released him and stepped back. Then he saw Bruce’s face and froze in shock. Bruce’s face was so red. The normally stoic Batman was blushing. He looked so cute! Clark gawked at him, unable to look away.

“What’re you looking at?” Bruce stomped away, flustered.
He grabbed his cowl and pulled it on, hiding his face. Then he rushed toward the Batmobile. “I’m going on patrol.”

Clark watched Batman drive away, still in shock. Bruce had looked so cute just now. It was driving Clark crazy. He wanted to see that expression on Bruce’s face again and again. He wanted to grab ahold of Bruce, pin him against the wall, rip off that Kevlar and-

His pants tightened as he felt himself becoming erect. He wanted Bruce bad…

Clark had been wrong. Being friends wasn’t what he wanted from Bruce. It wasn’t enough.

He wanted more. Wanted everything. Wanted it so badly.

This wasn’t a simple little crush anymore. Clark couldn’t ignore how he truly felt.

He wanted Bruce to be his.

SxB

After a long day at LexCorp, Lex Luthor returned home to his penthouse in downtown Metropolis. He stepped out his limo, then entered the high-rise luxury apartment building. Three bodyguards and his personal assistant, Mercy Graves, followed him inside. They took the elevator up to the highest floor and strolled to the front door of Luthor’s penthouse.

He unlocked the door and walked inside. Then he froze.

There was blood all over his tile floor. Dead bodies were littered all across the room. The corpses were all LexCorp employees. Luthor recognized all of them even though their faces were mutilated with carved smiles.

Luthor’s bodyguards drew their weapons. Then they were suddenly gunned down with a barrage of bullets.

The three men fell over, dead. Only Lex Luthor and Mercy Graves were left standing. Then the sound of laughter echoed throughout the penthouse, and Luthor knew exactly who he was dealing with.

The Joker stepped out of the shadows with a machine gun slung over his shoulder. He grinned madly. “Heya, Lexy. Old buddy, old pal.”

Luthor glared at the freak. “What do you want, Joker?”

“I need you to hook me up with some, uh Supes repellant.” He cackled.

“You mean kryptonite?”

“Yeah, the green stuff. I want some.”

Luthor sighed. “My last kryptonite shipment was stolen by Batman. There’s hardly any left.”

“Oooh. I don’t like that answer, Lexy.” The Joker furiously stormed towards him, wielding a large knife. “You’re a real kill-joy. Anyone ever tell ya that? Maybe I should give you a smile.”

“I can give you kryptonite dust,” Luthor offered.

“Dust?”
“When Superman breathes it in, it weakens him.”

The Joker grinned excitedly. “Now we’re talkin’. Give it to me.”

“Mercy, fetch the kryptonite dust,” Luthor ordered.

“Yes, sir.” His assistant walked away into another room.

After she left, Luthor stared at the freak again and asked, “Are you planning to kill Superman?”

“Oh, no. Nothing boring like that.” The Joker laughed nastily.
One Bad Day

Chapter Summary

“All it takes is one bad day to reduce the sanest man alive to lunacy. That’s how far the world is from where I am. Just one bad day.” –The Joker

Chapter Notes

This is when the angst starts... Poor Clark. Poor Bruce, too.

The Joker was missing. Batman had been searching for the psychotic mass-murderer all night with no success. Apparently, those idiots at Arkham Asylum didn’t even notice that the Joker was gone until tonight. Before the Joker escaped, he had left an imposter in his cell. The clown’s imposter had fooled the guards for days until Commissioner Gordon had visited the asylum again.

It didn’t make any sense. Bruce had done everything possible to monitor the asylum’s exits. He should have seen the Joker escape. Along with the Joker, a psychiatrist named Harleen Quinzel had also disappeared from the asylum. The doctor must’ve helped the Joker escape undetected.

The sun was rising now. Bruce drove back to the Batcave and parked the Batmobile. Then he stormed out of the vehicle, slamming the car door. He was furious with himself. Batman was supposed to stop this from happening. Now the fucking Joker was on the loose somewhere.

Batman had an idea of where the clown probably was. If he wasn’t in Gotham, then he must be in Metropolis. Damn it. Clark was in danger.

Bruce rushed into the Batplane. He needed to fly to Metropolis as soon as possible.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Clark sat at his desk, staring at his computer screen. He hadn’t touched the mouse or keyboard in twenty minutes. Lost in thought, Clark considered how to tell Bruce about his feelings. After work today, he would go home and call Bruce on the Bat-Comm. Then he would ask Bruce out on a date again, take him somewhere nice, and finally confess his feelings for the other man.

That was the plan. Clark was sticking to it.

He hoped Bruce would accept his feelings, but he knew there was a possibility of rejection. Clark swallowed nervously. It was worth the risk though. He couldn’t ignore how he felt anymore. He liked Bruce. A lot. He wanted to date Bruce. To hold him and kiss him and-

Clark crossed his legs, stopping that train of thought before he became too excited. He was still in the office after all. He really needed to focus on his job for now. Tonight he’d call Bruce and set up the date.
He typed on his computer for a while, then glanced over at Lois’s desk. Now she was almost an hour late this morning. Did she sleep in? Sometimes she’d forget to set her alarm.

For a moment, Clark listened for her heartbeat. Lois was still in Metropolis, but she wasn’t in her apartment. And her heart was beating fast...

“Help! Superman, help!” He heard Lois call out frantically.

Jumping out of his chair, Clark rushed across the office, into the restroom. He locked the door and quickly changed into his Superman suit, then flew out the window.

Superman zoomed across the sky, heading straight to Lois. She was standing on the roof of a skyscraper with the Joker. The insane clown had a tight grip on her arm and he was holding a knife to her throat.

When Superman landed on the roof, the Joker grinned at him. “Hey there, Supes. Fancy seeing you here.” He cackled and pressed the blade closer to Lois’s throat. “What a nice girl you have. As pretty as Rachel. Well, before she got crispy. Hehehe. Batsy would understand. It’s an inside joke.”

Superman glared at the madman. “Joker, let her go.”

“You want her, Supes? Come and get her!” The Joker leapt backwards off the building, taking Lois with him.

As they fell, Lois screamed in terror while the Joker laughed hysterically. Superman immediately flew after them, catching them both in his arms. The Joker smiled wickedly and dropped his knife as he reached into his pocket. Then he pulled out a handful of kryptonite dust and blew it in Clark’s face.

Caught by surprise, Superman coughed as he landed on the ground and hunched over in pain. The kryptonite burned his throat and his eyes stung. He kept coughing, trying to get out any kryptonite that he inhaled. Meanwhile the Joker dashed away.

Lois stood beside him, patting him on the back. “Superman, are you okay?”

Clark blinked a few times. His vision was blurry. He glanced at Lois, then watched in horror as her face morphed and changed. Suddenly, Lois wasn’t Lois anymore. His worst enemy, Zod, the evil Kryptonian general was standing right next to him.

“How did this happen? Zod was supposed to be in the phantom zone. Now he’s back?! Superman has to stop him! He has to save Earth!

SxB

Batman sat in the cockpit, piloting the Batplane. Soon, he reached Metropolis, flying above the large city. When he noticed a flash of blue, he glanced down at the streets below. Superman was hovering in the air, chasing after Lois Lane. She was running down the street, along with a crowd of people.

What the hell?! Bruce flew the Batplane down, heading towards the Kryptonian.

Superman’s eyes glowed red. Rays of heat vision shot out of his eyes, hitting the ground near Lois. He was about to kill her!
Reacting quickly, Bruce flew the Batplane straight into Superman, hitting him. The plane shoved Superman away as Batman grabbed a parachute and jumped out the emergency hatch. Falling to the ground, Bruce yanked open the parachute and eased his descent. He landed next to Lois on the street.

When he glanced up, he could see Superman throwing the Batplane aside. The plane plummeted to the ground, crashing into an intersection a few blocks away, exploding into flames. Nearby civilians abandoned their vehicles, fleeing the street. Screams of terror permeated the air.

“Come on.” Batman snatched Lois’s arm and ran into an alleyway.

“What the hell is going on?!” Lois demanded, “Why is Superman trying to kill me?!”

They hid in the alley behind a dumpster while Superman zoomed across the sky, shouting, “Zod!”

Batman crouched low to the ground. “I think he’s hallucinating. It’s probably fear toxin. Get down.”

Lois crouched beside him, trembling in fear. Bruce didn’t blame her for being scared. This situation was a nightmare. The Joker must be responsible for this. Somehow, he made Superman susceptible to fear toxin. Batman had the antidote, but he needed to get close enough to Clark to give it.

“Zod, I know you’re here!” Superman shouted as he landed on the street. “How did you get out of the phantom zone?!” He looked at the fleeing crowd of people. “You even brought an army with you.”

His eyes glowed red, preparing to zap innocent people.

“No!” Batman jumped out of the alley, reaching into his utility belt. He pulled out a kryptonite grenade and hurled it at Superman.

The grenade hit Clark and exploded, sending out shards of kryptonite. The green shrapnel slashed and burned the Kryptonian’s skin as Clark screamed in pain.

Pulling out another grenade, Batman approached the injured alien, ready to attack again.

Then Lois ran out of the alley and grabbed Bruce’s arm. “Stop! You’re hurting him!”

“I have no choice!” He angrily ripped his arm away. “Do you think I want to do this?! If I don’t stop him, he’ll destroy the entire city!”

Stumbling on his feet, Superman groaned in pain. His suit was slashed in several places and he was bleeding from multiple lacerations. He glanced at Bruce and Lois. His face was smeared with blood.

“Zod…” Clark growled at Lois. “Get away from Bruce! Don’t you dare hurt him!”

“W-What? I’m not Zod!” She backed away fearfully.

Clenching his fists, Superman zoomed towards Lois, about to punch her.

Before he could hit Lois, Bruce pulled her out of the way and threw another kryptonite grenade. Clark screamed in agony as the green shrapnel cut him. Meanwhile Batman took Lois and escaped. He flung her over his shoulder and used his grappling gun to swing away.
They fled to a different street and hid in another alleyway, behind a large truck. Bruce set Lois on the ground and crouched again, hiding. Lois looked completely confused now.

“He-He called you Bruce. Why?” she asked.

“Get down. Hide.” He grabbed her arm and pulled her down, into a crouching position.

She gazed at him with a shocked expression on her face. “You’re Bruce Wayne, aren’t you? And that means…” She gasped. “Clark?”

_Dammit._ Bruce snapped, “You can have this epiphany later. Be quiet.”

Nearby, Superman soared through the sky, searching for them. “Zod, let him go!”

Normally, the Kryptonian would be able to find them easily. But his senses were skewed due to the fear toxin. The hallucinations prevented him from recognizing their heartbeats…

Right now, Clark was a loose cannon. Everyone was in danger.

_SxB_

Standing on a rooftop, the Joker laughed as he watched the city of Metropolis burn. Combining the kryptonite dust with Scarecrow’s fear toxin had been brilliant. And now, Batsy was here too, to enjoy the show. The Joker could see the smoldering remains of the Batplane, laying in an intersection downtown.

“Look at all the pretty lights, Puddin’!” His new companion, Harley Quinn squealed next to him.

“It’s chaos at its finest, my dear.” He grinned.

“You’re so smart, Mr. J!” She smiled happily. “Now Supes can kill the B-man for you!”


“Batman. He’s gonna die-”

The Joker furiously smacked her in the face, knocking Harley Quinn to the ground. “Shut your mouth! No one is allowed to kill my Batsy but me.”

“Y-Yes, Mr. J.” She agreed fearfully.

_SxB_

Batman and Lois were still hiding in the alley while Superman frantically flew around the city, tormented by hallucinations.

“Zod!” Clark screamed as he forcefully landed in the street, creating a large crater. “Come out and fight me!”

He angrily grabbed a parked car and hurled it through the air. The vehicle smashed into the side of a building and exploded. Thankfully, the building appeared to be vacant. Most people have already evacuated from downtown Metropolis. The streets were empty.

But then, the United States army arrived. Soldiers with guns and tanks slowly approached the Kryptonian, inching forward. If they started shooting at Superman, there was no telling what would happen. In his altered state, Clark could kill them all without realizing it.
Bruce watched anxiously. “I have to stop this. He’s going to kill someone.”

“Well, how many of those kryptonite bombs do you have left?” Lois asked.

“None.”

“None?!” She gaped at him.

Batman stood and handed Lois his last piece of kryptonite. He couldn’t leave her unprotected. “Stay hidden, and don’t let go of that.”

Lois took the kryptonite and gave him a worried look. When he started to walk away, she grabbed onto his arm.

“Wait! How are you going to fight him? This is suicide!”

“You’re probably right,” Batman admitted. “But I’m the only one who can stop him.”

He yanked his arm out of her grasp and continued to walk away.

“Bruce,” she called out.

He glanced over his shoulder at her.

“Please be careful,” Lois pleaded with tears in her eyes. “If Clark kills you…it’ll destroy him.”

“That’s a risk I have to take.” Batman fired his grappling gun at a nearby building and propelled himself to the roof.

On the roof, Batman stood on the ledge and pulled a syringe out of his utility belt. He only had one dose of the fear toxin’s antidote. He had one shot at this. He needed to get close enough to Clark and stick him with the syringe. And he’d have to aim carefully. Normally, needles couldn’t penetrate Clark’s skin. But Superman was covered in cuts right now from the two grenades. Bruce just needed to aim for one of the lacerations.

Batman watched the wrecked street below. The United States army was still approaching. But they seemed hesitant to attack. Obviously, they knew what they were dealing with. Superman could kill them all easily.

Before a fight with the army could break out, Batman needed to get Clark’s attention. Bruce recalled the old footage he had watched of Superman’s famous battle with Zod. The Kryptonian general had a special name for Clark.

“Kal-El!” Batman shouted.

Clark immediately glanced up. “Zod!”

With a sonic boom, Superman jumped into the air, zooming towards Bruce.

Batman tightly gripped the syringe in his hand, bracing himself for impact. This was going to hurt. Superman rammed into him, flying him up into the sky. Bruce gasped in pain as he felt a couple ribs break.

As they soared up into the sky, Batman jabbed the syringe needle into a bloody cut on Clark’s arm. He injected the antidote, then dropped the syringe, feeling relieved. Soon, the antidote would take effect and this nightmare would end.
Meanwhile Superman continued to fly them up higher and higher. *He’s taking me into space!* Bruce realized as he panicked. He tried to push Superman away, but the Kryptonian wouldn’t let go of him. Clark was still hallucinating. He thought he was taking Zod away from Earth.

When they reached outer space, Batman didn’t hold his breath. He knew that would rupture his lungs. Having any air in his lungs would kill him instantly. Without a space suit, humans could only survive for a very short amount of time in space. At most, he had 15 seconds. Maybe less.

In outer space, Clark finally released him and Bruce floated away weightlessly. Seconds slowly ticked by as he stared at Superman. Clark’s face could be the last thing he’ll ever see. Strangely, Bruce was okay with that. His last few moments would be with Clark. His friend...

Bruce felt light-headed as everything started to fade out. He blinked and stared at Clark one last time before shutting his eyes.

SxB

Clark had protected Metropolis by taking Zod into outer space. He watched the Kryptonian general, expecting an attack. But an attack never came. Clark blinked a few times as Zod’s appearance began to change. Suddenly, Batman was floating in front of him. Clark stared at him in confusion and listened for his heartbeat.

But he heard nothing. The heart had stopped. *No! Bruce?! What have I done*?!

Panicking, Clark quickly grabbed onto Bruce and flew back down to Earth. He landed on a street in Metropolis, next the smoldering remains of the Batplane. The whole area was wrecked. Clark had done this?

He set Bruce down on the ground and frantically started performing CPR. He didn’t know what else to do. If Bruce hadn’t been dead for long, maybe Clark could still bring him back. Maybe there was still a chance…

His eyes welled up with tears as he pushed down on Bruce’s chest over and over. Then he leaned over and breathed air into the other man’s mouth. After breathing into Bruce, he started performing chest compressions again.

“Please…” Tears streamed down Clark’s face as he begged. “Please, come back to me… *Please!*”

Clark felt a crippling pain in his chest like a hollow void eating him from the inside out. Bruce couldn’t die. He just couldn’t! Clark would never forgive himself. It was all his fault. He had killed Bruce!

He cried as he desperately continued pushing down on Bruce’s chest. He pushed down over and over. He couldn’t stop. He couldn’t lose Bruce. Clark would never recover from this. He wouldn’t be himself anymore. Wouldn’t be *Clark Kent* anymore.

It was that kryptonite dust… The Joker must’ve drugged him with something. That bastard!

Superman felt an indescribable anger. *Rage.* He would kill the Joker for this. Now that Bruce was dead, no one would stop him. Superman would find the Joker and shove his hand through that bastard’s chest. Then he’d kill all the criminals on the face of the planet. He’d kill them all! And it still wouldn’t be enough. This pain would never go away.

Suddenly, Bruce took a breath. His heart was beating again.
Relief washed over Clark as he came back from the brink of madness. What had he been thinking? He wasn’t a murderer. Batman doesn’t want him to be a murderer.

Still crying, Clark pulled Bruce’s unconscious body into his lap and held him close. “Bruce, thank God. I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.”

He couldn’t stop crying.
His whole body ached. When Bruce woke up, he winced in pain as he studied his surroundings. He was back at Wayne Manor, laying in bed. It hurt whenever he breathed. Some of his ribs were broken. He glanced to the side and noticed an IV in his arm. There was a bag of IV fluid hanging next to his bed.

“Master Wayne, how are you feeling?” Alfred stood next to the bed.

“Where-?” Bruce coughed and spoke with a raspy voice, “Where is Clark?”

“Mr. Kent brought you home, then he left.” Alfred explained, “He told me what happened, Master Wayne. Your heart stopped momentarily… Then Mr. Kent performed CPR on you.”

_I must’ve died in space._ That wasn’t surprising. Bruce struggled to sit up as he asked, “How is Metropolis? Were there any casualties?”

“The downtown area suffered heavy damage and some people were injured, but there were no reported casualties, Master Wayne.”

Bruce nodded, feeling relieved. Superman hadn’t killed anyone. “And, Clark… How is he?”

Alfred hesitated for moment. “Mr. Kent is very…upset. When he brought you here, he was crying and apologizing profusely. It seems he blames himself for what happened.”

_That idiot._ “Clark didn’t know what he was doing. He was drugged with fear toxin. The Joker did all of this.” _Because I let him escape…_ Bruce gazed down at his lap, angrily clenching his fists. None of this should have happened. He should’ve prevented it.

Swinging his legs off the bed, Bruce groaned in pain as he stood.

“Master Wayne, you need to rest,” Alfred insisted.

Bruce hunched over and held onto his aching ribcage. “I will, but there’s something I need to do first.”

He staggered out of the room while his butler watched him, obviously concerned. It was painful, but Bruce managed to limp down the stairs. Then he headed to a secret elevator and traveled down to the Batcave.
In the cave, Bruce stumbled over to the Batcomputer and collapsed in the chair. His breaths came out shallow and ragged. He felt weak like he was about to pass out. He latched onto the desk, so he wouldn’t fall out of the chair. Next to the computer, there was an extra Bat-Comm for emergencies.

He grabbed the Bat-Comm and called Superman.

“Clark?” Bruce waited for a response, but the Kryptonian didn’t answer. “Clark, I know you can hear me. What happened isn’t your fault. You were drugged. You were out of your mind.”

He waited a few minutes, staring at the Bat-Comm. There was still no response… Clark must be an emotional wreck right now. Bruce needed to get through to him.

Worried, Bruce tried calling again. “Clark, I…I know you didn’t mean to hurt me. I forgive you. It’s okay. Just answer me.”

He held the Bat-Comm, waiting anxiously. What if Clark did something drastic? Would he harm himself? The hero always wore his heart on his sleeve. Emotionally, he was vulnerable. Could he even handle what happened? Could he cope? Or was it too much? Did the Joker break him?

“Clark,” Bruce called again with a small tight voice. “Please answer.”

His plea was met with silence.

In desperation, Bruce banged the Bat-Comm on the desk. “Dammit, Clark! Answer me!”

SxB

In the Fortress of Solitude, Clark sat alone in the dark. The wind was howling outside, blowing snow everywhere. It was freezing cold in the Arctic, but the temperature didn’t bother Superman. He always came here when he wanted to be alone. And right now, he couldn’t face anyone. Not after what happened… What he did…

Superman had almost destroyed Metropolis. The city he was supposed to protect. And he had hurt Bruce. The man he was supposed to protect… His friend…

Clark hadn’t moved in days, and still wore his filthy Superman suit, covered in dried blood. He had no desire to move. No motivation. He just wanted to hide from the world and rot away in private. His thoughts kept circling back to that moment when the fear toxin had worn off, when he had seen Bruce’s body floating in outer space lifelessly. That image haunted him.

He was so grateful that Bruce was alive, but he also felt guilty. The guilt was suffocating. Clark felt terrible about what happened and ashamed…. So ashamed. When he thought Bruce was gone forever, Clark had been ready to wreck the entire world. He was ready to kill. He wanted to kill. It was terrifying. How close Clark had been to losing himself. On the verge of madness.

He cared about Bruce so much. If the man hadn’t been revived, Clark would’ve torched the world… Superman would’ve gone on a rampage, killing any criminal he could find. Killing anyone he could blame.

It was dangerous. To care so much about one person.

When he first met Batman, the vigilante had been right. Clark is a dangerous alien. And, he is corruptible. Superman is capable of causing so much damage to the world.
It’s better to hide. To stay far, far away. So he couldn’t hurt anyone again.

Alone in the Arctic, Clark tuned out the rest of the world, ignoring everything. He spoke to no one, interacted with no one. For weeks. The days all bled together while Clark stayed huddled in a corner of the fortress.

Sometimes he would listen to Bruce’s heartbeat just to make sure the man was still alive. But, more often than not, it wasn’t necessary. Clark didn’t need to listen for a heartbeat because he could hear something better. Bruce’s voice.

The Bat-Comm was laying on the floor, next to him. Every day Bruce would call him. And Clark would listen, but he’d never answer. Sometimes Batman would bark orders and yell in frustration. Other times he would speak calmly and plead.

But every day, without fail, he would call… His messages all started the same way:

“Clark, we need to talk.”

“Clark, seriously. Answer me. Now.”

“Clark, you’re pissing me off. Answer me!”

“Clark, where the hell are you? Whenever I try to track your Bat-Comm, you’re out of range.”

“Clark, are you in the Arctic somewhere? Or are you in Antarctica?”

“Clark… At least give me proof that you’re not dead.”

“Clark, I know you blame yourself for what happened. Don’t. It’s not your fault.”

“Clark, please stop ignoring me.”

“Clark, you fucking asshole. Answer me!”

“Clark, I will find you. And when I do, I’m going to kick your ass.”

“Clark, enough of this already. I forgive you. I swear. Just answer me.”

“Clark, please… Do you want me to beg?”

“Clark, you sadistic fucker.”

“Clark, if I jump off a building, will you come? Do I have to endanger myself?”

“Clark, I…I’ll let you hug me. I’ll let you… Fuck, I can’t take this anymore.”

“Clark, just tell me you’re okay.”

“Clark, I went by your apartment today. Your rent was due. I paid it.”

“Clark, you owe me 700 dollars.”

“Clark, if you’re really my friend, talk to me. Now.”

“Clark, you’re a shitty friend.”

“Clark, stop ignoring me!”
“Clark, I’m done calling you. When I find you, I’m going to make you regret this. Asshole.”

The next day, Bruce didn’t call…

SxB

Without the sound of Bruce’s voice, time passed by slower. For a few more days, Clark didn’t move from the same spot. He stayed in his cold dark corner inside the Fortress of Solitude, wallowing in misery. He had planned to stay there forever, but eventually the boredom became unbearable.

Clark stood and wandered down the hall. He had to stay away from people, but he could still talk to holograms. When he reached the fortress’s computer, he turned on his father’s A.I. program. Before his father had died on planet Krypton, he had created an artificial intelligence program based on his own likeness.

After turning on the program, Jor-El appeared in front of Clark as a hologram.

The hologram studied him for a moment. “What is wrong, Kal-El?”

Clark replied sadly, “I don’t think I can live on Earth anymore.”

Jor-El looked confused. “Why?”

“I’m too strong here. I’m dangerous.”

“Your strength is a gift. Your mother and I sent you to this planet because we knew how strong you would be underneath the yellow sun.”

“Well, you made a mistake,” Clark snapped. “I can’t live like this.”


With a sigh, Clark explained, “One of my enemies drugged me. When I was hallucinating, I hurt someone I care about… I-I killed him. His heart stopped, but I was able to revive him.”

“Who is this man?”

“Bruce. He’s my friend.” Tears welled up in his eyes as Clark said, “I want to protect him more than anything, and I killed him.”

“But he is alive now?”

“That’s not the point! It never should’ve happened!” Clark angrily rubbed the tears from his eyes. “I can’t forgive myself for hurting him.”

“Do you love this man?” Jor-El asked.

“What?” He gaped at the hologram in surprise. “N-No. I just… I care about Bruce a lot, and-”

“Kal-El, you can always be honest with me.”

Swallowing nervously, Clark hesitated for a moment. He knew he had feelings for Bruce, but now after everything that has happened… He realized just how serious those feelings are. He couldn’t deny it.
“Yeah, I… I love him.” A tear streaked down his face as Clark confessed, “Father, I love him so much. What should I do?”

“My son, you must speak to your beloved.”

_Beloved?_ He stared at the hologram in disbelief. “It doesn’t bother you that I have feelings for a man?”

“Such relationships were not uncommon on our home planet, especially among male warriors.” Jor-El explained, “I believe Earth had similar cultures like the ancient Spartans and the Sacred Band of Thebes. On Krypton, your bond with this _Bruce_ would’ve been considered normal.”

“Well, on Earth, the culture is a little different now. Most male warriors don’t… _bond_ like that. I don’t know if Bruce could ever love me back.”

“You will not know until you ask,” Jor-El advised wisely.

Clark sighed, still feeling miserable. “It doesn’t matter anyway. I can’t be with him. Not after what I’ve done.”

“I did not send you here to be alone, Kal-El. Do not isolate yourself. You must speak to him.”

He shook his head. “No, I can’t risk hurting Bruce again.”

“Kal-El-”

Clark shut off the A.I. program and stood in silence.

SxB

In the Fortress of Solitude, Clark laid on the floor, staring up at the ceiling. He had been taking a nap, but then he had another nightmare. He had a lot of those lately. In most of the nightmares, Bruce would die horribly in some way, then Clark would become a monster and destroy the world. Usually, Clark would wake up screaming or in tears.

Afterwards, listening to Bruce’s heartbeat was the only thing that could calm him down. Right now, Batman was in Gotham, in the Batcave, probably on the computer. His heartbeat was strong and steady like a melody. It was soothing.

Clark listened to that wonderful heartbeat for almost an hour. Then he suddenly heard a familiar voice coming from Metropolis.

“Superman! Help me! Please! Help!” Lois screamed desperately.

Without thinking, Clark jumped to his feet and flew out of the fortress. Soaring through the sky, he traveled to Metropolis as fast as possible. Listening to Lois’s voice, he quickly found her on the roof of her apartment building. He hovered in front of her, scanning the area, but there were no threats.

Lois was standing on the rooftop alone. She wasn’t in danger at all. Clark glared at her, irritated that she tricked him.

“Sorry.” She smiled apologetically. “I really needed to talk to you.”

Annoyed, Superman turned around, about to fly away.
“Clark, wait.”

He froze and stared at her in shock. “How do you know?”

Lois explained, “When you were hallucinating, you thought I was Zod and you told me to stay away from Bruce… Then I just figured it out. I know that Bruce is Batman too.”

“Oh…” I attacked her too? Clark gave her worried look. “Did I hurt you?”

“No. Well, you tried,” she admitted. “But Bruce saved me. He saved all of Metropolis.”

Superman nodded, feeling guilty.

“It’s not your fault, Clark. The Joker drugged you with fear toxin or whatever it’s called.”

“I killed Bruce.”

“I know… I saw you doing CPR on him. But he’s okay now. You saved him.”

Clark scoffed. “Yeah, I saved him after killing him. That’s real heroic.”

She sighed while crossing her arms. “Smallville, you have to go on with your life. You can’t hide forever.”

Avoiding her gaze, he silently looked away.

“Please just come back to work,” Lois pleaded. “I told Perry you were injured during the evacuation. I forged a doctor’s note and everything. But it’s been three weeks and you need to come back. Do you want to lose your job?”

He huffed, “No, of course not.”

“So, you’ll come back?” she asked hopefully.

Clark flew down and landed on the roof, standing in front of her. “I caused so much destruction. I’m supposed to protect Metropolis, and I wrecked all of downtown.”

“That wasn’t your fault, Smallville.”

“Doesn’t change what happened…” He muttered sadly, “I think the city is better off without me.”

“You know that’s not true,” Lois argued. “Metropolis needs Superman. Always has. Always will. And the Daily Planet needs Clark Kent too.”

Clark gave her a small smile.

“Oh, but I feel like such an idiot,” she complained suddenly. “When I was crushing on Superman all these years, were you laughing behind my back?”

He blinked in surprise. “What? No. I wouldn’t do that.”

She grinned. “I know, Smallville. You don’t have a mean bone in your body. I just can’t believe I didn’t realize it sooner. I mean, your disguise isn’t that great.”

“Yeah… Bruce said the same thing.”

“Maybe we should get you a cowl like him,” she joked.
Clark laughed for the first time in weeks.
After talking to Lois, Clark finally returned to his small apartment. He turned on the lights and wandered into the kitchen. On the kitchen table, there was a huge stack of mail. On the Bat-Comm, Bruce had said he visited Clark’s apartment. He must’ve gotten the mail too. Clark sifted through the mail and noticed that all of the bills were gone. Bruce paid his electric bill too?

Clark frowned. He knew Bruce was rich, but he didn’t want the billionaire paying for him.

With a sigh, Clark walked over to his coffee maker and noticed that his bag of instant coffee was almost empty. Bruce must’ve drank it all. Clearly, he had spent a lot of time here.

Clark headed towards his home phone and glanced at the message machine. He had 15 voicemails. They were probably weeks old. Clark pressed play and listened to the messages.

“Hey, Smallville. We really need to talk. Please call me back.” Lois sounded worried.

In the next message, Bruce growled menacingly, “Clark, I will find you.”

The third message was from his Ma. “Clark, honey, are you okay? We saw what happened on the news. Your Pa and I are worried sick. Please call back.”

Clark stopped the voicemail, feeling guilty. He didn’t mean to worry his parents. Now he needed to take a trip to Smallville. He glanced at a clock on the wall. It was almost 9:30 PM. He didn’t know if his parents were still awake, but he knew that they’d want to see him as soon as possible.

After taking a quick shower and changing into a clean Superman suit, Clark flew out the window and soared across the sky towards Smallville. The small town looked exactly the same as always. Clark hoped this place would never change. It was like a safe haven to him.

When he arrived at the Kent farmhouse, Superman landed on the front porch and politely knocked on the door. Inside the house, a few lights were turned on, then he heard footsteps approaching.

Martha Kent opened the front door, then she flung her arms around Clark. “Oh, thank goodness! I was so worried.” She hugged her adopted son and pulled him inside the house. “Come inside.”

“Jonathan, it’s Clark!” She called out while ushering her son to the kitchen. “Are you hungry, dear?
I made some pie earlier.”

Clark smiled. “I’m fine, Ma. I don’t need any.”

“Nonsense. You look like you’re starving to death. Sit down. I’ll feed you.” She hurried to the refrigerator and pulled out a cherry pie.

With a shrug, Clark sat down at the table. Then Jonathan Kent entered the kitchen. His Pa walked to the table and patted Clark on the shoulder.

“About time you show up.” His Pa nagged as he sat down, “Are you trying to scare your poor Ma to death?”

“No, sir.” Clark answered guiltily.

“All that matters is that you’re here now.” His Ma set a plate of pie in front of him and sat at the table. “Are you okay, Clark?”

“Yes, Ma. I’m fine.” He ate a spoonful of pie, savoring the taste. He almost forgot how good Ma’s cooking is.

“What happened in Metropolis, son?” His Pa asked. “I read all kinds of things in the papers.”

Clark sighed. “It’s complicated… What papers did you read?”

“I still have them around here somewhere.” His Pa left the table and returned with a stack of newspapers.

Curious, Clark looked through the various newspapers, reading the headlines. One article was titled ‘Superman Goes on a Rampage. Batman Saves Metropolis’ while another was titled ‘Is Superman a Threat to National Security? How Can We Protect Ourselves?’

Most of the newspapers were Anti-Superman, except for the Daily Planet. Lois had written an article called ‘Superman: The Misunderstood Hero.’ In her article, she explained how Superman had been drugged by the Joker. At least Lois was protecting Superman’s reputation.

“Of course, we believe the Daily Planet.” His Pa looked concerned. “Is that what happened, son? Some lunatic drugged you?”

“Yeah…” Clark nodded sadly.

“Oh, that’s horrible. You can stay here as long you like, Sweetheart,” his Ma offered. “You don’t have to rush back to Metropolis.”

“Thanks, Ma, but I can’t hide forever. I’m ready to go back.”

“That’s my boy!” His Pa proudly slapped him on the back. “Don’t let anything keep you down.”

Clark smiled.

“Are you sure you’re okay, Clark?” His Ma still looked worried.

“Yes, I’m fine, Ma. Don’t worry,” he reassured her.

He stayed at the farmhouse for an hour before flying back to Metropolis. Seeing his Ma and Pa was just what he needed. Clark couldn’t believe he had actually considered leaving Earth. This planet
was his home. There were so many people here who cared about him. How could he ever leave?

SxB

In the morning, Clark walked to work. Several streets and buildings in downtown Metropolis were under construction. The city was still recovering after all the destruction Superman had caused while hallucinating. Now people were commonly referring to the disaster as Superman’s Rampage. It was disconcerting. Despite what Lois had said, Clark wasn’t sure if Superman would ever be welcome in the city again.

At the Daily Planet, Clark was greeted by Cat, Jimmy, and several other employees. Everyone was asking if he was okay. Apparently, Lois had told everyone in the office that he had been gravely injured. Even Perry seemed glad to see him. His boss welcomed him back, then gave him a huge pile of work.

Clark sat down at his desk, then glanced at Lois who was seated at the desk next to his. She smiled at him happily. She looked relieved that he had returned to work like he agreed to.

For the next few hours, Clark worked on his computer, writing a new article and doing research for Perry. While he worked, he suddenly heard the sound of a fire alarm. In a nearby building, people were screaming for help. His first instinct was to fly over and help them, but he hesitated and remained seated in his chair.

Maybe the fire department could handle it. What if Metropolis didn’t want Superman anymore?

In the office, someone turned on a large TV. On the local news, a reporter was showing live coverage of the burning building. While his coworkers anxiously watched the television, Clark looked away, trying to ignore it.

Then Lois threw a stapler at his head. Clark winced even though it didn’t hurt.

“What the hell are you waiting for?” she whispered angrily. “Go.”

Forgetting his self-doubt, Clark jumped out of his chair and rushed across the office into the bathroom. Then he quickly changed into his Superman suit and zoomed out the window. He flew to the burning building while a large crowd of people all watched, pointing at him.

The downtown building had obviously been under construction, but something went wrong. Probably an electrical fire. Inside, a dozen construction workers were trapped on the tenth floor. Superman broke through a window and entered the burning building.

One by one, Clark found every single construction worker and flew them down to safety. All of the workers thanked him while the crowd watched, cheering.

Superman finally felt like himself again.

SxB

For the rest of the day, Clark was in a good mood. His life was finally going back to normal. He saved some civilians, Perry yelled at him for disappearing from work, and Lois hung out with him as usual. Clark was genuinely happy.

After work, Clark started walking home to his small apartment. As he approached his apartment building, he heard a familiar sound and froze. Bruce’s heartbeat was nearby. The vigilante must be waiting for Clark inside his apartment.
Clark nervously stood on the sidewalk for a couple minutes. He wasn’t ready to see Bruce again. He just couldn’t do it.

Turning around, Clark walked away. He’d fly back to the Fortress of Solitude for the night. He’d sleep there, then go to work in the morning.

SxB

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, glaring at the computer screen. According to the tracking signal, Clark’s Bat-Comm was in Metropolis again. He had been in Metropolis for a week now, but Batman still couldn’t find him. Bruce had flown the new Batplane to Metropolis almost every night, stopping by Clark’s apartment and even the Daily Planet. But Clark was never there.

He’s avoiding me… Bruce angrily crossed his arms. That was the only explanation that made sense. Clark must be listening to his heartbeat and disappearing before Bruce could reach him. It was infuriating.

Bruce glanced at his Bat-Comm. He could try calling Clark again, but he knew that probably wouldn’t work. Superman had been ignoring his calls for weeks. Bruce just wanted to check on him. Why was Clark being so fucking difficult?

Since Clark wouldn’t talk to him, Bruce had to find someone who would. Bruce pulled out his personal cellphone, then used his computer to find Lois’s phone number.

A few minutes later, he called the female journalist on his cellphone.

“Hello,” she answered quickly.

“Lois?”

“Yeah…” She sounded confused.

“It’s Bruce Wayne,” he announced.

“Oh, hey Bruce,” Lois said happily. “How are you doing?”

“I’m fine. Did Clark return to Metropolis?”

“Yeah, he finally came back to work.”

“Is he…okay?” Bruce asked hesitantly.

“Yeah, I think he’s doing better. But you should really talk to him yourself.”

“I tried. He’s avoiding me.”

Lois huffed in frustration. “God dammit, Smallville. I’m sorry, Bruce. I’ll try to talk some sense into him.”

“Thanks… How did you get him to come back?”

“Oh. I cried for help and he thought I was in danger, so he came. You could always try crying for help. Works for me.”

“I don’t cry for help,” Bruce grumbled.
Lois chuckled. “Right, I guess Batman has a reputation to keep. Well, it’s just a suggestion. If Clark thinks you’re in trouble, he’ll definitely come.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

“You know…Clark really does care about you,” Lois claimed. “He just feels guilty about what happened.”

“It wasn’t his fault.”

“I know. I tried telling him that, but he won’t listen,” she complained.

“He’s an idiot.”

Lois laughed. “Yeah, he can be a little dense sometimes. Just know that he cares about you. Like a lot.”

Bruce shifted uncomfortably. “I have to go.”

He hung up before Lois could say anything else.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Clark worked on his computer, about to finish his newest article. It was almost 8:30 PM and the office was mostly empty. Even Perry left. Only Lois had stayed behind to keep him company. Clark needed to submit his article before going home. Today was his deadline.

Sitting at her desk, Lois spun her chair around to face him. “So, have you talked to Bruce yet?”

Clark sighed. “No.”

It had been three months since the whole disaster with the fear toxin. Three months since he had seen Bruce. Of course, Clark missed his favorite vigilante. But he knew it was safer to stay away. It was impossible to hurt Bruce again if Clark stayed far, far away.

Lois shook her head disapprovingly. “Are you ever going to talk to him? The poor guy is just worried about you. He called me again last night.”

Clark swallowed nervously. “What-What did he say?”

“He says you’re a giant alien asshole.”

Clark groaned and hid his face in his hands. Great, it sounded like Bruce hated his guts again.

Lois huffed. “I don’t even blame him for being mad. You’ve given him the cold shoulder for a really long time.”

“I’m not giving him the cold shoulder,” Clark argued. “I’m protecting him.”

“Bullshit.” Lois crossed her arms. “You’re just scared to see him again.”

Clark sadly looked away and muttered, “You don’t understand.”

“Understand what, Smallville?” she demanded.

How close I was to becoming a monster… How corruptible and dangerous I am. Clark sat in
silence, tightly clenching his fists. He loved Bruce. Loved him so much that Clark couldn’t forgive himself for ever hurting him. He wasn’t good enough for Bruce. Not anymore…

Clark quickly submitted his article, then stood to leave.

While he walked away, Lois snapped, “Fine! Avoid me too! That’ll fix the problem!”

Ignoring her, he took the elevator down to the first floor and left the building. Then he trudged down the street towards his apartment.

As soon as he entered the small apartment, he flopped onto the couch and kicked off his shoes. For a while, Clark sulked in the dark, feeling miserable. Now Lois was mad at him too…

With a sigh, Clark rolled onto his side, laying down. Why was everything so complicated? He only wanted to do what was best for Bruce. And that meant staying away… No matter how much Clark missed him.

Clark took off his glasses and shut his eyes, resting for a moment. Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice coming from Gotham.

“Superman!” Dick yelled frantically. “Superman, can you help me?! Batman’s hurt, and I don’t know what to do!”

Clark immediately sat up and listened for Bruce’s heartbeat. The normally strong steady rhythm was faint and weak. Batman was definitely injured. In a flash, Clark leapt off the couch, changed into his Superman suit and flew out of the window.

Hurtling across the sky, Superman flew as fast as possible to the city of Gotham. As he flew, he continued listening to Bruce’s heartbeat. His heart was beating so slowly like he had passed out. What the hell happened?! Panicking, Clark zoomed over the city streets until he found Batman and Robin in a dark alleyway.

Bruce laid motionless on the ground while Dick was kneeling beside him, still screaming, “Superman-!”

With a gust of wind, Clark swiftly landed in front of them.


“What happened?” Superman demanded.

“He was stabbed through the Kevlar.” The boy trembled, revealing his bloody hands. “I-I tried to control the bleeding, but it won’t stop.”

“Move,” Clark ordered as he kneeled next to Bruce.

Dick quickly obeyed, scurrying out of the way. Meanwhile Superman ripped the Kevlar off Bruce’s chest and studied the stab wound with his X-ray vision. No internal organs had been punctured, but Bruce was bleeding heavily. He couldn’t afford to lose any more blood. Clark needed to cauterize the wound.

Even though Bruce was unconscious, Clark grabbed onto his arms and held him down, keeping him still. Then Superman carefully used his heat vision to burn the laceration closed. As he cauterized the wound, Bruce thrashed and whimpered in pain, but thankfully he didn’t wake up.
Once the wound was closed, Clark pulled Bruce into his lap and whispered, “It’s okay. I’m sorry.”

He held Bruce close, wrapping him tightly in his arms. It’s been so long since Clark has done this… So long since he held the man he loved.

Dick watched for a while, before suggesting, “You can fly him home. I’ll take the Batmobile back.”

Clark gave the boy a skeptical look. “You can drive?”

“I know how. Just take him home.” Robin fired a grappling gun at a nearby building and propelled himself to the roof.

After the Boy Wonder left, Superman scooped Bruce in his arms and flew into the air, carrying him away.

SxB

At Wayne Manor, Clark sat next to Bruce’s bed, watching over the sleeping vigilante. Bruce had an IV in his arm now, thanks to Alfred. The butler had hung a bag of O negative blood on an IV pole. The blood was flowing through the IV tubing, entering Bruce’s arm. Once he recovered from the blood loss, Bruce should be fine.

Alfred silently stood beside Clark, periodically checking on the IV. The butler was obviously worried.

“Thank you for helping him, Mr. Kent.”

Clark shook his head. “You don’t need to thank me. I owe Bruce so much.”

“Nevertheless, I am glad you came.” Alfred smiled at him.

He smiled back, then gazed at Bruce again.

Suddenly, the door swung open and Dick rushed into the bedroom. The boy was still wearing his Robin outfit and he was covered in Bruce’s blood. “How is Bruce? Is he okay?”

“He’ll be fine, Master Dick.” Alfred gave the kid a concerned look. “Are you injured?”

“No, it’s not my blood.” Trembling slightly, Robin hurried toward the bed and stared down at Bruce. The boy still seemed shaken up.

“Dick, how did this happen?” Clark asked.

“We were fighting the League of Shadows, and they were really strong. I was no match for them.” Robin angrily clenched his fists. “One of the assassins almost killed me, but Bruce jumped in the way. He got hurt while saving me...”

Clark recognized the look on Dick’s face. The boy was furious at himself, tormented by guilt. He clearly blamed himself for Bruce’s injury.

“It’s not your fault, Dick.” Clark tried to reassure him, “These things happen. Being a hero is dangerous. Bruce wouldn’t want you to blame yourself. You have nothing to feel guilty about.”

Robin glared at him. “Hypocrite.”
“What?” Clark blinked in surprise.

“You’re a **hypocrite, Clark.**” Dick growled in way very similar to Batman. “You tell me not to feel guilty, but that’s why you’re hiding from Bruce, isn’t it? I know what happened with the fear toxin. You can’t avoid Bruce forever. It’s not fair to him.” Dick ranted angrily, “Do you have any idea how much you upset Bruce? He thinks you don’t like him anymore! Stop hiding from him like a coward. You’re a hero. Act like it!”

Robin stormed out of the room while Clark stared at him in shock. *I just got scolded by a thirteen-year-old…*

“I’m sorry, Mr. Kent.” Alfred hurried out the room, following the boy. “Master Dick, wait.”

Now Clark was alone with the sleeping vigilante. He sat in silence, considering what Dick had said.

*“He thinks you don’t like him anymore!”*

Was that true? Did Bruce really think that? Nothing could be further from the truth. Clark adored Bruce just as much as he always had.

He reached out and held Bruce’s hand, lacing their fingers together. He loved this man more than life itself. He admired Bruce. Respected him. Cherished him.

Clark kissed the back of Bruce’s hand. Then he leaned closer and stroked his other hand through Bruce’s soft hair. Clark hated seeing him hurt like this, but he knew Batman would never stop fighting. His Bruce… Always the hero. Always sacrificing himself. He had sacrificed himself for Clark too. By giving Clark the antidote, he had stopped Superman from murdering so many innocent people in Metropolis.

Saying ‘thank you’ wasn’t enough. Clark could never repay him.

After petting Bruce’s hair for a few minutes, he slid his hand down and cupped Bruce’s cheek. In his sleep, Bruce turned his head to the side and rubbed his face against Clark’s hand like he was seeking the other man’s touch. It warmed Clark’s heart.

With a smile, he leaned over and kissed Bruce on the forehead.

Bruce stirred slightly and barely opened his eyes. “Cl-Clark?”

“I’m sorry, Bruce,” he whispered.

Exhausted, the vigilante lost consciousness again as his eyes fluttered closed.

Clark knew that he needed to leave, but it was painful to pry himself away from Bruce. Superman forced himself to stand, then he leaned over once again.

He kissed Bruce’s forehead one last time, then stepped away with tears in his eyes.

“I’m sorry for everything. I love you.”

Clark flew out of the window, leaving Bruce alone in the room.
Chapter Summary

Bruce crashes a party

Chapter Notes

Reunited and it feels so good~

Hey, guys! My vacation was fun, but I'm happy to be back! Thanks for all the comments and kudos <3

Sometimes Clark hated his job. This was one of those rare times.

Dressed in his best suit, Clark stood outside the LexCorp building with a press pass hanging around his neck. The repairs to downtown Metropolis were mostly complete. And, of course, Lex Luthor was taking all the credit for rebuilding the city. Now he was throwing a party to congratulate himself.

The rich businessman had donated millions of dollars to the city’s recovery. But he didn’t do it out of the kindness of his heart. Clark knew how the villain operated. Luthor did it all for the good publicity. Also it was an opportunity for him to bash Superman.

Publicly, Luthor claimed that he was “cleaning up Superman’s mess” and called Superman a “violent menace to society”. In one magazine, he was even quoted saying “Superman is the worst thing to happen to Metropolis”. Luthor was trying to demonize Superman while making himself look like a hero. It was sickening. And Clark wanted no part in it.

Yet, here he was at LexCorp. Perry had ordered Clark to come here, so he could write an article about Luthor’s damn party. It was a fucking nightmare. Clark would rather be anywhere but here. All night, he’d have to listen people talk about how great Luthor is. It was enough to make him gag.

*The things I do for my job...* With a fake smile, Clark entered the LexCorp building along with several other guests. He took the elevator up to the ballroom, then he stood in a corner, watching the crowd.

All of the richest and most powerful residents of Metropolis were in attendance. Soon waiters came by, offering champagne and hors d’oeuvres. Clark hadn’t been to a party this fancy since the Wayne Fundraiser…

He felt an ache in his chest as soon as he thought of Bruce. It had been two months since he had last seen the vigilante. It had been so painful to leave. Clark remembered kissing Bruce’s forehead before finally forcing himself to go… He missed Bruce so much.
Clark snapped out of his thoughts when he heard the sound of microphone turning on. He glanced toward the noise and spotted Lex Luthor standing at a podium, holding the mic. The bald bastard was about to give a speech. Clark instantly felt sick to his stomach.

For the next ten minutes, Luthor gave a politically correct speech about rebuilding Metropolis and making the city great again. That part Clark didn’t mind. Then the Superman bashing started. Luthor did his usual rhetoric, calling Superman a menace and blaming him for the destruction of downtown Metropolis. To make matters worse, most guests were clapping like they agreed with Luthor.

It was disconcerting to see how much support Luthor had. Clark had to remind himself that these guests were not the common people. This room was full of politicians and other wealthy citizens. Everyone here probably accepted money from Luthor at one time or another. That’s why they were clapping.

They’re just sucking up to Luthor. Clark reminded himself again. Most people don’t blame me. I was drugged. It’s not my fault. Luthor is wrong. It’s not my fault.

The clapping continued. Clark remembered all the damage he caused to the city. All the destroyed buildings and streets… And the smoldering remains of the Batplane. The image of Bruce floating lifelessly in space flashed through his mind. My fault…

Clark clenched his fists, feeling sick again. He didn’t want to come to this fucking party. Why couldn’t Perry send someone else? This was awful. Clark wanted to leave, but he had to stay. He was required to stay. For his job.

Eventually, Luthor finished his speech. All the guests clapped, then they began to mingle amongst themselves. Clark stood alone, observing the crowd. Luthor was greeting guests now, shaking hands with everyone.

Clark knew that Perry would want him to interview Luthor, but he didn’t care. He refused to talk to Luthor. Besides, Clark could hear everything the villain was saying. Super-hearing had many perks. Clark already had several quotes that he could use in his article.

While he listened to Luthor prattle on, Clark suddenly heard a familiar sound. A strong, steady heartbeat.

Bruce?!

Clark immediately turned around to face the ballroom’s main entrance. It was none other than Bruce Wayne.

Gotham’s famous billionaire playboy stumbled into the ballroom, surrounded by an entourage of models. Bruce was wearing an expensive suit, but he looked disheveled like he had been partying all night. Was he pretending to be drunk again? What was he doing here? Bruce wasn’t on the guest list. He wasn’t supposed to be here. He was crashing Luthor’s party.

As he sauntered into the ballroom, Bruce took an entire champagne bottle from a waiter, then drank straight from the bottle. Soon other guests started noticing the famous party crasher. People gasped in surprise and gossiped among themselves. Suddenly, Bruce had become the focus of party, taking the spotlight away from Luthor.

Clark tensed nervously when Bruce glanced across the room and spotted him. Bruce stared at him for a moment, maintaining eye contact. His heart raced as Clark considered fleeing from the room.
But then Bruce looked away, acting as if he hadn't noticed the Kryptonian.

*He’s ignoring me?* Clark gaped at Bruce, genuinely surprised. Now that Bruce had finally found him, Clark was expecting a bigger reaction. Maybe a punch to the face. He never thought Bruce would simply ignore him. Somehow that hurt more than any attack.

A crowd of guests approached Bruce, greeting him and shaking his hand. Then Luthor walked across the ballroom, heading towards the billionaire playboy. Clark watched anxiously. If Luthor tried to hurt Bruce in anyway, Superman would shut this party down.

On the other hand, Bruce didn’t seem worried at all. He smiled at the villain and stumbled toward him.

“Hey, Lex! How’s it going? I haven’t seen you in forever!” Bruce unexpectedly wrapped his arms around Luthor, hugging him.

Clark watched, horrified.

What the fuck?!

Why was Bruce hugging Luthor? Bruce never hugged Clark like that! It wasn’t fair!

Luthor chuckled and grabbed onto Bruce, keeping him steady. “Don’t fall over, Bruce. I think you’ve had too much to drink.”

“Pfft, this is nothing. I’m just getting started.” Bruce smirked mischievously. “Remember boarding school? We got wasted every weekend. And I could always hold my liquor better than you.”

This time Luthor laughed wholeheartedly. “Really? Is that so? Because I remember you being a light-weight.”

“No way! I can totally drink more than you.” Bruce staggered on his feet again and Luthor steadied him.

“So a light-weight,” Luthor teased as he curled an arm around Bruce’s waist. “Come on, we have so much to catch up on.” Luthor ushered Bruce away from the crowd, leading him to a table.

Still standing across the room, Clark watched the two wealthy men, completely confused. He knew that Bruce had attended several different boarding schools after the death of his parents. But he had no idea that Bruce had gone to the same school as Luthor. Bruce never told him that.

Now Bruce and Luthor were sitting together at a table, acting like old buddies. Clark didn’t understand. Why was Bruce doing this? He must find Luthor as repulsive as Clark does… Right?

For the next hour, Bruce and Luthor sat together, drinking champagne while reminiscing. They regaled each other with old stories from their youth and laughed. They mentioned several names of students and teachers from their boarding school, recounting various events. Apparently, Bruce had been a troublemaker at the school, getting into fights and skipping class. Whereas Luthor had been a perfect student who only associated with Bruce on the weekends.

While they talked, Luthor sat closer and closer to Bruce, inching into his personal space. Bruce didn’t seem to notice as he guzzled more champagne. A waiter was standing by the table, constantly refilling his glass. If Bruce had been pretending to be drunk before, he certainly wasn’t pretending now.

Across the room, Clark listened to their conversation, watching vigilantly. This whole situation made him feel extremely uncomfortable. He didn’t like how defenseless Bruce seemed right now. Luthor was dangerous. Didn’t Bruce know that? He shouldn’t be so relaxed around Luthor of all
people. The champagne could be drugged for all he knows.

Bruce was swaying in his chair like he might fall over. Then Luthor flung an arm around Bruce and pulled him closer.

“Do you know what I remember most from that shitty school?” Luthor whispered in Bruce’s ear, “How much I wanted you.”

Bruce leaned against his shoulder and mumbled, “I-I feel dizzy.”

Luthor grinned. “Come on, I’ll bring you somewhere to lie down.”

Oh, Fuck no. No, no, no! This was not happening. Clark furiously clenched his fists, trying to control his rage. Luthor needed to get his disgusting hands off of Bruce NOW. Clark couldn’t tolerate this anymore.

Bruce stumbled on his feet as Luthor led him out of the ballroom. Clark also left the ballroom, following them. When he stepped outside, the hallway was empty, so he listened to Bruce’s heartbeat. Bruce was inside nearby room, down the hall. Alone with Luthor.

Clark felt a surge of anger as he stormed down the hall. How dare that bald bastard touch his Bruce! When Clark reached the room, he kicked down the door and barged inside.

In the room, Bruce was laying on a couch with his eyes closed. He appeared unconscious while Luthor was kneeling over him, unbuttoning his shirt.

“Get away from him,” Clark growled.

Luthor stood and glared at him. “What are you doing here? This room is off-limits.”

Ignoring the villain, Clark walked toward Bruce, who was still lying motionless on the couch. His tie and suit jacket were missing and his shirt was unbuttoned, but the rest of his clothes were still on. Thank God.

“You aren’t allowed back here. Leave before I call security,” Luthor snapped.

Clenching his fists again, Clark barely restrained himself from hitting the bastard.

“How about this, Luthor?” Clark threatened, “Get out of my way or I’ll write an article about this. I’ll tell the whole world how you tried to date-rape Bruce Wayne. Do you want that kind of publicity? I’ll gut you and your damn company.”

Luthor gaped at him in surprise, then he stepped aside. It seemed the businessman was taking Clark’s threat seriously.

“Wise choice.” Clark scooped Bruce off the couch, holding him in his arms.

As he turned to leave, he glared at Luthor one last time. “Stay away from Bruce. If I see you near him again, I will ruin you. That’s a promise.”

Clark marched out of the room, carrying Bruce away. He headed into the elevator and traveled down to the first floor. He gazed down at Bruce who still had his eyes closed. The billionaire was limp in his arms. Bruce must be out cold. What the hell was he thinking?! How could he hang out with Luthor so casually? Clark was rightfully furious with Luthor, but he was angry at Bruce too.

On the first floor, Clark stormed through the lobby, carrying Bruce. Several people pointed and
stared. A few even took pictures. But Clark didn’t care. He was too angry to care. He just wanted to get the fuck out of LexCorp.

As soon as they left the building, Clark hailed down a cab. He set Bruce down in the back of the taxi, then told the driver where to take him. He assumed Bruce was staying at the same hotel as last time.

Right before Clark could shut the taxi door, Bruce suddenly sat up and yanked him inside. Clark fell into the taxi while Bruce reached over and shut the car door.

Then Bruce spoke to the taxi driver through the divider, “There’s been a change in plans. Instead of the hotel, take us to 344 Clinton Street.” He gave the address to Clark’s apartment building.

“You got it.” The driver nodded.

After the taxi started moving, Bruce shut the divider, giving them more privacy. Then he casually leaned back and crossed his arms. Meanwhile Clark gawked at him, utterly confused. The whole thing had been an act?

Bruce gave him an annoyed look. “Finally. We need to talk.”

“I…I thought you were roofied or something.”

“Hmph. No. But I knew you couldn’t resist playing the hero.”

Clark gaped at him, still in shock. While he tried to process all of this, Bruce buttoned his shirt, fixing his messy clothes.

“Are you even drunk?”

“Oh, I’m drunk. But not drunk enough to let Luthor paw all over me. What took you so long to get rid of him?” Bruce shuddered in disgust. “Nasty bald fucker.”

Clark frowned. “So, you made a scene just to get my attention?”

“Well, what other choice did I have? I tried calling you. Many times.”

He sighed. “Bruce, I’m sorry. I just can’t-”

“Shut up,” Bruce cut him off. “You’ve sulked long enough. Get over it.”

“Get over it?! I killed you.”

“Yes, I know. I was there,” he said flippantly. “Quit being a pussy.”

Clark blinked in surprise. “Excuse me?”

“Pussy,” Bruce hissed with the smell of alcohol on his breath.

He really is drunk… Clark gave him an exasperated look. Sadly, he wasn’t surprised that Bruce was a mean drunk.

“Don’t call me that, Bruce.”

“Fucking pussy. All you do is run away and hide.”
“At least I don’t flirt with Lex Luthor,” Clark snapped angrily.

“I didn’t flirt with him.”

“Yes, you did! You were throwing yourself at him. All night. Like one of those cheap whores you bring to your parties.”

Bruce slapped him in the face. “Fuck you, Clark! You think I wanted Luthor touching me?! It was disgusting, and I hated it! But you were ignoring me! And I didn’t know what else to do!” As he screamed, a single tear rolled down his cheek.

Clark’s eyes widened in shock. He had never seen Bruce cry before. “Bruce…”

When he noticed the tear, Bruce furiously wiped it off his face. “Dammit.”

He rubbed at his eyes, trying to stop any more tears from falling. Clark watched, feeling a stab of guilt. Usually, Bruce had excellent control over his emotions. He hated showing weakness. And he certainly wouldn’t cry in front of anyone. But now, that control was broken. It was probably the alcohol lowering his inhibitions. He couldn’t hide how upset he was.

“I’m sorry, Bruce.”

“You fucking asshole!” He sobbed, still rubbing tears from his eyes. “I called you 87 times and you never answered!”

“I know. I’m sorry.”

“87 times!”

“I’m sorry.” Clark wrapped his arms around Bruce, hugging him tightly. “I was trying to protect you, but instead I hurt you more. I’m sorry.”

“Idiot.” Bruce hid his face in Clark’s chest as more tears fell.
The taxi headed down Clinton Street towards Clark’s apartment building. They would arrive shortly. In the back of the taxi, Clark still held Bruce in his arms. They had been sitting in silence for ten minutes now. Thankfully, Bruce wasn’t crying anymore, but he was obviously still upset. Clark hated seeing him like this. The poor guy looked so emotionally drained.

Clark pulled Bruce even closer, trying to comfort him. Bruce was practically in his lap now, but he didn’t seem to mind. He didn’t react at all. Bruce simply leaned against him, letting Clark do whatever he wanted.

He pressed his cheek against the side of Bruce’s head while combing a hand through his soft hair. “I’m sorry, Bruce. I’m so sorry.”

Part of him expected Bruce to push him away. But he didn’t. Instead Bruce nuzzled closer, accepting every ounce of affection he could get. It broke Clark’s heart. He felt terrible for reducing Bruce to this drunken vulnerable state. Bruce had been so desperate that he actually threw himself at Lex Luthor just to get Clark’s attention.

Clark felt a surge of anger as he remembered Luthor touching Bruce with his grubby hands. The bald pervert had thought Bruce was unconscious on the couch when he started undressing him. Clearly, Luthor didn’t give a damn about consent.

He protectively tightened his grip on Bruce. “You should stay away from Luthor. Unless you’re planning to beat him up as Batman. I’m totally fine with that.”

“Heh.” Bruce let out a small laugh. “If he touches me again, I’ll break his arm.”

Clark smiled in relief. “Glad to hear it.”

Soon, the taxi came to a stop. Clark opened the divider and handed some cash to the driver. Then he opened the car door and stepped out. When Bruce stumbled out, Clark grabbed onto his arm and steadied him. The taxi drove away while Clark glanced up at his apartment building, considering his options. He should probably take Bruce home.
“Wait here.” Clark carefully released his drunk friend. “I’ll change into my suit and fly you home.”

“No, I’m staying here.”

“Bruce, your place is way better than mine. It’ll only take a few minutes to fly you home.”

“No,” Bruce stubbornly refused. “I paid your bills. I can stay at your apartment if I want to.”

Clark sighed. “Okay… If you insist.”

“I do.” Bruce stormed past him and entered the apartment building.

Worried, Clark followed the other man inside, keeping a close eye on him. Bruce stumbled to the elevator and pressed a button, but nothing happened. The elevator must be broken again. Clark wasn’t surprised. His landlord was very cheap and didn’t like paying to fix things.

“Fucking elevator. I should just buy the whole damn building,” Bruce grumbled as he headed toward the stairs.

With a tight grip on the railing, Bruce staggered halfway up the first staircase until he finally lost his footing. He fell backward as his hand slipped off the railing. In a flash, Clark appeared behind Bruce and caught him.

“This is dangerous. Let me carry you.”

“I can do it.” Bruce grabbed the railing and pulled himself away from Clark.

He took a few more steps before he stumbled and almost fell again.

“No, you can’t. Come on.” Clark grabbed Bruce and flung him over his shoulder. Then he continued up the stairs.

While Clark carried the vigilante, he expected Bruce to protest and argue with him. But instead Bruce silently allowed it. Maybe he was too drunk to care. Or maybe he knew Clark was right. Clark hoped it was the latter. Lately, it seemed like he couldn’t do anything right concerning Bruce.

Eventually, they reached Clark’s apartment. After unlocking the door, Clark headed inside and flipped on the lights. Then he carried Bruce to the bedroom and carefully set him down.

“You can use my bed,” Clark offered.

Bruce simply nodded and sat on the bed. Then he kicked off his expensive shoes and yanked off his belt. Obviously, he was trying to get more comfortable. That suit wouldn’t be comfy to sleep in.

Clark headed to his dresser and opened a couple drawers, searching for comfortable clothes to give to Bruce. Unfortunately, Clark was behind on doing laundry. Most of his clothes were dirty. But, luckily, he found a clean white shirt and a pair of blue boxers.

He handed the clothes to Bruce. “Here. You can sleep in these.”

Bruce took the clothing, then he unfolded the boxers, revealing a large red S. The Superman symbol was on the boxers. Clark cringed in embarrassment. Shit! I completely forgot I owned those.

Bruce raised an eyebrow, studying the Superman boxers. “Seriously?”
“Uh… Lois gave that to me as a joke.” Clark laughed nervously and hurried back to the dresser. “Sorry. I’ll get you another pair.”

“Whatever. It’s fine.” He stood and walked into the bathroom, taking the clothes with him.

After he shut the bathroom door, Clark quickly found another clean shirt and some boxers. He changed into his pajamas in a flash. Now he was ready for bed.

When Bruce stepped out of the bathroom, he was wearing the white shirt and Superman boxers. The shirt was slightly baggy on him with the collar hanging to one side, revealing his left shoulder. The boxers fit him perfectly though. The large red S curved around Bruce’s ass, accentuating the beautiful globes of flesh. Clark smirked to himself. He liked seeing his symbol on Bruce. It was satisfying in a primal, possessive way.

With a yawn, Bruce flopped onto the bed and pulled a blanket over himself. He looked exhausted like he would fall asleep within seconds. Trying to be a good host, Clark decided to give him some space.

“I’ll sleep on the couch. Let me know if you need anything.”

When Clark turned to leave, Bruce suddenly reached out and grabbed his hand. “Stay where I can see you.”

What? Clark stared at him in confusion. “Bruce… I’m not going anywhere.”

He didn’t look convinced.

Clark sighed. “Okay. I’ll sleep on the floor.”

“Don’t be stupid.” Bruce yanked him towards the bed. “We’ve shared a bed before. It’s not a big deal.”

“Uh… Okay.” Clark sat down on the mattress next to Bruce.

Then Bruce scooted to the other side of the bed, making room for him. Clark laid down and pulled up the blankets. The mattress wasn’t very big. They were laying close to each other. Underneath the sheets, their arms and legs were only a few inches apart.

Within minutes, Bruce was fast asleep. Meanwhile Clark was wide awake, too aware of the closeness. It’s been such a long time since they’ve slept together in bed. The only other time this happened was when Bruce had the flu. Clark remembered that night fondly. He had been so happy to sleep with Bruce in his arms.

While Bruce slept, Clark cautiously reached toward him and draped an arm over his chest. Then Bruce rolled onto his side, snuggling closer to him.

Clark smiled as he shut his eyes.

SxB

In the morning, sunlight shined through the window. When Clark awoke, the first thing he saw was Bruce’s sleeping face only an inch away from his own. They were pressed against each other with their limbs tangled together underneath the bedsheets. In his sleep, Bruce frowned and turned his face away from the window. The sunlight must be bothering him.
Clark pulled a blanket over their heads, shielding them from the sun. The lines in Bruce’s face disappeared as he relaxed. Then Clark pulled Bruce closer, hugging him. After months of agony, Clark finally felt at peace. He had missed Bruce so much. How did he go so long without seeing his favorite vigilante? No matter what, Clark didn’t think he could ever let go of Bruce again. Even though it was selfish, he just couldn’t let go.

Bruce stirred in his sleep, then Clark tensed nervously. Was Bruce finally waking up? How would he react to this? Would he be angry? Maybe Clark should get out of bed.

Clark untangled himself from Bruce and started to scoot away. Then Bruce unexpectedly latched onto him. He flung his arms around Clark’s neck and buried his face in Clark’s shoulder, cuddling him. Clark froze in shock as his heart skipped a beat. Apparently, Bruce wanted him to stay.

Smiling, Clark wrapped an arm around Bruce and hugged him. As long as Bruce wanted him, Clark would never leave. Never again.

They laid together underneath the sheets until Clark dozed off.

Bruce winced in pain when he barely opened his eyes. He had a splitting headache and he felt dehydrated. Obviously, he drank too much last night.

Right now, he was laying in bed next to a large male body. His face was nestled in the crook of the man’s neck and Bruce could feel strong muscular arms holding him. Images flashed through his mind as Bruce slowly remembered different events from last night. He remembered crashing a party and flirting with Lex Luthor…

*Luthor?!* Bruce felt a jolt of panic as he quickly sat up and kicked the other man away. Wrapped in bed sheets, the man crashed onto the floor, then Bruce stood and scanned his surroundings. He recognized the room and calmed somewhat. He was in Clark’s apartment.

Clark stood and yanked off the bedsheets, revealing his face. He looked worried. “H-Hey, Bruce.”

*Oh, thank God, it’s Clark.* Bruce let out a sigh of relief. More memories from last night came to the surface. He recalled his plan to get Clark’s attention. Apparently, it worked well. He remembered Clark carrying him out of LexCorp, then they had taken a taxi here. Bruce glanced down at his borrowed clothes. He was still wearing the ridiculous Superman boxers.

“Are… Are you mad at me?” Clark asked nervously.

Bruce shrugged. He didn’t want to admit that he thought he had been in bed Luthor for a second. That freaked him the fuck out. But sharing a bed with Clark wasn’t a big deal. He didn’t mind Clark touching him.

Another memory came to mind as Bruce froze. He remembered crying in the back of the taxi. Clark had seen him cry. *Fuck!* Bruce clenched his fists and he looked away, feeling ashamed. He drank way too much last night. He actually cried. How fucking pathetic. And he let Clark see him like that…

“Bruce, are you okay?” Clark approached him, looking concerned.

“No.” He glared at Clark. “I called you 87 times.”

“I know. I’m sorry.”
“Why didn’t you answer me?” Bruce demanded angrily.

Clark sighed. “Because I felt guilty and I didn’t want to hurt you again… But by avoiding you, I was hurting you. I realize that now. I’m sorry.” He pleaded with large blue eyes. “Will you please forgive me?”

Bruce swallowed hard and looked away. “Fine, but there’s something I have to do first.”

“Okay, what?”

He walked into the living room while Clark followed. Then Bruce headed to the end-table next to the couch. He opened a drawer and took out a black glove.

Clark gave him a surprised look. “Where did that come from?”

“I stashed it here. I knew I would need it later.”

“For what?”

Bruce pulled the glove on his right hand. He had been waiting to do this for months. He recalled all the hours he spent searching for Clark. All the pent-up frustration and anger. And all the desperate, pleading calls on the Bat-Comm. He had tried so hard to reach Clark, but the idiot ignored him. Clark needed to learn that ignoring Batman had consequences.

Using his gloved hand, Bruce suddenly punched Clark in the face.

The Kryptonian crashed onto the floor. He held his face while screaming in pain, “Ow! Oh my God! That hurts! Why?!”

“I told you that I’d kick your ass after I found you. And I’m a man of my word.”

“But why does it hurt so much?” Clark cradled his injured face, looking confused.

“There are tiny pieces of kryptonite woven into the fabric. I made it especially for you.”

“Oh, God. It burns!” Clark whined, “I think I’m going to bruise.”

“Good. My invention was a success.” Bruce flexed his right hand. “Maybe I should test it again.”

Clark jumped to his feet and backed away from him. “No! Don’t hit me. Please. It really hurts.”

“When I call you, answer me,” he growled. “Never ignore me like that again.”

“I won’t I promise! I’m sorry!”

Satisfied, Bruce finally took off the kryptonite glove. Then he lounged on the couch and propped up his feet, making himself at home. Meanwhile Clark was still fussing over his face.

“Ow…” He winced as he poked his bruised cheek. “I think you knocked one of my teeth loose.”

Bruce rolled his eyes. The glove was designed to hurt, but he knew Clark would heal quickly. Within minutes, the bruise should be gone.

“Oh, quit whining. And make me some coffee.”

Despite the pain, Clark smiled. “Does this mean you forgive me?”
Bruce reached for the glove again, then Clark fled to the kitchen.

While Clark was busy making coffee, Bruce smirked to himself. Of course, he forgave Clark. But it was still fun to watch him squirm.
In the apartment, Bruce and Clark sat at the kitchen table, drinking coffee. It was already 11 AM, and they were still wearing the clothes they slept in. Bruce had slept for a long time, but he needed the rest. His head still ached from all the drinking last night.

He grimaced in pain as he took another sip of coffee. At least he wasn’t nauseated or throwing up. He’d had worse hangovers. He still felt like crap though. The coffee was helping a little.

Sitting across from him, Clark watched, looking concerned. The Kryptonian’s face had completely healed from the punch. Clark had whined so much about that bruise and it was already gone. For someone so strong, he must have a pathetic pain tolerance. Whereas Bruce was very accustomed to pain.

“About last night…” Clark said guiltily. “I’m really sorry for hurting you and making you…upset.”

Bruce shifted uncomfortably in his chair. He knew what Clark was really trying to say: “I’m sorry for making you cry.”

It was embarrassing. Bruce rarely ever cried, but he had been so fucking frustrated. Even now, he still felt bitter about all the months he spent searching for Clark. It was infuriating. Clark had wormed his way into Bruce’s life, then he suddenly disappeared. When Clark was gone, Bruce had felt his absence every day, gnawing at him like a gaping wound.

Before, Bruce had been perfectly fine alone. Then Clark came and fucked it all up. Somehow Bruce had grown accustomed to the other man’s presence. It became normal. Expected. Preferred. Bruce took for granted that Clark was always going to be there until he wasn’t…

And that’s why it had hurt so much. Because Bruce had allowed himself to become attached, to have expectations. It had been stupid, but it was too late now. The attachment was already there. Bruce genuinely cared about Clark. And caring meant Clark could hurt him.

After the prolonged silence, Clark looked worried. “Bruce?”

“I’m fine.”

“Are you hungover?”

“Yes,” Bruce grumbled. “Isn’t it obvious?”
“Are you hungry? I’ve heard that eating helps.”

“You’ve never been hungover?”

“Well, no,” Clark admitted. “Alcohol doesn’t affect me that much.”

Bruce huffed in annoyance. “Of course, it doesn’t.” Lucky bastard…

“I’d make you something, but I don’t have a lot of food here. I can take you out to eat,” Clark offered. “Would that be okay?”

He shrugged. “Yeah, that’s fine.”

Clark smiled brightly, flashing his perfect white teeth.

“But I need to stop by my hotel room first,” Bruce added. “So I can shower and change clothes.”

“Sure! I’ll fly you there.” Clark stood excitedly. “Let’s go.”

SxB

While Bruce was taking a shower, Clark paced back and forth in the fancy hotel room. It was the same exact room as last time. Months ago, the last time Clark was in this hotel room, he had asked Bruce out on a date. Of course, the date had never happened after the huge misunderstanding over the kryptonite shipment…

Clark cursed himself for being such an idiot. Now he felt like he was making up for lost time. Today he had asked Bruce out to eat again. And Bruce had agreed again. This time Clark was determined not to screw this up. He would take Bruce to the best restaurant in Metropolis. And nothing would get in his way.

Standing in front of a mirror, Clark nervously tried to fix his crooked tie. He had to dress formally for the restaurant he had in mind. He was wearing some of his best clothes. But underneath the suit, he still wore his Superman outfit. Just in case.

When Bruce finally stepped out of the bathroom, he looked amazing. He was wearing one of his perfectly tailored suits and he had his damp hair combed back. Bruce sauntered across the room while Clark watched in a daze. Bruce was drop-dead gorgeous. How could Clark ever ignore this man? His very presence demanded attention.

Bruce stared at him with piercing blue eyes. Then he stepped close to Clark and grabbed his tie.

“Your tie is a mess.” Bruce unfastened Clark’s tie and straightened it. “Why do you even wear ties if you don’t know how to tie them properly?”

Clark smiled sheepishly. “Heh, sorry.”

Bruce finished fixing his tie, then he stared up, meeting Clark’s gaze. They were standing so close together that Clark could see the flecks of gold in Bruce’s grayish-blue eyes. Clark swallowed hard as his heart pounded in his chest. He was so tempted to lean forward and kiss him.

When Bruce stepped away, Clark finally snapped out of his trance. Dammit. Clark needed to control himself. He could not screw this up.

“I’m starving. Let’s go.” Bruce headed to the door.
Before he could reach the exit, Clark rushed over and held the door open for him. Bruce gave him a confused look, then walked out of the room.

SxB

The fanciest restaurant in Metropolis was close to Bruce’s hotel. It was only a block away. Clark and Bruce walked down the street until they reached the entrance to Le Mistral. Clark had never been to the French restaurant before, but he had heard stories from Lois. She highly recommended the place. It was supposed to have the best food in town.

At the entrance, Clark held the door open again and bowed slightly. “After you.”

Bruce smirked while rolling his eyes. “You’re ridiculous.”

He walked inside, then Clark followed. The interior of the restaurant was definitely impressive. Everything looked so elegant and high-class. There were beautiful paintings on the walls and chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

“Good afternoon, gentlemen.” A host greeted them. “May I have the name for your reservation?”

Reservation? Clark cringed in embarrassment. Damn. He didn’t know that he needed a reservation just to eat here.

Bruce glanced at Clark and immediately understood the situation. “The name is Bruce Wayne.”

The host gaped at him for a moment, blinking in surprise. “B-Bruce Wayne? You’re the Bruce Wayne?”

Bruce smiled charmingly. “Do you think you could seat us without a reservation?”

“Yes, sir! Of course, Mr. Wayne. I’m sorry I didn’t recognize you right away. Please follow me.”

The host ushered them into the large dining area.

They followed him to a table and sat down. Then the host gave them a couple menus. “Please enjoy your meal, Mr. Wayne. Let me know if you need anything. Chloe will be your server.”

After the host scurried away, Clark looked at Bruce and asked, “Have you been here before?”

“No.” Bruce grabbed a menu and flipped through the pages.

“Wow.” Clark teased him, “You’re such a celebrity.”

“Shut up. At least I got us a table.”

Clark winced guiltily. “Yeah… Sorry about that.”

Bruce shrugged, still studying the menu. “This place is expensive, Clark. We don’t have to eat here.”

“No, it’s fine. I’m paying,” he insisted. “Get whatever you want.”

Bruce raised an eyebrow. “I can buy my own meal.”

“I know, but you paid my rent. I owe you, remember. Let me pay you back.”

“…Alright,” Bruce agreed reluctantly.
Soon, the waitress came to their table, smiling happily. “Hello, I’m Chloe. I will be your server today. Can I get you anything to drink?”

“Just water,” Bruce answered.

“I’ll have water too,” Clark replied.

“Okay, two waters. Are you gentlemen paying together or separately?” she asked.

“Together. I’m paying,” Clark pointed at Bruce. “If he tries to pay, don’t let him.”

The waitress laughed while Bruce glared at him.

“How sweet. Your partner is so lucky.” She winked at Bruce and walked away. “I’ll be right back with your drinks.”

Once she was gone, Bruce growled, “What the hell was that?”

Clark crossed his arms defensively. “I told you I was going to pay.”

“Our waitress thinks we’re a couple.”

“Really?” He blinked in surprise.

“She called me your partner.”

Clark grinned, giddy with excitement. A complete stranger thought he was dating Bruce?! This was great! They must really look like a couple!

Bruce stared at him, looking annoyed. “Clark?”

Clark instantly snapped out of his happy trance. He cleared his throat and leaned back in his chair, trying to act nonchalant. “Oh, well. It doesn’t bother me, but we can clear up the misunderstanding if you want. I don’t care either way.”

“No, I…” Bruce hid his face behind a menu. “I don’t care either. It’s not a big deal.”

Smiling victoriously, Clark picked up the other menu. He glanced through the menu, then froze. Shit… The whole menu was in French. Clark couldn’t read any of it. He could ask Bruce for help, but he didn’t want to seem incompetent. He already screwed up by not making a reservation.

Clark studied the menu for a while. He could just order something randomly. All the food here was supposed to taste good. Clark found something called Couilles de Mouton in the Spécialité section. That meant it was a specialty, right? Also, there were little stars next to it on the menu. It must be pretty good then.

When the waitress returned, she set two glasses of water on the table. “Are you two ready to order? What can I get for you?” She looked at Clark first.

“Uh, I’ll have the Couilles de Mouton,” Clark said, butchering the pronunciation.

Suddenly, Bruce cracked up, laughing.

“What?” Clark gave him a confused look.

Bruce shook his head with an amused expression. “You don’t want to eat that, Clark.”
“Sure, I do.”

“You just ordered lamb testicles.”

“What?! Seriously?!” Clark gaped at him in shock. *That’s so gross! French people eat that?!
*

Now the waitress was giggling.

With a sigh, Bruce ordered for both of them, “Just give us two orders of Filet de Porc.”

“Great choice. I’ll be back as soon as it’s ready.” She walked away, still snickering.

After she left, Bruce took a sip of water and criticized him. “If you needed help reading the menu, you should have said something.”

“I didn’t want to look stupid,” Clark admitted.

“By ordering lamb testicles?”

“Hey!”

Bruce laughed at him again. It was such a rare sight. The Dark Knight hardly ever laughed. Even though it was at Clark’s expense, he still enjoyed hearing the sound.

Clark smiled. “I think this is the most I’ve ever seen you laugh.”

That seemed to catch Bruce off-guard. He immediately stopped laughing and looked away. “So?”

“I like it. You should laugh more often.”

“Whatever.” Bruce blushed slightly.

Clark stared at him with wide, hungry eyes. *So cute…*

In about fifteen minutes, the waitress returned with their food. Clark ate his lunch happily. The pork filet tasted really good. He was so glad that he wasn’t eating lamb testicles. Just the thought of it grossed him out. Luckily, Bruce had warned him. And, he was right. Clark should have asked for help instead of ordering something random…. *What is wrong with me? Why do I keep making stupid mistakes?* At least Bruce found it amusing.

When they finished eating, the waitress came back and collected their plates. “Oh, I almost forgot to ask. Are you celebrating a birthday or an anniversary? If it’s a special occasion, I can bring you some free dessert.”

Bruce shook his head. “It’s not-”

“It’s our one year anniversary,” Clark declared.

She grinned. “That’s great. Congratulations! I’ll get you some cake.” The waitress hurried away happily.

Bruce gave him an incredulous look. “Our anniversary?”

“Well, it’s been about a year since we met. Also, we get free cake this way.” Clark smiled.

Bruce didn’t seem completely thrilled with the idea, but he didn’t argue with Clark over it. Soon,
the waitress returned to their table with a huge piece of chocolate cake. Clark ate about half of the cake while Bruce only took a couple bites. When they were done, there was still a lot of cake left.

“We can get a to-go box,” Clark suggested.

Bruce nodded. “I’ll bring it home to Dick. He’ll like it.”

“Sure,” Clark agreed cheerfully.

SxB

After they left the restaurant, Bruce and Clark walked back to the hotel. They entered the hotel room, then Bruce headed toward the mini-fridge on the counter. He placed the to-go box in the fridge and glanced at Clark. The Kryptonian was watching him carefully. Clark had been acting strange all day, especially at the restaurant. Why did he insist so much on paying?

When the waitress had given Clark the bill, he wouldn’t even let Bruce look at it, which was annoying. Bruce was rich, and perfectly capable of paying. He knew Clark didn’t have a lot of money. Instead of splurging at expensive restaurants, Clark should be saving what he has. What the hell was he trying to prove?

Bruce crossed his arms. “The next time we eat somewhere I’m paying. When I paid your rent, I never expected you to pay me back, so don’t worry about that. You don’t owe me anything.”

Clark smiled sadly. “Thanks, Bruce. But that’s not true. I owe you a lot.”

They weren’t talking about money anymore… Bruce uncrossed his arms, giving Clark a concerned look. “You still blame yourself for what happened?”

Clark sighed. “Of course, I do. You died and it was my fault.”

“No, it wasn’t,” Bruce argued. “The Joker drugged you. I don’t blame you at all. If you listened to me on the Bat-Comm, you would know that.”

“I did listen. I heard everything you said.”

Bruce snapped in frustration, “Then you know I forgave you months ago! You shouldn’t feel guilty about it. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“But I was going to…”

“What?”

Clark swallowed nervously and confessed, “When you were dead, I-I completely lost it. I was planning to kill the Joker. I was going to murder every criminal I could find.”

Disturbed, Bruce’s eyes widened as he stared at the Kryptonian. He had no idea Clark had contemplated murder. “You…You may have thought about it. But you didn’t actually murder anyone.”

“No, but I was going to. If you didn’t come back, if your heart didn’t start beating again… I was about to kill so many people, Bruce.” Clark looked ashamed as he admitted, “When we first met, you were right about me. I’m…dangerous. I would’ve destroyed the world if you didn’t come back.”

Clark stared at him with tears in his eyes. “I’m corruptible. The Joker almost ruined me. When you
warned me about him, I didn’t listen. I thought there was nothing the Joker could do to corrupt me, but there is. I can turn evil under the right circumstances. I can kill. I was so close to losing myself.”

Bruce felt a surge of sympathy for the hero. “Clark… Everyone is corruptible. It’s possible for anyone to turn evil.”

“Not you. Nothing corrupts you. You’ve been fighting the Joker for years, and he has never broken you. Then the Joker comes after me once, and I…” Clark guiltily lowered his gaze.

Bruce sighed. “You can’t keep beating yourself up over this. You didn’t kill anyone.”

“I killed you.”

“Then you saved me. As soon as the fear toxin wore off, you saved my life. You brought me back.” Bruce stepped toward him and cupped Clark’s face with both hands, forcing the Kryptonian to look at him.

“You are a good person, Clark. Never doubt that.”

For a moment, they stared into each other’s eyes. Then, suddenly, Clark leaned forward and kissed Bruce.
Bruce froze in shock. Clark’s mouth was pressed firmly against his. How the fuck did this happen? Why didn’t Bruce see this coming? He stayed still for a couple seconds, trying to process the situation. Then Clark pulled away, looking embarrassed.

“I—I’m sorry. I—”

Bruce cut him off, yanking Clark into another kiss. He ran his hands through Clark’s hair as he pulled the Kryptonian closer. For once, Bruce’s mind shut off. This felt good. It felt right. He could analyze the situation later.

Clark kissed him back desperately, hungrily like a man who had been starved for far too long. Bruce opened his mouth wider and Clark instantly deepened the kiss. Their tongues slid against each other as they kissed wetly, ravaging each other mouths. After a while, Bruce started to feel light-headed as they kissed feverishly over and over and over. Obviously, Clark didn’t need to breathe as much as he did.

After another long kiss, Bruce finally broke away and lowered his head against Clark’s shoulder. He inhaled deeply, trying to catch his breath. Rational thoughts began to form. What the hell am I doing? They were making-out like a couple of teenagers. Bruce needed to think about this before—

His mind short-circuited when he felt Clark grab his ass. He glanced up, then Clark kissed him again, plunging his tongue inside Bruce’s mouth. Bruce made a muffled sound as Clark squeezed his ass roughly. All coherent thought was gone. His heart raced as Bruce returned the kiss forcefully.

For a moment, Clark allowed Bruce to dominate the kiss, then he suddenly scooped Bruce off the floor and propped him against a wall. Bruce’s legs dangled in the air as he held onto Clark’s shoulders. Meanwhile Clark stood between his legs, kissing him. Bruce was pinned between Clark and the wall with the Kryptonian easily supporting his weight. Bruce had never been in this position before. He had never kissed someone who could pick him up and manhandle him. It was strange, exciting and disconcerting all at the same time.

As they kissed, Clark yanked off Bruce’s suit jacket and undid his tie. Then Bruce pulled off Clark’s suit jacket too. Clark leaned closer against him, kissing Bruce’s neck. Bruce arched his head back, giving him better access while wrapping his legs around Clark’s waist. When Clark
nipped at a sensitive area on his neck, Bruce let out a short gasp.

Clark smirked. “You’re so cute.”

“Shut up,” Bruce growled as his face flushed.

Clark kissed him on the mouth again. Bruce kissed back fervently. Then he felt Clark pulling him away from the wall. Bruce tightened his grip on Clark’s shoulders and kept his legs wrapped around the other man’s waist while Clark carried him. They continued to kiss as Clark headed towards the bed.

Suddenly, Clark shoved Bruce down on the bed and straddled him. Wasting no time, Bruce grabbed onto Clark, pulling him into another kiss. They kissed deeply, then Clark spoke hotly next to his ear.

“I waited so long for this.”

What? Bruce blinked in confusion. Clark waited? Was this planned?

Before Bruce could ask anything, Clark kissed him again. His voice was muffled while they kissed passionately. Soon Bruce forgot what he was going to ask. Eventually Clark broke from the kiss, then he ripped open Bruce’s shirt. Buttons popped off as the shirt was splayed open, revealing Bruce’s bare chest. Clark’s hands roamed all over his chest and back, caressing his skin. Bruce leaned into the touch while they kissed.

Then Clark’s hand slid lower towards his pants. He palmed Bruce’s erection though the clothing, groping him. Bruce gasped in pleasure as he ached into the touch. It felt so good. Suddenly, he heard the sound of Clark snapping his belt, easily breaking off the belt buckle. The Kryptonian flung the ruined belt aside.

After this display of strength, Bruce had a moment of clarity.

He quickly grabbed Clark’s arm, stopping him. “Clark, wait.”

Clark paused and looked at him.

“What…is this?” he asked. “What do you want from me?”

Clark tilted his head to the side like he was confused by the question. “I just want to be with you.”

Bruce relaxed somewhat. “Okay. Like friends with benefits? We can have that kind of arrangement.”

“Is that my only option? I mean, is that what you want?”

He huffed in annoyance. “Clark, just tell me what you want.”

Clark sighed. “I want whatever you’re willing to give. Bruce, I…” He hesitated for a moment before confessing, “I’m in love with you.”

Bruce’s eyes widened in shock. “You’re…what?”

“I’m in love with you.”

In a jolt of panic, Bruce immediately pushed Clark away and back-flipped off the bed. What the fuck? What the actual fuck?? His heart hammered in his chest as he paced back and forth.
Clark stood, looking concerned. “Bruce, what’s wrong?”

He continued to pace anxiously. “Sex is one thing, Clark. I can do that. But this? You can’t love me.”

“Why not?”

“Because…Because it’s a bad idea.”

“Why?”

“It just is!” Bruce hurried to the door and grabbed the handle, about to flee the room.

In a flash, Clark zoomed over and slammed the door shut, forcing him to stay. “We aren’t done talking. Why is it a bad idea? Tell me.”

Bruce grumbled, “I don’t have the best track record when it comes to relationships.”

“Neither do I.”

“My last girlfriend was killed by the Joker.”

“I understand that you’re scared. I am too—”

“I’m not scared!” he yelled. “I’m doing you a favor. I’m a terrible choice. You should date someone like Lois.”

Clark stubbornly shook his head. “But I don’t want anyone else. I want you.”

“Well, too bad. I don’t do relationships. Not anymore.” Bruce yanked on the door handle again, but Clark leaned his hand against the door, trapping him inside.

“Let me open the fucking door!” He snapped in frustration.

Clark stared at him sadly. “Bruce, I don’t want to lose you.”

“You won’t. We’re friends.”

“Are you going to avoid me now?”

Bruce scoffed. “Oh, that’s rich coming from you. You avoid me for months, then suddenly you’re in love with me.”

“It wasn’t sudden. I’ve had these feelings for a while.”

Bruce blinked in surprise. “How long?”

“I realized I had a crush on you after you saved me from Luthor and took me to Gotham.”

“That…was ages ago.”

“I know.”

Bruce swallowed nervously. “Clark, we can’t…”

“Okay,” he agreed solemnly. “You know I’d never force you to do anything you didn’t want.”
“Hmph. Then open the door.”

With a sigh, Clark opened the door for him. “I don’t want you to leave.”

Bruce was about to exit the hotel room, but then he hesitated. He didn’t like the sad expression on Clark’s face. It bothered him.

“We’re still friends, aren’t we?”

“Of course.” Clark nodded.

“Don’t you dare ignore my calls or avoid me again.”

Clark gave him a confused look. “You still want me around? You just said it isn’t a good idea for us to be together.”

“I know, but…” Bruce lowered his gaze, feeling conflicted.

I can’t cut you out of my life completely. I should, but I can’t. I just got you back…

“Bruce?”

He glanced up at Clark. “What?”

“Can we compromise?” Clark asked hopefully. “I know you don’t want a relationship, but the physical stuff doesn’t bother you, right?”

Bruce shrugged. “Well, no.”

“So, I can touch you and you won’t mind?”

Bruce crossed his arms. “If we have sex, it wouldn’t be fair to you. For you, it would mean more-”

“I’m not talking about sex. I just want to be close to you.”

“…Okay.” He uncrossed his arms, feeling unsure.

Clark stepped toward Bruce and pulled him into an embrace. He kicked the door shut while holding Bruce tightly. Clark ran a hand through Bruce’s hair and kissed the sensitive part of his neck. His breath caught in his throat as Bruce wrapped his arms around Clark, clutching the Kryptonian’s back.

“Does this bother you?” Clark whispered in his ear.

“No, it…” Feels so good. Don’t stop. “It’s fine.”

“Let me know if I go too far.” Clark kissed him, open-mouthed with tongue.

Bruce melted in the embrace, kissing Clark back freely. He was tempted to cave in and give Clark whatever he wanted. Give Clark everything… He could fall in love with Clark easily, if he allowed it.

Terrified, Bruce quickly pulled away, breathing hard. “Not on the mouth.”

“Okay.” Clark lovingly kissed his cheek then his forehead. “I’m just happy to hold you like this.”

Clark held him close, trailing his hands up and down Bruce’s back. Meanwhile Bruce hid his face
in Clark’s shoulder. He felt so out of control. Bruce wasn’t sure what the hell was happening. He knew that he needed to put a stop to this and establish firm boundaries. But he couldn’t bring himself to push Clark away again.

Instead Bruce leaned into the embrace, letting Clark hold him.
Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark's relationship becomes public

In Gotham, Batman stood on a gargoyle, overlooking the city. He was high above the streets, on the side of a tall building. At the moment, everything was quiet. Batman had been on patrol all night. He had stopped dozens of criminals, but they were mostly thieves and small-time gangsters. Usually, he focused on major threats like the Joker, the Penguin, Poison Ivy, Bane, Scarecrow, the Riddler or even Catwoman. But none of them had been out tonight. So Batman had to distract himself with whatever criminals he could find…

And it wasn’t working. Bruce was still thinking about Clark… About kissing him. About how good it felt.

Fuck. Batman fired his grappling gun at a nearby building and swung away. He couldn’t date Clark. It was completely out of the question.

Batman jumped down into an alleyway, between two abandoned buildings. Then he walked to the Batmobile. It was nearly 5:30 AM. He had been up all night. It was time to go home. He got into the vehicle and drove away.

He sped down the city streets, heading to the outskirts of town. As he drove, he passed by rolling greens hills and the entrance to the Gotham Cemetery. Batman suddenly stomped on the brake, then he turned the Batmobile around. He drove into the empty cemetery and parked the Batmobile behind some trees.

Bruce stepped out of the vehicle and strolled through the cemetery. There was a layer of mist above the grass, shrouding several tombstones from view. Unfortunately, Bruce knew this cemetery like the back of his hand. His parents were buried here, and so was Rachel Dawes.

As he walked, he stopped by his parents’ graves, checking on their tombstones. Then he headed towards Rachel’s grave. He came here to visit her, to remind himself why he needed to be alone.

Batman stood in front of Rachel’s grave, solemnly staring at her tombstone. She had died so young… She was only 26 when the Joker killed her. That was four years ago.

Bruce let out a long sigh. It was his fault that she died. The Joker had captured her and Harvey Dent, then the homicidal maniac left them in two separate locations that were both set to explode at the same time. Batman went to one location while the Gotham police raced to the other location… Bruce had decided to save Rachel, but the Joker had given him the wrong address on purpose. So, instead Batman had saved Harvey Dent, and Rachel had died…

Rachel’s death had been painful, but Batman had continued to fight the Joker. Meanwhile Harvey Dent became Two-Face and ultimately died anyway. Harvey had been a good man, but the Joker broke him. The Joker loves corrupting good people and driving them insane.

The Joker had tried to do the same thing to Clark. And he almost succeeded…
Bruce remembered the ashamed look on Clark’s face when they talked yesterday.

The hero had tears in eyes as he confessed, “I’m corruptible. The Joker almost ruined me. When you warned me about him, I didn’t listen. I thought there was nothing the Joker could do to corrupt me, but there is. I can turn evil under the right circumstances. I can kill. I was so close to losing myself.”

Bruce swallowed nervously. His hands trembled as he recalled the Joker’s threat.

The Joker had grinned nastily and snickered. “Can you imagine, Bats? Superman descending into madness. The whole world would burrrrrrn. I’m getting all hot and bothered just thinking about it.”

Bruce could imagine. He could imagine what would happen if Superman truly lost his way, if he became a murderer. It would change everything. It would change the entire world. No one would be able to stop him, except Batman. Maybe… If Batman had enough time to prepare and a foolproof plan. Maybe he could beat Superman in a fight. But realistically, Bruce knew he’d probably lose. Then the whole world would burn…

It’d be irresponsible and selfish to start a romantic relationship with Clark. Just being friends with the Kryptonian was foolish enough. But loving him? There’s no way that could end well. Honestly, Clark could do better than Bruce. Bruce had issues and a ridiculous amount of emotional baggage. Also he came with enemies like the fucking Joker.

And if the Joker ever finds out about the relationship… Bruce cringed. If the Joker knew or even suspected a relationship, he would never leave Clark alone. The psychotic clown would torment Clark for the rest of his life, finding new ways to torture him until he finally loses his mind. The Joker would make him part of the game.

Bruce could not condemn Clark to suffer like that. There’s a reason why Batman has to be alone.

He felt his throat tighten as he stared at Rachel’s grave. She is a perfect example why. People close to Bruce die, or they’re hurt beyond repair. When Bruce chose to become Batman, he also chose a lifetime of being alone. He can’t have a serious relationship. He can’t fall in love. Because this is the life he has chosen. Because he’s Batman.

“I’m sorry, Rachel. I failed you,” Bruce said mournfully. He had an aching pain in his chest like a gaping wound that would never close. Never fully heal.

I can’t fail Clark too.

Bruce turned and walked away. In the distance, the sun was starting to rise.

SxB

At Wayne Manor, Bruce peeled off the suit of black Kevlar and took a quick shower. Afterwards, he pulled on a black robe and walked into his bedroom. He could see the sunrise, shining through his window. He winced at the bright light and drew the curtains, shrouding the room in darkness. Then he glanced at the clock. It was 6:15 AM. Alfred was probably done preparing breakfast.

Bruce left his room and headed down the stairs. In the dining room, Dick was already eating and Alfred had plate of food waiting for him.

The butler greeted him. “Good morning, Master Wayne. Your breakfast is ready.”

“Thanks, Alfred.” Bruce yawned as he sat down.
He started eating while Dick grabbed a newspaper off the table. The boy unfolded the paper and began reading. Suddenly, he dropped his fork with a loud clang. Dick stared at the newspaper with wide eyes like he was in shock.

Bruce gave him a concerned look. “Dick, what’s wrong?”

“Uh… Are you dating Clark now?”

“What?!” He snatched the newspaper away from Dick and studied it.

Oh, shit… The headline was titled ‘Bruce Wayne’s Secret Gay Lover’ and there was a photo of Clark carrying Bruce bridal style outside the LexCorp building. The article also described how Clark had left in a taxi with Bruce… Fuck! Even though Bruce was drunk, he shouldn’t have allowed Clark to carry him in public like that.

Bruce skimmed through the rest of the article, turning to the next page. There was another photo of Bruce and Clark eating together inside the French restaurant. Their waitress had been interviewed. She had claimed Bruce and Clark were celebrating their one year anniversary…

Seething with anger, Bruce tightly clenched the newspaper, ripping it. God fucking dammit!

Dick looked worried. “Bruce, are you-?”

Bruce slammed his fist on the table. “No, Clark and I are not dating. This is slanderous garbage! I should fucking sue them!”

Dick blinked in surprise. “Uh… Okay. So, the pictures are photo-shopped then?”

His anger deflated somewhat. “Well, no.”

“Is the waitress lying?” Dick asked.

Bruce admitted reluctantly, “Clark wanted free cake, so he said it was our anniversary.”

“So, what did they lie about?”

Nothing… Bruce propped his elbows on the table and hid his face in his hands. He couldn’t sue anyone for slander. He couldn’t do a damn thing. Bruce wanted to keep Clark at a safe distance, but he failed. Now everyone thought they were dating.

Alfred spoke sympathetically, “Master Wayne, I am sorry that you have been ousted like this, but perhaps it is for the best.”

“Outed?” Bruce angrily grabbed the ripped newspaper. “You actually believe this trash? Clark and I are not dating.”

Dick groaned in frustration. “Oh my God. We all know you’re gay for Superman. Just admit it.”

“Clark is my friend. I am not gay for him.”

The boy rolled his eyes. “Yeah, right. When he wouldn’t talk to you, you were brooding for months like a teenage girl.”

“No, I wasn’t,” Bruce growled.

“Yes, you were.” Dick looked at the butler pleadingly. “Alfred, back me up on this.”
“When Mr. Kent was gone, I did notice a substantial increase in Master Wayne’s brooding habits,” Alfred supplied.

Dick grinned excitedly. “See! The brooding proves it. You’re totally gay and have a boner for Superman.”

Alfred sighed. “Language, Master Dick.”

Furious, Bruce glared at his ward as he snapped, “First of all, an attraction to Clark doesn’t make me gay. If anything, I’m bisexual. Secondly, I don’t brood. I plan. There’s a difference. And thirdly, you’re thirteen. Why am I having this conversation with you? Go to school!” He stood and angrily stomped away.

Dick gaped at him as he left, then glanced up at Alfred. “…Did he just admit he’s attracted to Clark?”

SxB

At 7 AM, Clark’s alarm clock started beeping on the nightstand. Clark sleepily rolled over in bed and slammed his hand on the alarm clock, smashing the device. He had been trying to turn it off, but instead he broke it.

“Oh, not again,” Clark complained as he sat up. Now he needed a new alarm clock.

With a yawn, Clark stood and walked into the bathroom. After relieving himself and brushing his teeth, he studied his reflection in the mirror. He had stubble on his face. Deciding to shave, Clark shot lasers from his eyes which reflected off the mirror and bounced back towards his face. He carefully moved his gaze while the lasers removed all the stubble.

When he was done shaving, Clark left the bathroom and quickly got dressed. He wore a regular business suit with his Superman attire hidden underneath. Then he walked across the small apartment towards the kitchen. He grabbed a couple pieces of bread and zapped them with his heat vision. Clark ate the toast and hurried out the door. He didn’t want to be late for work.

Humming happily, Clark walked down the stairs until he reached the first floor. Then he stepped out of the apartment building and froze in shock.

On the sidewalk, there was a large group of people, holding up cameras and microphones. They all rushed toward Clark, yelling over each other. Bright lights flashed as the cameramen took dozens of photos. Then several microphones were jabbed in Clark’s face while the reporters all asked questions at once.

“Mr. Kent, is it true that you’re dating Bruce Wayne?”

“Why did you keep the relationship a secret?”

“Can you tell us your side of the story?”

“What is Bruce Wayne like in bed?”

“Is Bruce Wayne gay, bisexual, or pansexual?”

“Has Bruce Wayne been cheating on you with female models? Is he unfaithful?”

“Do you and Bruce Wayne have an open relationship? Is he allowed to have sex with other
people?"

“Have you really dated Bruce Wayne for a year?”

“How would you describe your relationship with Bruce Wayne?”

The reporters asked more and more questions while Clark gaped at them in shock. He was so confused right now. Why did everyone think he was dating Bruce? What the hell is going on?!

In the street, a car screeched to a halt next to the sidewalk. Then the car window rolled down and Lois yelled at him, “Smallville, get in!”

Clark ran away from the crowd and jumped in the front passenger seat of Lois’s car. She quickly drove away while the cameramen continued taking pictures. They sped down the street, away from the apartment building.

His heart raced as he complained to Lois, “I don’t understand. Why is this happening?”

“Have you seen the news yet? Rumor has it you’ve been dating Bruce for a whole year. Look.” While driving, Lois flung a newspaper at Clark.

He caught the newspaper and read the headline titled ‘Bruce Wayne’s Secret Gay Lover’. Clark paled as he read the rest of the article. Oh, no… This was bad. Very, very bad. Now pictures of Clark’s face were plastered everywhere.

He swallowed nervously. “Do… Do you think anyone noticed?”


Clark let out a sigh of relief. At least his secret identity was still safe. For now. He flipped through the newspaper again, studying the article. What a mess…

Bruce was not going to be happy about this.
When Clark and Lois arrived at the Daily Planet, a crowd of reporters were already waiting outside. Bright lights flashed as the cameramen snapped photos. Meanwhile the reporters yelled dozens of questions. Clark and Lois hurried past the crowd, rushing inside the building. Then they took the elevator up to their office room.

When they entered the main workroom, all the other employees stared at Clark while gossiping amongst themselves. Clark could hear all the whispers. They were all talking about the article and his relationship with Bruce. A few rude people were insulting Clark, calling him a ‘faggot’.

With a sigh, Clark tried to ignore the whispers as he headed towards his desk. Lois walked beside him, glaring at their gossiping co-workers. At least Clark had one ally here.

Before he could sit down, Perry yelled from inside his office, “Kent, get your ass in here!”

Damn it. Clark trudged into his boss’s office. Perry was sitting at his desk, arguing with someone on the phone. After he finally slammed the phone down, he looked up at Clark.

“Kent, we need to talk.”

Clark sighed. “Sir, I’m really sorry about the paparazzi downstairs.”

“Sorry?” Perry crossed his arms. “Boy, you’ve got nothing to be sorry about.”

Clark smiled gratefully. “Really? Thank-”

“This shitstorm is great publicity for the Daily Planet!” Perry exclaimed, “Everyone’s calling me, trying to get an interview with you—Bruce Wayne’s elusive boy toy. It’s fantastic!”

Boy toy? Annoyed, Clark frowned at his boss. “Uh… Okay.”

“I want an article, Kent. Write a full exclusive about your relationship with Bruce Wayne. Spare no details! Make it as kinky and gay as possible. People eat that shit up. We’ll make millions!”

Clark gritted his teeth, barely containing his anger. “Sir, I don’t feel comfortable doing that.”

“I’m not going to write about my personal life.”

“Hmph. Fine. We’ll have Lois interview you. She can write the article.” Perry yelled, “Lois, get in here!”

“But, sir-!” Clark protested.

Lois hurried into the office, looking worried. “What is it, boss?”

“Interview Kent about his weird sex life and write about it.” Perry ordered.

“I’m not doing an interview!” Clark snapped angrily.

Perry sighed in frustration. “Either write the article yourself or do the interview. I don’t care which. This is the biggest story right now, and you’re going to help out the Daily Planet.”

“No, I’m not,” Clark stubbornly refused. “My personal life is nobody’s business.”

Perry glared at him. “I want the article on my desk by noon, Kent. If I don’t get it, you’re fired.” He pointed to the door. “Now get out of my office and get to work. Lois, help him. He’s going to need it.”

SxB

What the hell am I supposed to do? Clark sat at his desk, sulking. Microsoft Word was open on his computer screen, but the document was blank. How could Perry expect this from him? It wasn’t fair! Clark couldn’t write about his relationship with Bruce. If he did, Bruce would never forgive him. And they weren’t even dating…

Clark let out a long sigh and hid his face in his hands.

“Come on, Smallville. Just let me interview you.” Lois sat down beside him. “Think of this as your chance to explain the truth. I know you haven’t been dating Bruce for a whole year, so obviously there’s some misinformation out there.”

“I’m not dating Bruce at all,” Clark grumbled. “We’re just friends.”

She raised an eyebrow. “Still?”

“Yeah.”

“So, you two haven’t kissed or anything?”

Blushing slightly, Clark looked away. “Well, I, uh…”

Lois chuckled. “Okay, so you have kissed. Good. Have you tried asking him out?”

Clark gave her a serious look. “Lois, I don’t want you to write about this.”

“I won’t. This is strictly off the record.” She leaned toward him and whispered, “So, what’s really going on between you two? You guys didn’t talk to each other for months, then all this crazy shit happened.”

He sighed. “It’s complicated.”

“Smallville, everything with you is complicated. Trust me, I’m used to it by now.”
Clark smiled at her. “Fine. I’ll tell you. But this is not an interview and I seriously don’t want you to write about it.”

She rolled her eyes. “Oh, my God. I won’t write about it. Just tell me.”

For the next ten minutes, Clark explained everything. He told her all about Luthor’s party and how drunk Bruce was. He even told her about Bruce’s mean trick. Clark explained how he had saved Bruce from Luthor and carried him away. He told her about the taxi ride back to his apartment and spending the night with Bruce.

When he told her about Bruce wearing the Superman boxers, she laughed. She also laughed when he explained how Bruce beat him up the next morning. Next, he told her about the fancy French restaurant and how he mistakenly ordered lamb testicles. She thought that was hilarious. He also explained how he lied to the waitress in order to get the free cake. Then he told her about his talk with Bruce inside the hotel room…

“After I said I loved him, Bruce completely freaked out.” Clark explained sadly, “He said we can’t be together and that he doesn’t do relationships anymore.”

“Did he give a reason why?” she asked.

“Well, he said his last girlfriend was killed by the Joker.”

“Aw, poor guy.” Lois looked sympathetic. “I think he likes you. He’s just scared.”

“Yeah, I guess…” Clark understood the fear of losing someone. The sight of Bruce’s lifeless body in space still haunted him. That fear had controlled Clark for months, keeping him away from the man he loved. But Clark didn’t want to live in fear anymore…

He remembered how it felt to kiss Bruce for the first time. And how wonderful and amazing it was when Bruce actually kissed him back. It was the best feeling in the world. He would give anything to be with Bruce. His desire for the man outweighed his fear. Now that he had a taste of what it’s like being with Bruce, Clark couldn’t let go. He couldn’t give up without even trying.

Clark was determined to change Bruce’s mind, to assuage his fears and concerns. He knew that Bruce enjoyed kissing him, and that Bruce cared about him a lot… Like Lois said, he’s just scared. With enough time and patience, Clark could probably get through to him.

Clark glared at the blank word document on his computer screen. All these damn articles weren’t helping the situation at all. Bruce must be freaking out right now.

“Smallville, I know you don’t want me to write about you and Bruce, but just hear me out,” Lois pleaded. “We need to turn something into Perry. I can write a really short article to dispute all the rumors. I’ll say that you and Bruce are only friends, and that this is all a huge misunderstanding.”

“I…I don’t know.” Clark said reluctantly, “I guess that would be okay. But I don’t want to do anything behind Bruce’s back. All of this affects him too.”

“Sure, I get that. Why don’t you call Bruce and see what he thinks?” Lois suggested.

“Yeah. Good idea. I’ll call him.” Clark stood and hurried across the large office area towards the bathroom.

Inside the bathroom, he locked the door and pulled out the Bat-Comm. Then he pressed the button on the side, calling Bruce.
“Hey, Bruce. Can you hear me? Bruce?”

After a moment of silence, Bruce answered with a raspy voice. “Yeah, I’m here.” He sounded groggy like he had been asleep.

Clark smiled guilty. “Sorry. Did I wake you?”

“I was patrolling all night. What’s wrong?” Bruce huffed in annoyance. “Let me guess. You’ve seen the news?”

“Yeah… I think everyone’s seen it.” Clark hesitated before disclosing, “Perry wants me to write an article about us.”

“Tell him no.”

“I did! But now he’s threatening to fire me if I don’t do it.” Clark nervously paced around the bathroom as he explained, “Lois offered to write the article for me. She said she’ll dispute all the rumors and claim we’re only friends.”

“That will only make the rumors worse. You shouldn’t respond at all.”

“Yeah, you’re probably right… But I don’t know what else to do.” He complained, “Bruce, I don’t want to lose my job over this.”

“…I’ll take care of it.”

Clark blinked in confusion. “What?”

“Don’t write the article. Don’t do anything. I’ll take care of it,” Bruce claimed.

“How? What are you planning to do?”

Instead of a reply, he only heard static.

“Bruce? Bruce?!” Clark yelled into the Bat-Comm. “Don’t you hang up on me!”

SxB

It was almost noon. Clark was already cleaning out his desk and packing up his belongings. He hadn’t heard back from Bruce and he hadn’t submitted anything to Perry. At noon, he was going to lose his job… Clark wasn’t happy about the situation, but he had to accept it. Hopefully, he could find a job somewhere else. He would miss the Daily Planet though.

With a sigh, Clark sat down at his desk. All of his stuff was in a cardboard box in front of him.

Suddenly, Lois rushed toward him and shoved a sheet of paper in his face. “I wrote the article. Proof-read it, then we’ll turn it in.”

Clark glanced at the paper and shook his head. “We can’t turn it in. Bruce doesn’t want us to.”

“I don’t care! Perry is going to fire you if we don’t do this!” Lois pleaded desperately, “Please, Smallville. We have to submit the article.”

“Bruce said no. We can’t.”

“What about your job?!?”
Clark crumbled up the paper and threw it in the cardboard box. “I can find another job. Bruce
doesn’t want us to do the article, so we aren’t doing it. I can’t betray his trust. He’s more important
than any article.”

“But… But—” Lois sighed and sat down next to him, looking defeated. “This is so unfair. Perry
shouldn’t be able to fire you over this. I’m going to miss you.”

Clark gave her a sad smile. “I’m going to miss you too… I really enjoyed working here.”

For a few moments, they sat in silence. When it was finally noon, Perry barged out of his office
and stormed across the workroom, towards them.

“Kent, where is my article?!” His boss demanded.

Clark and Lois shared a poignant look, then he stood and faced Perry. It was time to face the
chopping block.

Before Clark could say anything, the elevator doors slid open and the room was suddenly filled
with excited chatter. Among the voices, Clark heard a familiar heartbeat. His eyes widened in
shock as he turned towards the elevator.

Bruce stepped out of the elevator and strolled across the workroom. He looked impeccable in his
perfectly tailored business suit, and he had a pack of Daily Planet employees following him.

He flashed a smile at Perry. “Mr. White, long time no see.”

Perry White looked surprised. “Mr. Wayne, what brings you here?”

“All you been checking your emails?” Bruce smirked as he declared, “I own the Daily Planet
now. I’m the majority shareholder.”


Several people in the room gasped while Clark stared at the billionaire in disbelief. Bruce bought
the whole company just to protect Clark’s job? This was what Bruce meant when he said he’d take
care of it?!

Perry cleared his throat, trying to regain his composure. “I didn’t see any emails about this. When
did this happen?”

“I became the official owner of this company about twenty minutes ago. Come with me. We’re
having a meeting.” Bruce headed toward a nearby conference room. While he walked, Bruce
glanced over his shoulder and winked at Clark.

After Bruce and the group of employees entered the conference room, Lois chuckled happily.

“Still such a flirt.” Lois smirked. “Brucinda, you never disappoint.”

“Oh, stop it.” Clark couldn’t stop himself from smiling too.

SxB

When the meeting started, Clark sat down at his desk and used his super-hearing to eavesdrop. In
the meeting room, Bruce was talking to all of the upper management, explaining that the Daily
Planet was now part of Wayne Enterprises. While Clark sat his desk, Lois sat in a chair next to him,
fidgeting excitedly.
“What’s he saying now?” She asked impatiently.

“He’s just introducing himself. Nothing big has happened yet.” Clark replied.

“I wonder what changes Bruce is going to make. Do you think we’ll get better health insurance? I’ve heard Wayne employees get the best insurance.”

Clark chuckled. “I don’t know, Lois.”

“Superman, help! Please help!” Suddenly, Clark heard screams coming from Smallville. He could also hear strong winds and the sound of buildings being torn apart.

“Oh, no.” He quickly stood and hurried away.

Lois chased after him. “Wait, where are you going? I need you to spy on our bosses.”

“There’s a tornado in Smallville. It’s near Ma and Pa’s house. I have to go.” Clark rushed into the bathroom and locked the door.

After he changed his Superman suit, he zoomed out the window, flying towards Smallville.

Clark was gone for two hours. First, he saved the people of Smallville from a tornado. Then, on the way back, he caught a plane falling from the sky. And after he arrived in Metropolis, he found a supervillain terrorizing civilians, which led to a battle.

When Clark finally returned to the Daily Planet, Bruce had already left. He could hear Bruce’s heartbeat on a jet, heading back to Gotham.

In the bathroom, Clark changed back into his business attire and put on his glasses. Then he headed into the workroom. It was business as usual in the office area. Everything looked the same, except Lois’s desk was empty. Clark felt a pang of worry. What happened when he was gone? Lois wasn’t fired, was she?

Clark felt relieved when he spotted Lois waving happily across the room. She was standing outside a private office that had her nameplate on door. Bruce must’ve given Lois her own office. That was nice of him. Clark smiled as he approached Lois.

“So, what happened when I was gone?”

“Oh my God! So much! Smallville, check out my new office.” Lois excitedly pulled Clark into her office and shut the door. “It’s bigger than Perry’s. And look at the view!” She pointed at a large window, overlooking the city. “I swear Bruce taking over is the best thing that ever happened to this company.”

“Did you get promoted?” Clark asked.

“Yeah, Bruce said I can make decisions in his place when he’s gone. I’m like my own boss now. I only answer to Bruce and he doesn’t really care what I do.” Lois grinned proudly, before adding, “I, uh, hope you don’t mind. Bruce said that he considered promoting you instead, but he didn’t want to make the rumors worse.”

“No, it’s fine.” Clark smiled. “I’m glad you were promoted. I just want to keep the job I have.”

“Well, you don’t have to worry about that.”
“What do you mean?”

“It’s impossible to fire you now.” She explained happily, “Bruce made all of the upper management sign a contract that specifically protects you. Now you can write whatever you want and show up to work whenever you want. Also, you have unlimited vacation time. So, you can leave and go be Superman whenever you’re needed. You don’t have to worry about missing work anymore. Isn’t that great?”

His smile faded. “Yeah… Great.”

“What’s wrong?”

“I don’t need Bruce buying people off for me,” Clark grumbled, frowning.

Lois groaned in frustration. “Oh, no. I know that look. Smallville, do not screw this up for me.”

“I’m not going to screw up your promotion. I’m happy for you.” Clark crossed his arms as he sighed. “But I don’t want special treatment just because Bruce owns the company. That isn’t right.”

“Hmph. What? You don’t like being a kept man?” She joked.

Clark scowled angrily, then Lois blinked in surprise. “Wow. That really does bother you.”

“I need to talk to Bruce.” He stormed out of the office.

SxB

Metropolis was destroyed. Several buildings had collapsed and now the ground was covered in rubble. A nearby skyscraper was still standing, but it was on fire. People were jumping from the windows, plummeting to their deaths to escape the flames. The smell of smoke and blood permeated the air. The streets were littered with charred dead bodies. They had been hit by heat vision.

Batman laid on a pile of rubble, unable to move. His Kevlar suit was in tatters. He was bleeding out from his abdomen and both of his legs were broken. He couldn’t stand. He couldn’t do anything, but watch.

He winced when he heard the Joker’s laughter. The insane clown skipped across the wreckage, laughing hysterically. “I did it! I finally did it, Batsy! I ruined him. Your precious Blue Boy Scout.”

The Joker sat down beside him and grinned widely, showing his sharp yellow teeth. “Let’s watch the world burn together.”

Above them, Superman shot across the sky. The alien fired lasers from his eyes, destroying another building. Killing more innocent people…

“No,” Batman rasped in horror.

The Joker chuckled. “There’s beauty in chaos. Don’t you think, Batsy?”

Suddenly, Superman landed in front of them, creating a large crater. In a flash, he zoomed towards the Joker and grabbed him by the throat. Then Superman lifted the clown up into the air, choking him.

“Stop! Clark, stop!” Batman yelled frantically. “Don’t do this! Please! You’re not a killer! STOP!”
Ignoring Bruce, Superman stabbed his hand through the Joker’s chest, killing him. The Joker coughed up blood as he let out a final raspy laugh. Then Superman dropped the Joker’s corpse on the ground.

Tears sprang to his eyes as Bruce stared up at the Kryptonian. This monster was not his friend. He was not Clark.

Superman glanced down at the blood on his hands then he tilted his head back and laughed. Bruce flinched, disturbed by the ugly sound.

Then Superman looked at him and grinned. He had the same toothy, yellow smile as the Joker.

“Aaaaahh!” Bruce screamed as he jolted awake.

He thrashed on the bed, still disoriented and panicking. Unexpectedly, he felt a pair of strong arms wrap around him and pull him into a tight embrace.

“Shh. It’s okay. Bruce, it’s okay. It was just a nightmare,” Clark spoke softly while hugging him.

Bruce calmed somewhat as he scanned his surroundings. He was in his bedroom at Wayne Manor. The door to the balcony was cracked open. Clark must’ve flown inside. Through the glass door, he could see the sun setting in the distance. He hadn’t been asleep for long.

For a couple minutes, Bruce leaned against Clark, letting the other man hold him. Soon, his could feel his heart rate return to normal as he relaxed. Being in Clark’s arms was comforting. Too comforting… It was pathetic.

Embarrassed, he pulled himself away from Clark. “I-I’m fine.”

Clark was sitting next to him on the bed, wearing his Superman attire. He watched Bruce with concern. “Do you remember your nightmare at all?”

God, I wish I didn’t… Bruce shuddered as he remembered the Joker’s smile on Clark’s face. It had looked so fucking wrong.

“Are you okay?” Clark scooted closer to him.

“I said I’m fine,” Bruce snapped as he stood up. “What’re you doing here, Clark?”

“I wanted to talk to you about something, but it can wait.” Clark looked worried. “What was your nightmare about?”

“Nothing. I don’t remember.”

“I don’t like it when you lie to me.”

“Well, I don’t like it when you don’t mind your own damn business!” Bruce angrily stomped away.

In a flash, Clark appeared next to him and pulled him into another hug. Bruce froze for a moment while Clark held him close. Without thinking, Bruce melted in the embrace, resting his head against Clark’s shoulder. He couldn’t force himself to push the other man away. Why did he need this so much?

“I heard you talking in your sleep,” Clark admitted. “You said my name. You were begging me to stop. What was I doing?”
“Clark…” Bruce grabbed onto the Kryptonian’s shoulders and seriously met his gaze, looking straight into his light-blue eyes. “No matter what happens, no matter how horrible things get, you have to listen to me.”

“O-Okay.” Clark blinked surprise.

“I mean it. You have to listen,” he insisted. “If I tell you not to do something, you can’t ignore me. No matter how angry you are or how much pain you’re in. Do you understand?”

Clark nodded. “Yeah, I understand. I’ll listen to you, I promise.”

Relieved, Bruce rested his forehead on Clark’s shoulder again. He was so exhausted. He swayed on his feet, leaning heavily against Clark for support.

“How much sleep did you get today?” Clark asked.

Bruce shrugged. “Maybe a couple hours.”

Clark huffed in disapproval. “That’s not enough, Bruce.”

“I have to go on patrol soon.”

“No, you don’t. Go back to bed.”

“Make me,” he said petulantly.

“What?”

Bruce quickly stepped away from him and stumbled towards the door. Make me? What the fuck am I saying? The sleep deprivation was definitely affecting him.

Before he could reach the door, Clark suddenly grabbed him and lifted him off the floor.

“What the hell, Clark?! Put me down!” Bruce struggled to break free while Clark carried him back to the bed.

“I’m making you go to bed. Just like you said.” He flopped down on the mattress, taking Bruce with him.

Now they were laying down, side by side on the bed. Clark spooned Bruce from behind, keeping a tight grip on him.

“Dammit, Clark! Let go!” Bruce thrashed stubbornly in the Kryptonian’s grasp.

Clark spoke calmly next his ear, “It’s okay. If there’s an emergency in Gotham, I’ll wake you. Don’t worry. Just get some sleep.”

After that reassurance, Bruce finally stopped struggling. He lied still, letting Clark hold him. Behind him, he could feel the sturdy warmth of Clark’s body. This position felt a little strange, but it was comfortable. Usually, when Bruce shared a bed with someone, he would be in Clark’s position, spooning a woman… There were a few times when Bruce had sex with men in the past, but he had never cuddled with them.

Now, it seemed the act was reserved solely for Clark. This was the third time they’ve shared a bed and Clark always cuddled. It was expected now. Bruce relaxed in the embrace, enjoying the feeling of warmth and closeness. He would never admit it, but he felt safer in Clark’s arms.
They laid in bed peacefully for a while until Bruce abruptly confided, “I dreamt the Joker turned you into a murderer.”

“Yeah, I figured… I’ve had similar nightmares too. Many times,” Clark confessed sadly, then his voice changed to a more hopeful tone. “But everything will be okay as long as we stick together, right? I know you’ll always lead me down the right path.”

“You shouldn’t have so much faith in me.”

Clark sighed and snuggled closer to him. “You’re too hard on yourself. Get some sleep.”

Bruce shut his eyes and slowly dozed off, lulled by Clark’s presence.
When Bruce awoke, the room was dark and he could still feel Clark pressed against his back, holding him close. Bruce was enveloped in the Kryptonian’s arms like a protective cocoon. He felt completely surrounded. Clark was all over him. Earlier, Bruce had been too exhausted to protest, but now his mind was clear. He couldn’t date Clark, and they couldn’t sleep together like this.

Bruce glanced at the clock on the nightstand. It was already 10:36 PM. Now he definitely needed to go on patrol. Bruce shifted to the side, trying to scoot away. Then Clark tightened his grip and pulled him closer. Behind him, Bruce could feel the steady rise and fall of the other man’s chest. Clark was still soundly asleep, breathing against Bruce’s neck.

Damn it. Bruce tried to break free again. This time he grabbed onto Clark’s hands, using all his strength to pry them off. For a moment, he succeeded and Clark released him. Bruce quickly scrambled away, but then Clark snatched him again, pulling him back. The sleeping Kryptonian draped a leg over Bruce, pinning the lower half of his body. Clark trapped his arms too, hugging him tightly.

Frustrated, Bruce considered yelling at the clingy idiot. If Clark would wake up, then Bruce could just order him to let go. He opened his mouth to say something, then he felt an unexpected movement.

Suddenly, Clark shifted behind him, grinding against his ass. Bruce’s eyes widened in shock. He could feel Clark’s erection through his clothing. The hard length was pressed against him, nudging his ass over and over. Bruce blushed as his heart hammered in his chest. What the fuck?! Clark was humping him in his sleep!

“C-Clark?” Bruce gasped when he felt a hand slide underneath his shirt, caressing his skin.

“Mmm. Bruce,” Clark hummed happily next to his ear.

Is he dreaming about me? Bruce swallowed nervously as his face flushed even more. What the fuck should I do? If Clark woke up now, he’d completely freak out. Then he’d want to talk about it. Bruce shuddered at the thought. He did not want to talk about this with Clark. He wanted to pretend it never happened.

His breath caught in his throat when he felt Clark’s hand brush against one of his nipples, rubbing and teasing the sensitive area. Bruce squeezed his eyes shut and bit his bottom lip, forcing himself
to stay quiet. Clark was unconscious. He didn’t even know what he was doing. Bruce could just wait this out.

Clark’s other hand slid down Bruce’s abdomen towards the waistband of his pants. Bruce’s eyes shot up as he quickly grabbed Clark’s hand, stopping him.

“My Bruce,” Clark purred as he nestled his face in the crook of Bruce’s neck.

The Kryptonian easily freed his hand, then he grabbed Bruce again, gripping his hipbone. He roughly yanked Bruce closer while thrusting against his ass. Bruce gasped in surprise as he felt the warm cock through the clothing. Clark was very well-endowed. For a moment, Bruce wondered how this would feel without all the clothes in the way. He could imagine Clark bent over him, holding him down while ramming inside him over and over. That large cock stretching him and filling him up…

Bruce moaned when he felt Clark thrust against him again. Clark was breathing heavily now, close to orgasming. His thrusts became more and more frantic while Bruce lost himself in the sensation. He was painfully hard now, envisioning all the ways Clark could take him. Fuck him long and hard.

Suddenly, the thrusting stopped, and Bruce felt the clothing against his ass become hot and damp. He quickly realized that it was Clark’s cum pressed against him. Bruce blinked a few times, finally coming to his senses. Meanwhile Clark sighed contently in his sleep.

God fucking dammit. Bruce pulled himself away from Clark. The Kryptonian simply released him and rolled onto his back with a satisfied look on his face. Apparently, Bruce was free to go now that Clark was done dry-humping him. Perverted alien bastard.

Bruce huffed indignantly and stomped away. He headed across the room towards the adjoining bathroom, then shut the door. Bruce quickly flung off his clothes and stepped into the shower. He could actually feel some of Clark’s cum sticking to his left ass cheek, and he was still fully erect…

Clark got to finish, but he didn’t. Annoyed, Bruce turned on the shower, then hot water sprayed down on him. For a few minutes, Bruce cleaned himself with soap. He tried to ignore his erection, but it wouldn’t go away. Damn you, Clark. Bruce eventually caved in and touched himself, stroking his aching cock. His orgasm came hard and fast.

Bruce tried not to, but he thought of Clark.

SxB

When Clark opened his eyes, he was laying alone in Bruce’s bed. He could hear the other man’s heartbeat inside the bathroom, along with the sound of running water. Bruce must be taking a shower. Clark sat up, then he noticed how sticky his pants were.

Oh, no… He had cum in his sleep. He blushed as he remembered his sexually explicit dream about Bruce. Did he have the dream while Bruce was still in the room? Did Bruce know? Clark gulped nervously. In the bathroom, he could hear the water turn off. Bruce was almost done with his shower.

Clark looked back down at his pants. His Superman suit was stained now. He needed to change clothes quick. In a flash, Clark zoomed out the window and soared through the sky back to Metropolis. He entered his apartment, found his spare Superman suit, changed into the clean
clothes, and flew back to Gotham as fast as possible. Within a minute, Clark was back in Bruce’s bedroom at Wayne Manor.

Soon, Bruce opened the bathroom door and stepped out. He was wearing a black robe, and his dark hair was dripping wet. He stared at Clark like he was studying the clean Superman suit, but he made no comment. Maybe Clark was being paranoid. Maybe Bruce had no idea about Clark’s wet dream.

“H-Hey, Bruce.” Superman smiled sheepishly. “Did you sleep well?”

“Not as well as you.”

After Clark winced, Bruce quickly added, “You slept a long time.”

“O-Oh. Yeah.” Clark laughed nervously. “I was pretty tired, I guess. But I feel great now.”

“Good.” Bruce walked past him, then opened a secret door in his closet, revealing a suit of black Kevlar. “I’m going to get dressed. Wait outside.”

“Sure!” He fled out the room and shut the door.

In the hallway, Clark leaned against the wall and let out a sigh of relief. It seemed his secret was safe. Clark chuckled to himself. He was so glad Bruce didn’t know about the wet dream.

Man, that would be embarrassing.

SxB

After Bruce changed into his bat suit, Clark followed him down to the Batcave. The vigilante told Clark that he had something for him. Clark was curious what it could be. He watched while Bruce headed towards a steel safe that was lined with lead. Batman unlocked the safe, then he took out a syringe.

“Give me your hand,” Bruce ordered.

Clark complied trustingly, stretching a hand out towards Bruce.

Without any warning, Batman suddenly pricked Clark’s finger with the syringe needle, making him bleed.

“Ow!” Superman ripped his hand away, looking betrayed. “What was that for?”

“I invented a needle that can penetrate your skin. I needed to test it.”

“Great.” Clark complained, “First, you make a glove that can hurt me, and now needles.”

Bruce gave him an amused smirk. “Quit whining. The needle contains a very small amount of kryptonite. Only enough to break your skin.”

Next, Batman took out a vial. He filled the syringe with a strange fluid, then he capped the needle.

“Take it.” He handed the syringe to Superman. “That’s the antidote to Scarecrow’s fear toxin. If you ever suspect you’ve been drugged, inject yourself with the antidote as soon as possible.”

Clark stared at the syringe, then grinned brightly. “Wow. Bruce, this is great! Thank you! I was really worried about being drugged again. This helps so much! I’ll carry it with me everywhere I
“go.” He put the syringe in a secret pocket on his yellow waistband.

Batman looked pleased. “Good. Don’t lose it.”

“I won’t, I promise!” Clark wrapped his arms around Bruce, pulling him into a tight hug. “Thank you so much, Bruce! This is the best gift ever!”

“You’re…welcome,” Bruce muttered awkwardly. “You know, I gave you that for my peace of mind too.”

Clark beamed with joy. “I know. And, I’m grateful for that too! You’re so amazing.”

“That’s enough hugging.” Batman pushed him away.

“Aww. But I like hugging,” Clark whined as he released the vigilante.

“Too bad.” Bruce abruptly changed the subject. “So, what did you want to talk about?”

“Huh?”

Bruce rolled his eyes. “Before we fell asleep, you said you came here to talk to me about something. So, what is it?”

“Oh…” Clark shifted uncomfortably. “Yeah, it’s about work.”

“Okay. What about it?”

Clark sighed. “I know you made people sign a contract so they can’t fire me.”

“And?”

“And, you need to get rid of it,” he insisted. “I don’t want any special treatment. It’s not fair. I should be treated just like all the other employees.”

“But you aren’t like other employees.”

“Yes, I am.”

“You disappear from work all the time.”

Clark huffed in irritation. “I can’t help that. If Metropolis is in danger, I have to save the city. I can’t just ignore it.”

“Exactly.” Bruce argued, “After everything you’ve done to protect Metropolis, I think you deserve some special treatment. If any other employee was absent as much as you are, I’d recommend firing them. Also, you’re involved in a public scandal now. You need the job security.”

“I don’t think us dating is a scandal.”

“We’re not dating,” Bruce snapped.

“You know what I mean. People think we’re dating.”

“Yeah, and that makes you celebrity gossip. The media will be obsessed with you as long as they think we’re a couple.”

“Well, playing favorites at the Daily Planet isn’t gonna help! You probably made the rumors
worse.”

“How stupid do you think I am?” Bruce growled. “That contract you hate so much has a privacy clause in it. If anyone at the Daily Planet leaks information about our relationship, I can sic a team of lawyers after them and ruin their lives.”

Clark frowned. “I don’t like that. You shouldn’t be threatening people for me.”

“Oh, I should stand by and let assholes like Perry bully you?”

“Perry doesn’t bully me!”

Batman gave him skeptical look.

“Okay, fine. Maybe he does,” Clark admitted. “But I can handle it!”

Bruce scoffed, “If you could handle it, then why did you come crying to me?”

“I didn’t!” Superman gritted his teeth, barely containing anger. “I called you because I was trying to be nice and include you in an important decision. I never expected you to take over the entire company!”

“Hmph. Don’t complain to me if you don’t want my help.”

Clark let out a sigh of frustration. “Look, I know you were just trying to help, but you need to get rid of the contract.”

“And make it possible to fire you again?”

“Yes.”

Bruce crossed his arms as he replied stubbornly, “No. The Daily Planet is mine now. I can do whatever I want with it.”

Clark glared at him. “Fine. Then I quit.”

“What?” Batman blinked in surprise.

“I quit. I won’t work for the Daily Planet anymore.”

“But…you love that job.”

“Yeah, I do. But I’m not going to fight with you over it. Like you said, the Daily Planet is yours now. Congratulations,” Superman sneered resentfully as he turned to storm away.

“Wait!” Bruce called out.

Clark stopped and turned around to face him.

“I-I’ll get rid of the contract,” Bruce offered. “From now on, you won’t get any special treatment.”

Clark’s face brightened. “Really?”

“Yes, just…don’t quit your job. I know how much it means to you.” Bruce looked away guiltily. “I’m sorry.”

In a flash, Clark appeared in front of the vigilante. Then he stretched out his arms expectantly.
Batman stared at him. “What are you doing?”

“Gimme a hug and I’ll forgive you.” Clark grinned while waving his arms up and down.

Bruce sighed. “You are so simple-minded.”

“Hey, no I’m not-” He froze when Bruce stepped forward and hugged him.

Once the shock wore off, Clark instantly returned the embrace, holding Bruce tightly. This was the first time Bruce ever initiated a hug. Clark had always hugged him, not the other way around. Now Bruce had his arms wrapped around the Kryptonian while hiding his face in the crook of Clark’s neck.

Clark smiled happily. He could stay like this forever. While they hugged, he could hear Bruce’s heartbeat quicken. Obviously, this was having an effect on the normally stoic vigilante.

Eventually, Bruce broke from the embrace, stepping away.

“I’m going on patrol,” he grumbled as he hurried away.

Clark watched him flee to the Batmobile and smirked, feeling smug. *He does like me.*
Bad Reputation

Chapter Summary

Bruce doesn’t give a damn about his bad reputation.

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! Thanks for all the comments and kudos! This chapter is a long one :)

After a long day of work, Clark left the Daily Planet and headed home. Usually, he’d walk down the street, but the paparazzi was waiting for him outside. He had to fly out a window and use his super-speed to sneak past the crowd of reporters. The media was always stalking him now. It was so annoying.

Once he reached his apartment, Clark flopped down on the couch, feeling exhausted. He considered flying to Gotham to visit Bruce, but he really needed to catch up on his sleep. Knowing Batman, the vigilante would stay up all night.

With a yawn, Clark stood and walked to the kitchen. He glanced at his home phone on the counter. According to the caller ID, he had three missed calls from his Ma and Pa. They’ve been trying to reach him.

Clark grabbed the phone and called his parents.

The phone rang a couple times before his Ma answered. “Hello?”

“Hey, Ma. What’s going on?”

She paused for a second. “Clark, honey, we need to talk.”

“Oh, okay.” He shifted nervously. “What’s wrong?”

His Ma replied strangely, “You know that I’ll always love you no matter what. You trust me, don’t you?”

“Ma, seriously. What’s wrong?”

She let out a long sigh, then asked, “Why didn’t you tell me that you’re gay?”

“What?!” Clark screeched, completely caught by surprise. “I’m not gay, Ma!”

“So, you aren’t dating that rich boy Bruce Wayne?”

Clark hesitated for a moment, unsure of what to say. His Ma must’ve heard about the relationship on the news. He didn’t want to talk about this, but he was always honest with his parents. They’ve done so much for him. He didn’t like hiding things from them.
After the lengthy silence, his Ma sounded worried. “Clark? Honey?”

“Technically, no. I’m not dating Bruce,” he answered reluctantly. “But it’s complicated.”

“You have feelings for him?”

Clark stalled before admitting, “Yes.”

“I don’t understand. You’ve always liked girls before,” she complained. “Why can’t you date a nice girl like Lois?”

“Lois is just a friend.”

“Do you only like men now?”

“No, I just…” Clark struggled with the words, trying to explain himself. “I like Bruce. That’s it.”

His Ma huffed. “Well, I think you can do better than a sleazy playboy.”

“Bruce isn’t like that at all, Ma!” Clark snapped defensively. “Once you get to know him, he’s completely different. He’s a really great guy.”

“I’ll be the judge of that. Invite him to dinner.”

He blinked in surprise. “What?”

“I want to meet him. Invite Bruce over for Sunday dinner.”

“Uh… Ma, I-I don’t know if that’s a good idea.”

“Invite him, Clark,” she insisted. “If he’s as great as you say, your Pa and I will welcome him.”

“You just want to size him up,” Clark grumbled.

“Of course I do. I have to see this city slicker who seduced my poor boy.”

He groaned in frustration. “You’ve got it all wrong!”

“Then prove me wrong. Invite him.”

“Fine, I will!” Clark snapped without thinking.

“Dinner is at seven. See you on Sunday.” His Ma sounded pleased.

After she hung up, Clark realized his mistake. His Ma knew exactly how to rile him up. She had manipulated him… Now he was supposed to invite Bruce over to dinner.

*Oh, god.* Clark dropped the phone on the counter, then sat down at the kitchen table. He propped his elbows on the table while holding his head in his hands. Dinner was a terrible idea. There were so many things that could go wrong. What if his parents don’t like Bruce? What if Bruce doesn’t like his parents?

At least it was only Tuesday. Clark had awhile to figure things out. Maybe he could get the dinner cancelled somehow… But his Ma seemed pretty determined. She won’t leave Clark alone until he eventually brings Bruce over. She’d nag him every day if she had to.

It seemed like there was no escaping the situation. Clark let out an exasperated sigh. If he was
lucky, maybe Bruce would be too busy for dinner on Sunday. Now he could only hope to delay the inevitable...

SxB

What is the best way to get rid of a rumor?

Replacing it with a bigger rumor. A bigger scandal.

Bruce understood that, and he had a plan to divert attention away from Clark. Right now, the media was obsessed with the idea of a bisexual Bruce Wayne. They were only interested in Clark because of his supposed relationship with the playboy billionaire. If Bruce could downplay that relationship, the media should lose interest in Clark.

All his life, Bruce has had to deal with the media, and that would never change. But hopefully, he could spare Clark from all this bullshit.

Bruce already had a reputation for sleeping around. He was known for having sex with countless women. Being bisexual simply added male partners into the picture. Now, he could be known for fucking countless women and men. He didn’t have to change his public persona that much.

At Wayne Manor, Bruce invited over dozens of men. One by one, Bruce met with each of them in secret. The men were all models and actors—people already in the public eye. Bruce paid each of them to lie and say they’ve slept together. Some of the men didn’t even want the money. They knew being involved in a Bruce Wayne scandal would be free publicity. And, the young men were all attention-whores. That’s why Bruce selected them in the first place.

These men would spread more rumors fast. And the media would have a field day with it. Then, hopefully, the media will lose interest in Clark and leave him alone. Instead of being Bruce’s one and only male partner, he’d become one of many.

After all the secret meetings, Bruce sat in a chair in the lounge and drank a glass of scotch. Dealing with all the stupid models and actors had given him a headache. At the moment, Wayne Manor was quiet. It was only 11:30 AM, and Dick was still at school. Bruce was completely alone now, except for Alfred.

The butler entered the lounge and set down a cup of tea while taking away the bottle of scotch. “Have some tea, Master Wayne. It’s better for you.”

Bruce huffed in annoyance, then drank the tea instead.

Alfred gave him a stern look. “I understand your desire to protect Mr. Kent, but I’m afraid you’re going about it the wrong way.”

Bruce sighed. “This is the only way. If I publicly deny my relationship with Clark, the media would only become more obsessed. I have to distract them with a larger scandal.”

“Mr. Kent would not approve of this method.”

“Hmph. Since when do I need Clark’s approval? He’ll get over it.”

“The board of directors won’t be pleased either.”

“The board is never pleased with me,” Bruce scoffed. “They’d love to take Wayne Enterprises away from me, but they can’t.”
Alfred frowned. “Master Dick is being bullied at school.”

“What?” His eyes widened in surprise. “Because of me?”

“Your actions affect other people, Master Wayne.” Alfred scolded him, “You may not care about your reputation, but those close to you do.”

The butler walked away, leaving him alone in the lounge.

Shit... Bruce leaned over, holding his head in his hands. He had no idea this was causing Dick problems at school. He felt guilty, but it was too late to stop his plan now. It was already set in motion. Soon, the rumors about Bruce would get much worse.

At least the media will leave Clark alone after this.

SxB

After his lunch break, Clark walked back toward his desk. At the Daily Planet, everything had mostly returned to normal. Perry would still yell at him sometimes, and he’d still hang out with Lois. But she had her own office now, which was nice. Whenever Clark wasn’t at his desk, he was usually in Lois’s office, keeping her company.

Clark sat down at his desk and routinely checked his email. Everything was calm until he noticed the whispers. All around him, he could hear his coworkers gossiping. He tensed uncomfortably when he heard Bruce’s name over and over. There were more rumors. Something had happened.

On his computer, Clark quickly googled Bruce’s name. Then he found several new articles. His eyes widened in shock as he skimmed through the articles. There were twenty different guys claiming that they had slept with Bruce. What the hell? Clark felt confused, but also angry. Who are these assholes? He read through all the articles he could find, trying to understand the situation.

All the men claiming that they had sex with Bruce were either models or actors. Some of them were fairly famous. The media was going crazy over this. Every second, more and more articles and tweets were popping up. The rumors about Bruce were spreading like wild fire. Why is this happening?! Clark angrily clenched his computer mouse, breaking the device in his hand.

Bruce didn’t actually sleep with all those guys, did he? And why did his alleged partners all come forward at the same time? Why today? It almost seemed like...it was planned. Clark released his broken computer mouse and leaned back in his chair. His thoughts raced as he reflected on all the new articles. Then he realized one very important thing.

Clark’s name wasn’t mentioned at all...in any of the articles. As if the media had forgotten about him.

Bruce had done this on purpose. He had released more rumors to draw attention away from Clark. And it was working. Now the media only cared about the new rumors, about the bisexual billionaire playboy who’s having sex with several male models and actors. No one’s asking about the no-name journalist anymore. Bruce was dragging his own reputation through the mud for Clark’s sake.

That...That idiot! Didn’t he know that Clark would never condone this?! Of course, he wanted the media to leave him alone. But not at Bruce’s expense! Never at his expense!

“Hey, turn on the TV!” Someone called out, “Declan Hyde is doing an interview on entertainment
Suddenly, the large TV in the workroom turned on while everyone watched with interest. On the television screen, an actor named Declan Hyde was sitting on a couch across from a TV show host.

“So, you’re saying that you’ve had…sexual encounters with Bruce Wayne?” The host asked.

Declan Hyde sneered. “Yeah, I think everyone in Gotham has.”

*You little bastard.* Clark glared at the TV while a few of his co-workers laughed at the snide comment.

The host chuckled as well. “I’ve heard that Mr. Wayne is currently in a relationship with a journalist. According to my sources, they’ve been dating for a whole year.”

Declan rolled his eyes. “Pfft. Come on. We’re talking about *Bruce Wayne* here. You really think he’s capable of staying in a relationship that long?”

“So, you’re saying Mr. Wayne is still single?”

“Oh, yeah. He’s very single. Trust me.”

“Why did you decide to do this interview?” The host asked.

Declan combed a hand through his styled hair. “Well, I just wanted to set the record straight, you know. I think Bruce Wayne coming out of the closet has inspired a lot of us to do the same.”

“Mr. Wayne still hasn’t released a formal statement.”

“I think his silence speaks for itself. I bet his company is pressuring him not to say anything.” Declan shrugged. “I mean, he was okay with me doing this interview.”

“Really?” The host looked surprised. “He’s okay with you speaking out?”

“Yeah, he’s not ashamed of the truth. He’s bisexual and proud,” Declan declared.

The host nodded. “How inspiring.”

Suddenly, Lois barged out of her office and yelled, “Turn that off!”

Then Perry stormed into the workroom too. “That’s right! Turn it off! Mr. Wayne is your boss. Show some goddamn respect, and get back to work!”

Someone quickly turned off the TV while everyone scurried back to their desks, afraid of Perry’s wrath. Clark was grateful for the interruption. At least he didn’t have to listen to the interview anymore. That asshole Declan Hyde was really getting on his nerves.

Lois walked towards Clark and placed a hand on his shoulder. “Smallville, come with me.”

He stood and followed Lois into her office. Then she shut the door, giving them privacy.

She looked worried. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I…I’m fine.” Clark muttered as he stared down at the floor.

Lois let out a frustrated sigh. “You’re not fine. I’m so sorry, Smallville. I can’t believe all of this is
happening. Bruce needs to do something to stop this.”

“He’s not going to,” Clark replied sadly.

“Why not?” She cringed in disgust. “The rumors aren’t true, are they?”

“No!” He snapped before feeling a sting of uncertainty. “I-I don’t think so. But I think he wanted these rumors to spread.”

“Why would Bruce want-?” Her eyes widened as she realized. “That crazy son of bitch. It’s all a distraction, isn’t it? So the media will forget about you?”

“That’s what it seems like,” Clark grumbled.

“Wow.” Lois blinked in surprise. “That’s a really ballsy move. I mean, Bruce is going to get a lot of backlash over this.”

“I know. People are badmouthing Bruce everywhere. I can hear it.” Clark angrily clenched his fists as more whispers invaded his ears. Sometimes, he hated super-hearing.

“I thought Bruce Wayne was a ladies man. I still can’t believe he’s a fag,” one voice hissed.

Another voice sneered. “I heard he’s slept with over fifty guys.”

“Nasty. What a man-whore.”

“He’s not a man-whore,” Clark growled, trying to ignore the cruel voices.

“Of course, he’s not.” Lois gave him a sympathetic look. “Do you need to take the rest of the day off? I understand if you need some time alone.”

“No. I’m not leaving work over this.” Clark determinedly stormed away, heading back to his desk.

SxB

Around 5:30 PM, most of the Daily Planet employees had left for the day. Clark was still at his desk though, trying to focus on his work and failing. His thoughts kept circling back to a certain billionaire. He was so angry at Bruce for doing this! Didn’t Bruce care about his reputation at all?

The media might be leaving Clark alone, but it wasn’t worth it!

Clark would rather deal with the paparazzi for the rest of his life than listen to pompous assholes like Declan Hyde talk about his Bruce. There’s no way Bruce actually slept with that jerk. God, Clark really really hoped Bruce hadn’t slept with him, or any of the other guys from the rumors. It was sickening. Clark couldn’t stand the thought of any of them touching Bruce.

“Smallville.” Lois approached his desk with a grim expression on her face. “There’s something I have to show you.”

Clark furrowed his brow. “What is it?”

“We should talk in my office.” She turned and walked away.

Worried, Clark stood and followed her across the workroom. They entered her office, then Lois shut the door.

“There’s a video that just went viral on the internet.” She walked to her desk and turned her
computer screen towards Clark.

On the screen, there was a link to video and it was titled ‘Bruce Wayne Sex Tape’. Clark froze as his eyes widened in shock. He visibly paled, feeling sick to his stomach.

Lois looked at him with pity. “I’m so sorry, Smallville. But I thought you had a right to know—”

“Play the video,” Clark ordered.

“I-I don’t think you should watch this. It’s pretty graphic.”

“Does it show his face?”

“Actually, his face is kinda blurry,” she admitted.

“I need to see it.”

“That’s not a good idea.”

“Play it. Now,” Clark demanded. “Or I’ll watch it on my own computer.”


She clicked on the video, then the footage started playing. In the video, there were two naked men on a bed. A dark-haired man was bent over, moaning like a porn star while a blond man fucked him in the ass. Clark recognized the blonde. His name was Ricky Saviano. He was a well-known model. Clark had seen him before on billboards. But who was the dark-haired man? His build was similar to Bruce’s, and even his voice was similar. But the video didn’t show a clear view of his face. Was that really Bruce?

Clark stared intently at the screen, studying the dark-haired man. Then the video showed a close up of the man’s back and Clark heaved a sigh of relief.

“That isn’t Bruce.”

“How can you tell?” Lois asked.

“Bruce has scars,” Clark explained. “Lots of scars, especially on his chest and back. That man in the video doesn’t have any. He isn’t Bruce. That’s someone else.”

“Oh, thank God.” Lois looked relieved as she turned off the video. “I’m sorry to scare you like that. I really thought it was Bruce.”

“It’s okay. I almost thought it was Bruce too, until I got a good look at his back.”

“Well, I guess some asshole leaked this shit and claimed it was Bruce for the attention.” She paused with a horrified look on her face. “Wait, you don’t think…?”

“Bruce.” Clark exploded in anger, shouting, “How could he do this?! Does he have any shame at all?!”

“We don’t know if Bruce leaked this. Maybe it was someone else.”

“Bruce released all the fake rumors! Why not a fake sex tape too?!”

“At least it wasn’t him on the tape,” she said reassuringly.
“No, but people think it’s him! That’s just as bad!” Clark ranted, “Does he want the whole world to think he’s trash?! For someone so smart, how could he do something so stupid?!”

“Clark, just calm down.”

“DON’T TELL ME TO CALM DOWN!” He angrily banged his fist on Lois’s desk, punching a hole through the wood.

“Whoa. Okay.” Lois backed away from him. “You’re starting to scare me.”

“I… I’m sorry.” Clark pulled his hand out of the furniture, feeling guilty. “I didn’t mean to break your desk. I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay, Smallville. It’s just a desk.” She watched him with concern. “Are you okay?”

His eyes stung with tears as he muttered, “I don’t understand why Bruce did this. How could he…? I have to talk to him.” Clark rushed out of the room.

SxB

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in the front of the Batcomputer, scowling at the screen. He was dressed in the full Batman garb, except for the cowl. On his computer, he was studying the viral video titled ‘Bruce Wayne Sex Tape.’ He had enhanced the images on the video so he could identity the two men. The blond man was obviously Ricky Saviano, while the other man was a hooker named Kevin Young. The Gotham Police had a file on the male prostitute in their database. It wasn’t hard to find.

Damn it. Saviano must have found a hooker that looked similar enough to Bruce, then leaked the video. Bruce had told Saviano to spread rumors. He never said anything about a sex tape. This whole thing was getting out of control. But that is the nature of rumors… They take on a life of their own.

Batman turned off the video and leaned back in his chair. At least his plan has been successful. Today, there was hardly any mention of Clark in the news. Soon, the media would forget about him. That’s all that mattered. Protecting Clark was far more important than Bruce’s shitty reputation.

If the Joker ever discovers Batman’s secret identity, Alfred and Dick would be in danger. Bruce couldn’t risk Clark too… It’s safer for the public to think Clark was simply one of Bruce’s many sexual conquests, rather than someone he actually cared about. The Joker knew Batman cared about Rachel…and that it ended in disaster.

When Bruce felt a gust of wind, he knew Superman had entered the cave.

He stood and turned around to face Clark, who was dressed in his Superman suit. The Kryptonian had an uncharacteristic frown on his face and he was glaring at Bruce. Clark looked angry. Given the circumstances, Batman wasn’t surprised.

Bruce broke the silence, explaining, “The sex tape is a hoax. That isn’t me in the video.”

“I know.” Superman still looked angry.

“Okay…” Batman watched him cautiously. He thought that knowledge would appease the Kryptonian, but apparently it hadn’t.
“Did you leak the video?”

Offended by the question, Bruce gritted his teeth as he answered, “No. Of course, I didn’t.”

“Then who did?”

“Probably Saviano. His modeling career has taken a hit recently. He’s desperate to stay relevant.”

“And the other rumors…” Clark growled, “Did you actually sleep with any of those guys?”

Bruce crossed his arms and replied harshly, “You know, we aren’t in a relationship. I can fuck whoever I want.”

In a blur of super-speed, Superman suddenly appeared in front of him, closing the gap between them. Now they were only inches apart. Clark glared at him, his blue eyes narrowed dangerously. “Did you?”

Bruce was tempted to take a step back, to put more distance between himself and the furious Kryptonian. But he was too proud. Instead, Bruce stood his ground, stubbornly meeting Clark’s gaze. He could see the anger burning in Superman’s eyes, the pure unbridled jealousy. It filled Bruce with a sick kind of pleasure, knowing he could affect Clark so strongly.

After a few tense moments, Bruce admitted, “No. I didn’t have sex with any of them. The rumors aren’t true. I paid them to lie.”

Superman finally took a step back, giving him more space. His anger had dissipated somewhat. Clark looked relieved, but still upset. “How could you do this without saying anything to me? Do you have any idea how much you freaked me out?”

“Sorry.” Bruce looked away guiltily. “I would’ve warned you, but I knew you’d try to stop me.”

“You’re damn right I would have! What were you thinking?!”

He sighed. “I did what I had to do. The media should lose interest in you now.”

“And what about you? People are saying awful things about you,” Clark complained.

“That’s nothing new.”

“You need to tell everyone that the sex tape is a fake.”

“Why?” Bruce raised an eyebrow. “I told Saviano to spread rumors about me. I never said he couldn’t leak a fake sex tape. He just took more initiative than I expected.”

“Initiative?” Clark yelled indignantly, “People are watching that tape, thinking that it’s you! Don’t you care?!”

“Not really.” Bruce shrugged.

Superman narrowed his eyes angrily. “Your name is being dragged through the mud and you don’t even care?”

“I’m Batman first and Bruce Wayne second. As long as I do what needs to be done, it doesn’t matter what people think of me.”

“It matters to me!” Clark exclaimed. “I hate it when people say bad things about you. I can’t stand
“Well, you better get used to it! Bruce Wayne is a notorious playboy who drinks too much and fucks anything that moves. That’s been my reputation for years,” he snapped in frustration. “You knew that when we met! Why does it bother you now?!”

“Because I love you!”

Caught off guard, Bruce stumbled back, staring at Clark with wide eyes. After his outburst, Clark looked away, obviously upset. Bruce didn’t like the hurt expression on the hero’s face. His chest tightened with a surge of guilt.

At that moment, Bruce remembered Alfred’s warning. “Your actions affect other people, Master Wayne. You may not care about your reputation, but those close to you do.”

As always, Alfred was right. Bruce needed to fix this.

He relented, “I…I’ll release a statement saying that the sex tape is a hoax. But the damage has already been done. It probably won’t change anything.”

“Release the statement anyway,” Clark insisted. “People need to know that isn’t you on the video.”

“Fine.”

Clark complained, “First you take over the Daily Planet without telling me, and now this. You have to talk to me about things, especially when it affects me too! You can’t leave me in the dark. It’s not fair!”

“I know. I’m sorry. It won’t happen again.”

“Good.” Clark frowned. “I’m still mad at you though.”

Bruce shifted uncomfortably. He already said sorry. What else could he possibly do? Bruce recalled their last argument, then he had an idea.

He stepped toward Clark and wrapped his arms around him, hugging him. The Kryptonian froze like he was in shock. Then Bruce quickly ended the embrace and stepped away. Clark was gapping at him, looking confused.

Bruce tried to explain, “Last time when you forgave me, you said…”

“A hug isn’t enough this time. You made me really, really mad.” Clark said sharply.

“Oh…”

He grinned. “I want a kiss.”

“What?!” Bruce bristled.

“Give me a kiss.” Clark pointed to his cheek and waited expectantly.

For a while, Bruce hesitated, surprised by the bold request. He couldn’t believe the audacity of this idiot, demanding a kiss from him. But he was seriously considering it… As much as he hated to admit it, he didn’t like it when Clark was angry or upset with him. It was better to appease Clark, so they could move on.
Bruce stepped forward and leaned in to kiss the man’s cheek. But, at the last second, Clark suddenly turned his head. Then he kissed Bruce on the mouth.

Blushing, Bruce jumped back in the surprise and glared at the Kryptonian. *Sneaky bastard.*

Clark smiled, beaming with joy. “Thanks, Bruce. I feel a lot better now. But next time, talk to me before you decide to do something crazy. I mean it.”

Bruce huffed in annoyance. “Fine. Whatever. I assume I’m forgiven now?”

“I don’t know. I may need another kiss.”

“Don’t push it,” he growled.

Clark laughed. “I had to try. But, yeah, I forgive you. It’s like impossible to stay mad at you. Even though you’re a real jerk sometimes.”

“Hmph. Well, now that’s settled. I’m going on patrol.” Batman grabbed his cowl and pulled it on before stomping away.

“I’ll come with you.” Superman suddenly latched onto him and flew out of the cave.

They soared high through the night sky, heading towards the inner city of Gotham. Wind blew all around them while Bruce tightly held onto the hero. He knew Clark would never drop him, but he still didn’t like the loss of control. Also, Clark was carrying him bridal style again, much to his chagrin.

“Dammit, Clark.” Bruce grumbled, “Can’t you carry me some other way?”

“Okay! How about a piggy back ride?”

Clark tossed him up, then Bruce landed on the Kryptonian’s back. Batman instinctively latched onto Clark’s shoulders for support while Clark grabbed both his legs. Now Superman was carrying him like some little kid.

Embarrassed, Bruce yelled while kicking his legs. “This is worse! Put me down!”

Clark laughed happily.
Sunday Dinner

Chapter Summary

Bruce takes a trip to Smallville

Bruce sat in the backseat of his town car while Alfred drove him through the city of Gotham. About thirty minutes ago, Bruce had received a phone call from Dick’s school. Apparently, his ward had gotten into a fight, and now the principal wanted to talk to him.

What the hell was Dick thinking? Bruce had warned him several times to only fight as Robin. When they arrived at the middle school, Alfred parked the car while Bruce entered the large building. The main office was right next to the entrance. Bruce walked into the main office, then a secretary directed him to the principal’s office.

In the office, Principal Sanders was seated behind her desk while Dick was sitting in a chair in front of her. When Dick noticed Bruce, he quickly looked away with a guilty expression on his face.

“Hello, Mr. Wayne. Please have a seat,” the principal greeted him.

Bruce sat in the empty chair next to his ward.

“I wish we were meeting under different circumstances, but I have to talk to you about Dick’s behavior,” the principal explained. “Earlier today, he was in a fight with four other boys.”

“It was four against one?” Bruce asked.

“Yes, but all the other boys are in an emergency room now. Dick is only one who didn’t sustain any injuries.”

Dick grumbled under his breath, “It’s not my fault they don’t know how to fight.”

“Shut it, Dick,” Bruce growled.

“Sorry.” The teen guiltily lowered his head.

Bruce faced the principal again. “Tell the other parents that I’ll pay for all the medical bills. How badly are the boys injured?”

“They’re mostly minor injuries. But you can’t make this disappear with money, Mr. Wayne.” The principal said sternly, “I will have to suspend Dick for a week. And if this happens again, he will be expelled.”

“I understand.” Bruce glared at his ward. “This won’t happen again.”

“Good.” The principal seemed relieved. “Now please take Dick home. He can return to school next week.”

Bruce nodded and stood to leave. “Come on, Dick.”
He walked out of the office with Dick trailing behind him. They exited the school, then headed to the parked town car. After they stepped into the car, Alfred started driving them back to the manor. In the back of the car, Bruce and Dick both sat in silence for a couple minutes. The air was heavy with tension while Bruce glared out a window.

Eventually, Dick broke the silence. “Look, I’m sorry, okay?”

“Why did you fight them? You know better,” Bruce snapped.

Dick slumped in his seat as he muttered, “They were talking shit about you.”

“What?” Bruce looked at him and demanded, “Explain.”

“At school, everyone’s heard the rumors…” Dick spoke with his head tilted down. His dark hair hid his eyes as he divulged, “There’s a group of kids who always insult you in front of me. I tried to ignore them, but they wouldn’t stop. And the teachers knew, but they didn’t care.”

“How did the fight start?”

“One of the kids said ‘Since you were raised by a faggot, you must be one too.’ Then I just lost it. I started yelling at them to shut up, then one of them tried to hit me and…” Dick sniffled like he was about to cry. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have fought them.”

Bruce clenched his jaw as he felt a surge of righteous anger. Suddenly, he was glad that Dick had beaten those other boys. The little fuckers deserved it. Bruce didn’t care if people insulted him, but Dick was off-limits. His ward shouldn’t have to deal with this bullshit.

“Dick, I should be the one apologizing.”

“What?” The boy gave him a confused look.

“It’s my fault that you have to deal with all of this. And it isn’t fair to you.” Bruce asked, “Are you sure that the teachers knew about the bullying?”

Dick sighed. “Yeah, they knew.”

Fuck that school. “Do you still want to take classes online?”

Dick blinked in surprise. “Really? You mean I can stay at home?”

“The choice is yours. If you don’t want to go back to that school, I won’t force you. But if you stay at home, I still expect you to take your education seriously.”

His face lit up excitedly. “I will! I’ll study every day, I promise!”

Bruce nodded in approval. “Then it’s settled. You’re home-schooled now.”

“Yes!” Dick happily pumped a fist in the air. “I’ve been wanting this for years! Does this mean I can patrol with you every night now, even on week nights?”

“But every night. But, yes, you can patrol with me more often. As long as you get your studying done.”

“This is so awesome!” Dick suddenly flung his arms around Bruce, hugging him. “Thank you, Bruce! You’re the best!”
At first, Bruce bristled at the contact. But then he smiled slightly and placed an arm around the boy, patting him on the back.

“Wow! And you hug back now?!” Dick snickered. “Clark must be rubbing off on you. He’s making you all nice and cuddly.”

“Shut up, Dick.” Bruce roughly shoved him away.

Dick fell backwards, laughing.

SxB

In the Batcave, Clark and Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, drinking coffee. It was almost 2:30 AM, and Dick had finally gone to bed. Batman and Robin had been on patrol most of the night. Like most Saturdays, Gotham had been busy. The Dark Knight and his sidekick had stopped dozens of crimes. Clark hadn’t been there, but Dick told him everything that happened, down to the last detail. The kid had been a ball of energy, and he seemed happier than usual. But he eventually tired himself out.

Now it was just Clark and Bruce, alone in the Batcave, still wearing their suits and capes. Batman typed on his computer, then took a sip of coffee. All of his attention was focused on the large computer screen. Batman was hard at work as usual. Clark smiled while watching the vigilante. Then he remembered that it was technically Sunday morning now… He told his Ma that he’d invite Bruce, but he still hasn’t done it.

Clark stared down at his cup of coffee while fidgeting with his hands. Should he invite Bruce? Clark told his Ma that he would. But dinner really wasn’t a good idea. He didn’t think that Bruce would want to go anyway.

Bruce stopped typing and glanced at him. “Something’s bothering you. What is it?”

“My Ma… She invited you to dinner tonight. I’m just letting you know. You don’t have to come. It’d be so awkward.” He laughed nervously. “My Ma and Pa are kinda suspicious of you. They seem to think you’ve corrupted me.”

“Corrupted you?”

Clark shrugged. “Well, you know what your reputation is like. They have the wrong idea about you.”

Bruce frowned, looking perturbed.

“But don’t worry about it,” Clark insisted. “After all the rumors and the fake sex tape, I completely understand why you wouldn’t want to go. Forget I said anything. I’ll just tell them that you couldn’t make it.”

“What time?”

“Huh?” Clark blinked in confusion.

“What time is dinner?” Bruce asked.

“Uh, seven.”

“I’ll be there.”
Clark gaped at him, unsure if he heard correctly. “Seriously? You’re going?”

“I can take my jet. I’ll meet you there.” Batman continued typing on his computer.

“O-Okay…” He still couldn’t believe Bruce agreed to this. “You know where the farm is?”

Bruce gave him an annoyed look.

“Right. Of course, you do.” Clark sighed. “You sure you want to do this? Won’t it make you uncomfortable?”

“It’s just dinner, Clark. I think I can handle it.”

“If you say so…”

Clark was dreading dinner already.

In his private jet, Bruce sat in the cockpit, piloting the aircraft. It was 6:45 PM and he had almost reached Smallville. He should arrive at the farm shortly. He would have dinner with the Kent family, then immediately fly home to Gotham. There was an extra Bat suit on the plane in case of an emergency. He expected Gotham to be quiet tonight, but he never knew for sure.

Soon, he flew over Smallville as he approached the Kent Farm. Luckily, the farm was fairly isolated. The farmhouse was surrounded by large fields and the closest neighbors were miles away. Bruce parked the jet next to a corn field, then he sat still in his seat for a moment.

He wasn’t looking forward to this dinner. Bruce only agreed to it because he needed to talk to Clark’s parents. He couldn’t let them believe that he corrupted their son. Once again, the rumors about Bruce were causing problems for those around him. Dick had been bullied at school because of his reputation, and now Clark was having trouble with his parents.

It was Bruce’s fault that the rumors were so bad. He couldn’t let this affect Clark’s relationship with his parents. Bruce needed to fix it. He had a responsibility to fix it.

Determined, Bruce stepped out of the plane and walked across the field towards the farmhouse. Clark was standing on the front porch, waiting for him. The Kryptonian was dressed casually in a plaid shirt and blue jeans. His dark hair was tousled and he looked cute in his thick-rimmed glasses. Although Bruce would never admit that.

As he approached the front door, Clark watched him nervously. “You actually came…”

Bruce smirked. “Don’t look so disappointed.”

“I-I’m not!” Clark rambled, “I’m always happy to see you. It’s just-”

The front door swung open, then a gray-haired man stepped onto the porch. The older man smiled and extended a hand. “Hey there, I’m Clark’s Pa. You must be Bruce.”

Bruce smiled back and shook hands with Jonathan Kent. “Good evening, Mr. Kent. Thanks for inviting me.”

“You’re welcome. Glad you could make it.” Mr. Kent released his hand, looking impressed. “That’s quite a handshake you’ve got. Not limp-wristed at all.”
“Pa!” Clark snapped angrily, offended on Bruce’s behalf.

Mr. Kent laughed. “I’m just kidding, son.”

“It’s not funny.” Clark glared at his father.

Bruce chuckled. “It’s a little funny.”

“See, he gets it.” Mr. Kent flung an arm around Bruce’s shoulder and ushered him inside. “Come on in. Make yourself at home.”

They all entered the house, then a gray-haired woman walked out of the kitchen, heading towards them. She was wearing pink frilly apron and she had a kind face.

“The food is almost ready. It’s taking a bit longer than I expected.” She looked at Bruce. “Well, aren’t you a snappy dresser.”

Bruce glanced down at his tailored Armani suit. He may have over-dressed for the occasion.

Mrs. Kent regarded him with a tight smile. “It’s nice to finally meet you, Bruce. Clark thinks the world of you.”

Even though she was being polite, Bruce could see the distrust in her eyes. “It’s a pleasure to meet you too, Mrs. Kent.”

“Oh, don’t be so formal. Call me Martha.”

Bruce visibly tensed upon hearing that name.

She noticed his reaction and looked concerned. “Is-Is something wrong?”

“No, it’s nothing.” Bruce forced a smile. “Martha is my mother’s name too.”

“Oh, really? What a coincidence.” Mrs. Kent asked curiously, “How is your mother? Does she live in Gotham like you?”

Bruce lowered his gaze, feeling uncomfortable. “She’s dead.”

“Aw. Dear, I’m sorry to hear that,” Mrs. Kent said with sympathy. “What about your father?”

“Also dead,” he answered tersely.

“Do you have any family left?” she pried.

Clark looked horrified by the line of questioning. “Ma, please-”

Bruce cut him off, “A few years ago, I adopted a boy. His name is Dick.”

Mrs. Kent smiled genuinely this time. “That is so sweet. Adopted children are the best. Did you know we adopted Clark?”

He returned the smile. “Yes, I knew.”

“So, how old is your boy?” Mr. Kent asked.

“Thirteen,” Bruce replied.
Mrs. Kent chuckled. “Oh, the preteen years. Clark is a sweetheart, but even he was a handful at that age. He was so cute though.” She grinned mischievously. “Do you want to see some old photos?”

“No, he doesn’t,” Clark was quick to interject.

Bruce smirked. “I’d love to.”

He could see Clark pouting in the corner of his eye.

In the living room, Bruce sat on the couch next to Martha Kent while she flipped through an old photo album. It was filled with pictures of Clark as a child. Mrs. Kent happily pointed out several photos as she told stories of Clark’s childhood.

Meanwhile Clark sat in a nearby chair, blushing and trying to hide his face with his hands. The poor guy looked so embarrassed. Bruce listened to Mrs. Kent while watching Clark’s reactions. It was very amusing. Bruce could barely stop himself from laughing. He was probably enjoying this too much.

Mrs. Kent flipped to another page in the photo album. “And these pictures are from Clark’s first school play.”

“Oh, come on. Ma, don’t show him that.” Clark complained.

“I want to see,” Bruce said with a shit-eating grin while Clark glared at him.

Mrs. Kent pointed to a photo of a seven-year-old Clark wearing a ridiculous orange costume with a green hat. “Clark was the cutest carrot in the whole play.”

Bruce cracked up, laughing. Meanwhile Clark groaned in embarrassment and hid his face in his hands.

Suddenly, a dinging noise came from the kitchen.

“Dinner is probably ready. I’ll go check.” Mrs. Kent set down the photo album and headed into the kitchen.

Bruce grabbed the photo album, still laughing. Before he could flip to the next page, Clark quickly snatched the album from him. His face was bright red as he glared at Bruce. At the moment, Clark looked more like a tomato than a carrot. Bruce kept laughing, unable to stop.

“A fucking carrot,” he wheezed between bouts of laughter. “Of all things, why a carrot?”

Clark’s glare disappeared as his mouth tugged into a smile. “It was a play about farming. I had to sing the Vitamin A song.”

“What?” Bruce laughed at the absurdity of it. “That’s so stupid.”

“I know.” Clark started laughing too and flopped onto the couch, next to him.

“I need copies of that photo album.”

“Don’t you dare.” Clark leaned against him as they smiled at each other.
“Hey, dinner’s ready. Oh.” Mr. Kent walked into the living room and saw them sitting close together. “Am I interrupting something?”

“No.” Bruce shot off the couch and hurried away.

In the kitchen, Bruce, Clark, and Mr. and Mrs. Kent all sat down at the dinner table. The table was full of food. Mrs. Kent had cooked a small feast for them all. After Mr. Kent said grace, they all began to eat, shoveling food onto their plates.

Dinner was rather pleasant. Mr. Kent asked Clark how his job was going, and Clark talked about a few articles that he had written recently. Bruce ate quietly, feeling content. Then he noticed Clark flinch suddenly and look away from the table. He must’ve heard something.

“What is it?” Bruce asked.

“There’s trouble in Metropolis. Luthor is up to something.” Clark looked worried.

Bruce nodded in understanding. “Go. Your city needs you.”

“Thanks.” Clark smiled gratefully, then told his parents, “Sorry. I’ll be back as soon as I can.”

In blur of super-speed, Clark disappeared from the table. Bruce continued to eat casually, then he noticed Mr. and Mrs. Kent both staring at him.

“You…know?” Martha Kent gaped at him in surprise.

Bruce nodded. “Yes. I’ve known for a while.”

“How did you find out that he’s Superman?” Mr. Kent asked.

“It was fairly obvious to me.” Bruce shrugged. “His disguise is a pair of glasses.”

Mrs. Kent huffed while crossing her arms. “I’ve been telling Clark for years that he needs a better disguise.”

“Yeah,” Jonathan Kent agreed. “He needs a mask like that Bat guy in Gotham.”

“It’s a cowl,” Bruce corrected him.

“What?”

“Batman wears a cowl, not a mask,” Bruce clarified.

“Well, whatever it’s called. Clark should get one of those,” Mr. Kent claimed.

Martha Kent stared at Bruce like she was studying him. “So, it doesn’t bother you at all? That Clark is an alien?”

Bruce set down his fork and met Mrs. Kent’s gaze as he answered honestly, “At first, it did bother me. I was suspicious and I didn’t trust Superman at all. But after a while, I learned that…Clark is the most trustworthy person I know. And I was foolish to ever doubt him. He’s not human, but he’s better than human…like he’s too good for this world.”

Jonathan and Martha Kent both smiled at him. Then Bruce cleared his throat and looked away, realizing he had said too much.
“Well, I better get going.” He stood to leave. “Thanks for dinner.”

“No, no! Stay,” Mrs. Kent insisted.

“Sit down, son. We aren’t done talking,” Mr. Kent motioned for him to take a seat.

With a sigh, Bruce reluctantly sat in the chair again. Then Mrs. Kent hurried to the kitchen counter and returned to the table with a piece of pie. She set the pie in front of Bruce.

“Here. Have some dessert. It’s Clark’s favorite—apple pie.” She smiled warmly.

Of course, apple pie is his favorite. Bruce stared at the pie, then politely forced himself to take a bite. It actually tasted pretty good, even though it was too sweet.

Martha Kent sat back down as she asked, “So, how did you meet Clark?”

“We met about a year ago, at a Wayne Fundraiser,” he replied.

Mr. Kent looked thoughtful. “Didn’t Clark write an article about that?”

“Yeah, he did. I almost forgot.” Mrs. Kent stared at Bruce, “In the article, I think he wrote that you stood up to the Joker. Is that right?”

“Well, the Joker crashed the party, but Superman took him away,” Bruce explained. “I was just a bystander.”

Martha shook her head. “No, you weren’t. I remember the article now. Clark wrote that you talked to the Joker and told him to leave your guests alone.”

Jonathan smiled. “Yeah, Clark spoke very highly of you in that article.”

“Clark is generous. He saved the guests, not me,” Bruce asserted.

Now Mrs. Kent was smiling too. “Brave and modest. No wonder Clark likes you.”

“We’re just friends,” Bruce told them.

“Right…” Mr. Kent didn’t look convinced.

“Of course, you are.” Mrs. Kent winked at him.

Bruce sighed in frustration. God dammit.

“You know… You’re really not what I was expecting,” Martha admitted.

“What do you mean?” Bruce asked.

“Well, your reputation isn’t the best.”

Honestly, I was expecting a perverted drunk,” Mr. Kent confessed.

“Jonathan,” she hissed while swatting her husband.

Amused, Bruce smiled at them. “That’s understandable. A lot of the rumors about me are false.”

“Can’t you do something to fix that? Like a hire team of lawyers,” Mr. Kent suggested. “You’re rich, aren’t you?”
“The rumors serve a purpose,” Bruce replied.

“And what purpose is that?” Mr. Kent pried, frowning.

Suddenly, Clark’s frantic voice came from the Bat-Comm. “Bruce! Bruce, can you hear me?!”

Martha’s eyes widened in shock. “Is that Clark?”

Fuck. So much for my secret identity. Bruce took the Bat-Comm out of his pocket. “What is it?”

“I’m sorry about this, but can you help me out?” Clark asked.

“What’s wrong?” Bruce demanded.

“Luthor has kryptonite again. I can’t get near him… Also, I’m kinda trapped,” Clark added sheepishly.

“I’ll be right there.” Bruce stood and put away the Bat-Comm. “I have to go.”

He marched toward the front door while Clark’s parents followed him.

“Wait, what is going on?!” Martha asked, obviously worried for her son.

“I don’t understand.” Jonathan looked confused. “Why would Clark call you for help?”

Bruce hurried outside while pulling out the remote to his jet. He pressed a button on the remote, turning on the plane. As the engine started, bright lights shined from his jet, illuminating the dark field while corn stalks swayed in the breeze. Before he entered the plane, he turned to face Clark’s parents who had followed him outside.

“Because I’m Batman,” Bruce revealed, then stepped into his jet.

Jonathan and Martha Kent watched in awe as the sleek, black plane shot off the ground, zooming across the sky.
At the Daily Planet, Clark sat at his desk, staring at his computer screen. Perry had given him a pile of work to do. Today was going to be a long day. Clark stifled a yawn before typing on his computer. He always felt a little sluggish after being exposed to kryptonite. That bastard Luthor had caused trouble last night in Metropolis. Normally, Superman could’ve handled the situation on his own. But somehow Luthor had gotten his hands on kryptonite again.

Thankfully, Batman had come to rescue. Clark smiled as he remembered the vigilante’s grand entrance. Bruce had flown a jet straight into the LexCorp building, then he kicked Luthor’s ass. Now, Luthor was in a hospital, recuperating. Batman really didn’t go easy on the villain. He had beaten Luthor to a bloody pulp… Superman was never that vicious with his nemesis. Luthor wasn’t a Kryptonian, and Clark didn’t like hurting people who were weaker than him.

Bruce had no qualms about hurting Luthor though. He seemed to enjoy it.

Maybe I should team up with Bruce more often. Clark smirked to himself. If Batman beat up Luthor enough times, maybe the villain would finally get the message and start behaving.

For the next few hours, Clark focused on his work. Around 6:30 PM, he said goodbye to Lois, then left the Daily Planet. He walked down the street, heading back to his apartment. The paparazzi wasn’t stalking Clark anywhere, but Bruce was still on the front page of several gossip magazines. Unfortunately, the fake rumors were still going strong. But now, a lot of people were publicly supporting Bruce Wayne, especially the gay community.

When Clark reached his apartment, he lazily flopped down on the couch. Then he heard the phone ring. With a tried sigh, Clark levitated off the couch and grabbed the phone while floating in midair.

“Hello?” He answered the phone.

“Hi, Clark, honey,” his Ma greeted him happily. “How are you doing?”

He landed on the floor, then leaned his back against the kitchen counter. “I’m fine. Sorry about leaving early last night.”

“Oh, that’s alright. You know your Pa and I understand. We had a lovely time last night. Next time you visit, feel free to bring Bruce with you,” she insisted.
In the background, Clark heard his Pa yelling, “Yeah, bring Bruce back!”

Clark laughed, feeling relieved. “So, you like him?”

“Sweetie, of course, we do,” his Ma cooed. “Why didn’t you tell us that Batman is your boyfriend?”

“He’s not my-” Clark blinked in surprise. “Wait, how do you know that?”

“Bruce told us after you called him.”

Shit… So when he called last night, Bruce was still at the farm. After Clark had been weakened by kryptonite, he couldn’t tell where Bruce was when he decided to call. Clark had been so desperate for help that he didn’t even think of the consequences. He let out a long sigh, feeling guilty. He had forced Bruce to out himself as Batman.

His Ma added, “Bruce also told us that the rumors are false. I suppose it’s all an act to protect his identity. Why didn’t you tell me earlier? Now I feel bad for judging him before we met.”

“Don’t feel bad, Ma. I would’ve told you, but…it’s not my secret to tell.”

“I understand,” she said kindly. “Well, let Bruce know that he’s always welcome here.”

Clark smiled. “Thanks, Ma. That means a lot to me.”

“Bruce is a good boy, and I can tell that he cares for you. His eyes light up when he talks about you.”

“R-Really?” Clark rubbed the back of his neck as he blushed slightly.

His Ma laughed. “You two are so cute.” In the background, he heard the oven dinging. “Oh, the pot roast is done. I better go.”

“Bye, Ma.”

“Bye, Honey. Talk to you later.” She hung up.

Clark set down the phone, grinning to himself. He had been so worried that his parents and Bruce wouldn’t get along. But his parents actually liked Bruce a lot. It was such a relief. Clark felt like a huge weight has been lifted off his shoulders. He was so excited and happy.

“His eyes light up when he talks about you.” Clark remembered his Ma’s words and almost squealed with joy.

He wanted to see Bruce. Right now.

In a flash, Clark changed into his Superman suit and flew out the window. Zooming across the sky, he headed towards Gotham, then flew into the Batcave through the secret outside entrance. In the cave, he landed on the ground, behind Batman. Bruce was sitting in front of the Batcomputer, dressed in his Bat suit, obviously ready for the night.

Superman approached him happily. “Hi, Bruce.”

“Hey, Clark.” Bruce continued typing, his eyes still focused on the computer screen.

Clark sat down in the chair next to him. “Thanks again for helping me last night.”
Batman shrugged while working. “You would’ve done the same for me.”

Clark smiled. “Thanks for meeting my parents too.” He paused before adding guiltily, “And I’m sorry for outing you as Batman.”

“They’re your parents. I trust them.”

His eyes widened in surprise. “Really? You trust them?”

“They’ve kept your secret for years, and they know I’m your ally. They saw you call me for help. They won’t tell anyone who I am.”

Clark nodded. “Yeah, your secret is safe with them… My parents really like you.”

Bruce abruptly stopped typing, looking uncomfortable. “They think we’re dating.”

Clark sighed. “Yeah, I know. Sorry about that. I told them before that we’re not a couple.”

“Good.” Bruce relaxed somewhat, then resumed his work on the Batcomputer.

While Batman focused on the computer, Clark watched him silently. He still believed that Bruce liked him as more than a friend. Clark wondered how long their relationship was going to stay like this. Technically, they weren’t a couple, but sometimes they acted like one. Whenever Bruce agreed to hug or kiss him…

How long would Clark have to wait? He understood that Bruce was afraid of what could happen if they started dating, but they shouldn’t let fear dictate their lives.

Clark was willing to take the risks. He was willing to do whatever it takes to be with Bruce. Because Bruce was worth it… Clark loved him so much. He wished he could hold Bruce right now and kiss him, and-

“When you were avoiding me, where did you go?” Bruce asked suddenly.

“What?” Clark snapped out of his thoughts.

Bruce looked at him and crossed his arms. “Back when I was searching for you… I looked everywhere, but I couldn’t find you. Where did you go?”

“Oh, I was at the Fortress of Solitude,” he replied.

“The what?”

“It’s in the Arctic. I can show you,” Superman offered excitedly. “Do you want to go there? I’ll fly you there right now.”

Batman gazed back at his computer screen. “I have to go on patrol with Dick soon.”

“Oh. Okay.” Clark deflated somewhat, feeling disappointed.

“Can you take me there tomorrow?” Bruce asked.

“Sure! Sounds fun.” Clark grinned happily.

Tomorrow, when they fly to the Arctic, he would have an excuse to hold Bruce again.
The next day, Bruce stood in the Batcave, dressed in his Bat suit and ready to go. Now he was waiting for Clark to arrive. They had agreed to leave at 5:30 PM. As soon as Clark left work, he was supposed to come straight here. Bruce crossed his arms as he tapped his foot impatiently. Clark was ten minutes late.

Suddenly, a gust of wind blew into the cave and Superman landed in front of him.

“Sorry I’m late. Metropolis was crazy today. Somebody hacked into the air traffic control system, and planes were crashing everywhere.” Clark heaved a long sigh, looking exhausted. “It was insane. I must’ve saved at least ten thousand people today.”

Bruce nodded understandingly. “If you’re tired, we can always reschedule-”

“No!” Clark cut him off. “I’ve been looking forward to this all day. We’re going.”

Bruce gave him an amused smirk. “Fine. I’ll follow you in the Batplane.”

He headed towards the plane, then Superman appeared in front of him, blocking his path.

“I can just fly you. It’ll be quicker.”

“I prefer flying myself. Besides, it’ll be warmer inside the plane.”

“Well, yeah, but…” Clark paused like he was thinking of an excuse. “The plane will be really hard to land. There’s nothing but ice up there.”

Bruce gave him an annoyed look. “I know how to land a plane, Clark.”

“Y-Yeah, I know… But there’s also snowstorms up there. It’ll be a lot safer if you let me fly you,” he insisted.

With a sigh, Batman considered his options. Potential snowstorms could be a problem. He didn’t want to risk losing another plane. A couple days ago, he flew a jet into the LexCorp building and completely trashed it. Lucius Fox wouldn’t appreciate Bruce wrecking another plane so soon.

“Fine. Have it your way,” he relented.

“Great!” Clark grinned excitedly. “Let’s go.”

The Kryptonian snatched Bruce off the ground, then flew out of the Batcave. They zoomed across the sky, heading north. Clark was carrying him bridal style again, but Bruce knew better than to complain about it. Last time he complained, Clark just found more embarrassing ways to carry him.

Strong winds rushed past them as they approached the Arctic. Bruce could feel the temperature dropping fast. His Kevlar suit gave him some protection from the cold, but not enough. He was still freezing. The exposed part of his face was beginning to feel numb. Bruce shivered as he turned his face towards Clark’s chest.

Despite the temperature drop, the Kryptonian was still so warm like his body didn’t even register the change in climate. After another strong gust of wind, Bruce shivered and curled inward, pressing himself against Clark. It was so fucking cold.

In midair, Superman abruptly stopped and hovered in place, high above the fields of snow and ice.
Bruce glanced up at him, then Clark smiled apologetically.

“Sorry. Sometimes I forget how much the weather affects other people. We’re almost there.”

He switched to holding Bruce with only one hand while he reached back and grabbed his cape. Clark wrapped the red cape around Bruce like a blanket. Then he continued flying as he held Bruce close to his chest protectively.

The cold wasn’t so bad anymore. Bruce barely noticed it. All he could feel was the heat rushing to his face as he blushed underneath his cowl. He shouldn’t be in this position. Pressed tightly against Clark and wrapped in his cape… Bruce was completely enveloped by Clark, surrounded by his warmth, by his scent. It felt intimate. Too intimate.

Bruce swallowed anxiously as he gripped the red cape. His mouth was dry and his heart was pounding like it was about to beat out of his chest. He needed to push the cape away—push Clark away. His hand shook as he tightly clenched the cape. Conflicting thoughts and desires rushed through his mind. He needed to push Clark away, but… But he didn’t want to.

In a moment of weakness, Bruce pulled the cape closer, covering the lower half of his face. The cape smelled so much like Clark. Bruce shut his eyes, reeling from the scent. God, he didn’t want to let go. Bruce could stay like this forever. Surrounded by Clark, and nothing but Clark. Bruce felt dizzy with relief as all the tension drained away from his body. He had never felt so warm, safe and content.

“We’re here.” Superman landed on the ground, then Bruce blinked a few times like he was awakening from a trance.

Clark glanced down at him and chuckled. “Were you taking a nap?”

“No.” Embarrassed, Bruce quickly shoved Clark away as he stood.

In front of them, there was a giant fortress made of ice. Bruce stared up at the impressive structure, studying the tall pillars of ice that crisscrossed over each other.

“Well, this is the Fortress of Solitude,” Superman announced as he walked towards the structure. “Come on. It’s warmer inside.”

Batman followed him inside the fortress, still scanning his surroundings. He had seen buildings constructed from ice before, but nothing this huge.

“How many people know about this place?” he asked curiously.

“Just you and me. I guess it’s like my Batcave,” Clark joked.

“Oh…” Bruce paused uncomfortably. “If this place is private, you don’t have to-”

“No, I want to show you around. Come on.” Clark grabbed his hand and led him deeper into the fortress.

While they walked, Bruce stared down at their hands. Clark still had a firm grip on his gloved hand like he had no intentions of letting go. Bruce tried to tug his hand away, but the Kryptonian didn’t seem to notice. Against his super-strength, Bruce’s struggling probably felt like nothing. With an inward sigh, he resigned himself to the hand-holding.

Of course, Bruce knew if he really wanted Clark to let go, all he had to do was ask… But instead
he said nothing.

“My place doesn’t have cool gadgets like yours, but I do have a computer,” Clark explained. “It’s a Kryptonian computer with an A.I.”

“What kind of A.I.?” Bruce asked.

“Uh, it’s kinda like my dad.”

“What?” Bruce gave him a questioning look.

“Before my biological father died on Krypton, he made an A.I. based on himself. Sometimes he talks to me as a hologram. Do you want to meet him?” Clark glanced back at Bruce, then noticed that they were still holding hands. He released Bruce, laughing nervously.

Bruce was curious about the alien technology. “I already met your adoptive parents. I might as well meet the biological ones too.”

Clark grinned happily. “Great. I’ll introduce you.”

He led Bruce down a long hallway towards a metallic podium. Then Clark approached the podium and pressed a few buttons that had strange alien markings. It was probably the Kryptonian language. Bruce watched with interest while Clark typed on the alien device.

Suddenly, a beam of light flashed in front of the podium and a hologram appeared. The hologram was an image of bearded, middle-aged man wearing armor that bore the Superman symbol. His face looked similar to Clark’s. There was a clear physical resemblance between the two.

“Bruce, this is Jor-El, my father.” Clark gestured to the hologram. “And, Father, this is Bruce.”

Jor-El stared at him and smiled. “Bruce... Kal-El has told me much about you. I am glad we’re finally meeting.”

“So am I.” Bruce crossed his arms as he studied the hologram. “As an A.I. program, do you only contain Jor-El’s memories or do you function as a computer as well?”

“Bruce.” Clark frowned at him like he was being rude.

The hologram looked amused. “Essentially, I am a copy of Jor-El, but, yes, I am also a computer. Do you have questions for me?”

Bruce nodded. “Many questions.”

“Ask away. I will answer to the best of my ability,” Jor-El replied.

For the next hour, Batman stood at the podium, talking to the hologram. The alien A.I. had a vast amount of knowledge. He told Bruce all about planet Krypton and the rise and fall of their civilization. He also told Bruce everything there is to know about kryptonite: why it hurts Kryptonians, how much of it is on Earth, and, most importantly, what kinds of kryptonite exist. Bruce had ample experience with green kryptonite, but he knew nothing of the different variations.

“Perhaps, the most dangerous variation of all is red kryptonite,” Jor-El revealed while Clark tensed uncomfortably.

“Why? Is it more harmful to Clark?” Bruce asked.
“No…” Jor-El spoke cryptically, “It is not dangerous for Kal-El, but it is for everyone else.”

Bruce frowned. “Explain.”

“When Kal-El is exposed to red kryptonite, he cannot control his impulses. He will act without guilt, empathy, or honor.”

A shiver ran down his spine as Bruce swallowed anxiously. “Are…Are you saying that Clark can lose his conscience? His sense of right and wrong?”

“Under the influence of red kryptonite, yes.” Jor-El answered.

Fuck. Bruce surged with anger as he growled at Clark, “Did you know about this?”

“N-No. Well, kind of.” Clark winced guiltily. “I’ve only been close to red kryptonite a few times, but that was years ago.”

“What happened?” Bruce demanded.

With a sigh, Clark explained, “Back when I was in high school, I dated a girl named Lana. One day, she came to school with a necklace containing red kryptonite.” He rubbed the back of his neck as he admitted, “I never touched the necklace, but I felt…different around her. More aggressive. Mean. Just not myself… Eventually, I figured out that the necklace was affecting me. I told Lana to destroy the necklace and she did.”

“You’re sure the necklace is destroyed?” Bruce asked.

“Yeah, it’s gone. And I haven’t seen any red kryptonite since then.” Clark claimed, “I wasn’t trying to hide anything from you. Honestly, I forgot all about it. And it didn’t seem that important. I mean, I didn’t go on a crazy rampage or anything.”

Jor-El interjected, “If you didn’t touch the red kryptonite, then you did not feel its full effect. Luckily, red kryptonite is extremely rare. The odds of encountering it again are minimal.”

Bruce glanced at the hologram. “Is it possible to scan for red kryptonite? Can you tell me where to find it?”

“No, I’m afraid I cannot,” Jor-el answered solemnly.

Damn it. Bruce clenched his fists as his thoughts raced anxiously. The existence of red kryptonite was like a ticking time bomb. Why didn’t Bruce hear about this sooner?! Without his morality, Superman would be the most dangerous threat on the planet. Clark said that red kryptonite made him more aggressive. Just how aggressive could he become? Would he start killing? If he felt like it, he could kill billions of people in the blink of an eye. He could take over the whole fucking world. Would Bruce be able to stop him? Batman always planned for the worst case scenario. And right now, he could think of nothing worse than fighting a bloodthirsty Superman. It was downright horrifying.

“Bruce…” Clark stared at him, his blue eyes filled with concern. “I’m really sorry. I don’t want you to be scared.”

“I’m not scared!” He snapped, then Clark flinched and looked away.

The Kryptonian looked so guilty, probably because he knew Bruce was lying. His inner panic must be obvious to the alien. Clark could always sense how fast his heart was beating.
Bruce took a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down. He needed to lower his heart rate, so he could conceal this pathetic fear.

“It’s not your fault.” Batman said determinedly, “I’ll find every trace of red kryptonite on Earth and destroy it. Then we won’t have to worry.”

“Ohay.” Clark smiled reassuringly.

Bruce crossed his arms as he faced the hologram once again. “Is there any else about kryptonite that I should know?”

“No, I believe you are well-informed now,” Jor-El replied evenly.

“Good. Thanks for the information, Jor-El. You’ve been helpful.” Bruce turned to walk away and glanced at Clark. “I need to go on patrol soon.”

Clark nodded. “Sure. I’ll take you home.”

Before they could leave, the hologram called out, “Kal-El, your beloved is very intelligent. He is welcome to visit me whenever he pleases.”

Bruce froze in his tracks and stared at Jor-El with wide eyes. “Beloved?”

Clark laughed nervously and rushed to the podium. “Oh, Father, you’re such a kidder. Bye, bye.” He quickly shut off the Kryptonian computer, causing the hologram to disappear.

“Come on, Bruce. Let’s go.” Clark hurried away, walking in front of him.

Bruce followed him while glaring at the back of his head. “He called me your beloved.”

“Gotta love that dry Kryptonian humor.”

“Jor-El wasn’t joking. He was being serious.”

Instead of responding, Clark walked in silence. He pointedly ignored Bruce while they headed across the fortress, towards the exit. With every passing second, Bruce became more and more annoyed. He hated it when Clark ignored him.

When they stepped out of the fortress, Bruce was immediately hit with a gust of cold wind. In front of him, Clark stood with his back facing him, his red cape flapping loudly in the breeze.

Irritated, Bruce marched toward the hero and grabbed his arm, forcing him to turn around. “Why did Jor-El call me that? What the hell have you been telling him?!”

“I told him that I love you.” Clark glared at Bruce, his eyes shining with desperation. “He’s my father. Am I not allowed to confide in him? Am I not allowed to feel this way?!”

Bruce faltered, suddenly unable to meet Clark’s gaze. “No, you… You can tell him whatever you want.”

For what seemed like an eternity, they stood outside in the snow, neither of them saying anything. The wind was still blowing fiercely and soon, Bruce could feel the cold sinking in through his Kevlar. His arms and legs went numb as he shivered involuntarily.

Clark’s gaze softened as soon as he noticed the shivering. “Come on, it’s freezing. Let me take you home.”
Unexpectedly, Clark reached behind himself and unfastened the cape from his shoulders. Then he draped the red cape over Bruce, covering the top of his head and folding the cape over his shoulders like a hood. Bruce stared down at the snow, refusing to look at Clark. He felt ridiculous, yet he didn’t remove the cape.

When Clark picked him up, Bruce didn’t protest. He simply hid his face in the crook of the other man’s neck. Clark held him tightly as they flew through the air, heading south. Bruce’s entire body was wrapped snugly in the cape, including his arms. Usually when they flew, Bruce would grab onto Clark, paranoid that he might fall. But Bruce didn’t hang on this time, trusting that Clark wouldn’t drop him. Trusting him with everything…

Bruce’s whole body trembled, but it wasn’t from the cold. *What the hell am I doing?* This was foolish. Dangerous. Bruce was caving in too much, allowing too much.

“I told him that I love you.” Clark’s voice rang out in his mind. “Am I not allowed to feel this way?!”

No, they weren’t allowed. They couldn’t be together. Not like this. It would only end in pain for them both. They had too many enemies. Their love would become a weapon used against them. Bruce couldn’t fail Clark like that. He could not fail.

Tormented by his own thoughts, Bruce barely noticed when they reached Wayne Manor. Instead of flying to the Batcave, Superman landed on the balcony by Bruce’s bedroom. He carried Bruce into the dark room, then sat down on the bed. Clark held Bruce in his lap while yanking blankets on top of him.

“What are you doing?” Bruce muttered.

“You’re still shivering.” Clark sounded worried as he hugged Bruce closer to his chest “Is that better?”

Covered in blankets and pressed against Clark, Bruce wasn’t the least bit cold, but he couldn’t stop trembling. How did they get to this point? When did it become normal for Clark to hold him like this? To dote on him? The hero treated him with a tenderness that Bruce had never received before. Clark held him like he was something precious, something worth protecting. But Batman didn’t need protection. And he definitely didn’t need to be coddled.

“Stop. Stop treating me like this.” Bruce pushed Clark away as he stood and yanked the blankets off. He pulled off Superman’s cape too, feeling oddly cold and dejected with it gone. Bruce clenched his fists and forced himself to stop trembling as his whole body tensed.

“I already told you we…we can’t be together. It’s a bad idea.” He said the words, but he sounded unsure like he was trying to convince himself.

“Bruce?” Clark stepped in front of him, staring at him with piercing blue eyes.

Slowly, he raised his hands to Bruce’s face and grabbed his cowl, sliding it back. The cowl fell back, revealing Bruce’s face. Clark stared right at him like he was searching for something. Bruce looked away, avoiding the intense gaze. He felt exposed, vulnerable underneath that stare. His heart thumped loudly in his chest as he swallowed nervously.

“W-We can’t,” he said weakly.

Clark grabbed onto Bruce’s chin and tilted his face up, kissing him. A surprised sound escaped his throat as Bruce staggered on his feet. Before he could step back, Clark latched onto him with his
other hand, pulling him closer. The kiss was demanding, feverish. Clark plunged his tongue into
Bruce’s mouth, dominating the kiss strongly. Without thinking, Bruce immediately kissed back
with equal fervor. He sucked on Clark’s tongue, eliciting a deep moan from the Kryptonian. Bruce
smiled into the kiss, enjoying the sound, enjoying Clark-

His eyes widened as his mind snapped into gear.

“I said we can’t!” Bruce roughly shoved Clark away.

Clark stumbled back, looking irate. “Why not?! You want this too, don’t you?!”

“It’s not that simple, Clark!”

“Yes, it is!” He shouted back, “You’re the one making it complicated!”

“Get out. This conversation is over,” Bruce growled as he stormed away.

When he reached the door, Clark appeared next to him in a blur of super-speed. Bruce grabbed the
doorknob, but the Kryptonian slammed his hand on the door, trapping him inside.

“No, it’s not.” Clark glared at him as he demanded, “Explain to me why we can’t be together. Why
do you keep denying us something we both want?”

“Stop pushing this. I already gave my answer.”

“But I know you want this too!” Clark grabbed onto Bruce and kissed him forcefully, pushing him
against a wall.

Bruce quickly broke away from the kiss as he punched Clark in the face. The Kryptonian released
him, his face impassive, obviously unharmed from the hit.

“Back off. Now,” Bruce hissed viciously. “Or I’ll cut off all contact with you.”

Clark’s eyes widened in surprise. “You wouldn’t dare.”

“Don’t test me,” Bruce snarled and left the room, slamming the door on his way out.

As he stomped down the hallway, he could hear Clark yelling in frustration, “Argh! Bruce, you’re
driving me crazy!”

Bruce ignored him and kept walking. When he glanced out a window, he spotted Superman in the
sky, flying back towards Metropolis. Bruce stopped by the window, his eyes lingering on the red
cape. He felt a painful ache in his chest, but chose to ignore it.

Why dwell on something he can’t have?
Early in the morning, Clark jolted awake in severe pain. He sat up while cradling his head in his hands. A couple days ago, he started having bad headaches. This was the worst one so far.

Clark groaned in agony as blurry images flashed though his mind. He could hear a voice, but the words were muffled. He couldn’t understand what was being said. Was someone trying to reach him? After a few seconds, the headache disappeared along with the mysterious voice and images.

Exhausted, Clark laid back down and stared up at the ceiling. He was alone in his apartment, lying in bed. He glanced at the clock on his nightstand. It was almost 8 AM. At least today was a Saturday. Clark didn’t have to go to work.

He closed his eyes for a while, but he couldn’t fall back to sleep. The frequent headaches were becoming worrisome. He wanted to talk to Bruce about it, but he hadn’t seen the vigilante all week…since their last argument.

Giving up on sleep, Clark sighed as he opened his eyes. He didn’t know what to do about Bruce. The man was so stubborn. Clark didn’t understand why Bruce had rejected him once again. I know he likes me, so why…? What am I doing wrong?

Clark sat up, then walked to the bathroom. He relieved himself, brushed his teeth and shaved by reflecting his heat vision off the mirror. Then he trudged into the living room and flopped down on the couch. He knew he should eat something, but he wasn’t hungry. His thoughts kept circling back to his fight with Bruce. He replayed the events over and over in head, obsessing over it. Bruce had kissed him back the first time. But the second time, Bruce had punched him in the face. Clark must’ve pushed him too far…

With a sigh, Clark ran a hand through his hair. Somehow he needed to fix things with Bruce, but he didn’t want to only be friends. They made so much progress. Bruce had initiated two hugs and even a kiss that one time for forgiveness. And he definitely kissed back last week…before he started pushing Clark away again. Were they back to square one? It was frustrating. Clark felt like he had screwed everything up.

Bruce was so hard to understand sometimes. The cranky man should come with a guidebook or an instruction manual. Clark chuckled at the thought, then he was struck by an idea. He needed to talk to someone who truly understood Bruce inside and out. And, nobody knew the vigilante better than Alfred. The butler had practically raised him.
Maybe Alfred can tell me what I’m doing wrong. With a burst of energy, Clark shot off the couch and changed into his Superman suit, then flew out the window.

SxB

At Wayne Manor, Superman could hear a familiar steady heartbeat coming from Bruce’s bedroom. After a night of patrolling, Batman must be fast asleep. Clark landed in front of the manor and knocked on the front door. Soon, he heard footsteps, then Alfred answered the door.

“Good morning, Mr. Kent,” the butler greeted him. “I’m afraid Master Wayne and Master Dick are both asleep. They are not ready for any visitors, but I will let Master Wayne know you stopped by.”

Clark shifted nervously on his feet. “Actually, I came here to see you.”

Alfred blinked in surprise, then he stepped aside while holding the door open. “I see. Please come in.”

Clark entered the manor, then Alfred shut the door. When the butler headed down the main entryway, Clark trailed behind him. They walked into the kitchen, then Alfred set a kettle on the stove and started boiling some water.

“Have a seat. I’ll make us some tea,” he said.

“Okay. Thanks.” Clark sat down at the kitchen table and fidgeted anxiously with the sleeves of his Superman suit.

While the kettle was heating, Alfred sat down across from him. “May I ask about the nature of your visit?”

“I, uh… I was wondering if you could help me with something.”

“Certainly.” Alfred smiled. “How can I be of assistance?”

“Well…” He rubbed the back of his neck while looking away. “You know how I feel about Bruce, right?”

“Yes. You are in love with him.”

Blushing, Clark spluttered, “D-Did Bruce tell you that?”

“He didn’t need to,” Alfred answered coolly.

“Oh.” Clark chuckled. “Heh, yeah. I guess it’s pretty obvious.”

“Indeed.”

Clark swallowed nervously before asking, “Do…Do you think I have a chance with him? I think Bruce likes me, but he keeps pushing me away. I don’t know what to do.”

Alfred looked amused. “You came here seeking my advice.”

“Well, yeah…” Clark admitted. “If you have any advice at all, I’d really appreciate it. I keep screwing everything up.”

“Don’t be so hard on yourself, Mr. Kent. Master Wayne is very attached to you.”
“Really?” His eyes lit up excitedly.

The butler nodded. “Yes. Very attached. That is why he pushes you away.”

When kettle whistled, Alfred stood and walked to the stove. He prepared two cups of tea while Clark frowned, confused by what the old man had said. It didn’t make any sense. Soon, Alfred returned to the table and handed Clark a cup of tea before sitting down.

Clark stared down at the steaming hot tea and muttered, “I don’t understand what you mean.”

With a sigh, Alfred explained, “Master Wayne’s worst fear is losing the people he loves. He lost his parents at a young age, and then he lost Miss Rachel a few years ago. He hasn’t recovered from either of those losses.”

“He mentioned Rachel before. She was killed by the Joker, right?” Clark asked.

“Yes…” Alfred took a sip of tea and spoke solemnly. “Master Wayne had an opportunity to save her, but the Joker tricked him. She died in an explosion. Master Bruce has never forgiven himself for that. He blames himself for Miss Rachel’s death.”

“He loved her?”

“Yes, he did. They were childhood friends. Master Bruce had known Miss Rachel for most of his life. Her death was devastating to him. Afterwards, he claimed that he would never love again. He said that it was irresponsible to have a relationship as Batman.”

“Yeah, that sounds like Bruce,” Clark grumbled.

Alfred smiled at him. “I was so relieved when Master Wayne befriended you. He has warmed up to you in a way I have never seen before. You are special to him. Perhaps more so than Miss Rachel ever was.”

Clark raised an eyebrow. “But you said he loved Rachel.”

“He did.” Alfred calmly drank his tea.

“Do you think he could ever love me?” Clark asked hopefully.

“He already does.”

“W-What?!” Clark gaped at the old man, his eyes widened in shock. “Did Bruce say that?”

“He didn’t need to. His feelings are as obvious as yours.” Alfred took another sip of tea, completely unfazed.

Clark’s mouth tugged into a smile. Of course, he was happy to hear all of this, but it seemed too good to be true. He was skeptical.

“But…But if Bruce loves me, then why does he push me away?”

“Because he hasn’t accepted it yet,” Alfred explained. “Master Bruce is trying to protect himself from further loss. After all, you cannot lose what you do not have.”

“So, he’s pushing me away because he doesn’t want to lose me?”

Alfred nodded. “He is terrified of losing you.”
Clark leaned back in his chair while crossing his arms. He soaked in the information, trying to process it all. Everything with Bruce was always so complicated.

“What should I do then?” he asked.

“Be patient. I know Master Wayne can be difficult. But in time, I believe he’ll realize that it’s okay for him to be happy. And being with you does make him happy, Mr. Kent.” Alfred implored, “Please don’t give up on him.”

Clark grinned. “You don’t have to worry about that, Alfred. I will never give up on Bruce. I love him, and I can be patient.” He said determinedly, “I’ll wait forever if I have to. I’m not going anywhere.”

“I am very pleased to hear that.” Alfred smiled.

SxB

When Bruce opened his eyes, he could see a sliver of sunlight through his bedroom curtains. Then he glanced at the clock on his nightstand. It was 10:37 AM. He had slept for about five hours. That was more than enough. He had work to do. Last night, he noticed several security breaches in the satellites orbiting Earth. It required further investigation.

Bruce stood and pulled on a black robe, then he left his room and headed down the hall. The manor was quiet, which meant Dick was still asleep. Robin had stayed up late with him, patrolling Gotham. It had been a busy night. Bruce could use some coffee. He walked downstairs, then headed towards the kitchen.

In the kitchen, he found Alfred and Superman sitting together at the table. Bruce immediately focused on Clark and crossed his arms defensively. He hadn’t seen the hero since their last argument. Clark had been so demanding that Bruce threatened to cut off all contact with him. He hoped Superman wasn’t here to call his bluff.

Clark looked away awkwardly while Alfred stood and greeted him, “Good morning, Master Wayne. Would you like some coffee?”

“Yes. Thank you.” Bruce glared at the Kryptonian. “What do you want, Clark?”

Before Clark could respond, Alfred interjected, “Actually, he came here to see me, Master Wayne. Mr. Kent, would you like a cup of coffee as well?”

“Yes, please,” Clark said sheepishly.

Bruce marched to the table and grabbed a chair, scrapping it across the floor. Then he sat down, still glaring at Clark. “You came here to see Alfred?”

“Y-Yeah.” Clark nodded.

“Why?” Bruce demanded.

“He gives good advice.”

Bruce blinked, caught off guard. Clark was right. Alfred always gave good advice. He knew from experience just how helpful the butler could be. Bruce glanced over his shoulder at Alfred who was busy preparing two cups of coffee.
“And what advice did he give you?”

Clark smiled. “To be patient.”

Bruce bristled as he swallowed nervously. Patient for what? They were talking about me. Bruce realized to his embarrassment. Across the table, Clark was still smiling at him fondly. What the hell did Alfred tell him? Bruce felt oddly betrayed like all of his secrets have been laid bare.

Alfred set two cups of coffee on the table. “I have matters to attend to. Excuse my absence. I believe you gentlemen have much to discuss.”

Bruce scowled at the butler, then Alfred gave him an apologetic smile before walking away.

Now he was alone with Clark. Bruce drank his coffee while avoiding eye contact with the Kryptonian. They sat in silence for a couple minutes until Clark finally spoke up.

“I’m sorry for the way I acted,” he apologized. “I won’t pressure you anymore. I can wait until you’re ready.”

“That’s not…” Bruce faltered for a moment, before he snapped, “We can never be a couple. Never. Do you understand that?”

“Sure, I understand that’s how you feel right now. So, I won’t push it.” Clark shrugged and took a sip of coffee.

Bruce let out a frustrated sigh. Obviously, Clark hadn’t given up. But at least he agreed to stop pressuring him. It was a step in the right direction. And, Bruce realized that was probably the best he was going to get. He was sick of arguing. Normally, he didn’t care what people thought of him. But Clark mattered too much. Bruce didn’t like fighting with him.

“Thanks,” he muttered.

Superman grinned brightly. “Anything for you, buddy.”

“You’re such a dork.”

Clark laughed.

For a while, Bruce and Clark sat the table, drinking coffee together. It was all very familiar like a daily routine. Soon, all the tension disappeared as they simply enjoyed each other’s company. Bruce had needed this. Drinking coffee with Clark was such a small, simple thing. Yet, it had become so important to him.

During moments like these, everything felt right with the world.

SxB

At 9:30 PM, Batman stood on the edge of a skyscraper, overlooking the city of Gotham. He was still investigating the security breaches in several of Earth’s satellites. Earlier today, even more satellites had been hacked. Bruce had traced the hacker to a company called S.T.A.R. Labs. The company had many locations spread across the globe. One of the labs was in Gotham. Bruce had researched the company and found various inconsistencies with their records. Something strange was happening inside these labs, and somehow it was connected to the satellites being compromised…
Batman needed to figure out what the hell was going on.

Using his grappling gun, Batman swung off the building and landed on the roof of the S.T.A.R. Lab facility. Near the center of the roof, there was an area with a glass ceiling. Bruce quietly cut a hole in the glass, then he leapt down into the lab.

It was pitch black inside the laboratory. Batman walked through the darkness, straining to see anything. He reached for his utility belt, about to grab some night vision goggles, when he suddenly heard a door open. Batman hid behind a pillar and carefully glanced at the open door. There was light coming from the doorway, and he could see three scientists walking together.

The scientists looked like average people wearing white lab coats, but they were speaking in a strange language Bruce had never heard before. The language didn’t even sound human. After the scientists left, Batman hurried to the open doorway and entered a room full of lab equipment. He headed past the machines and found an office.

Batman entered the office, then he froze in shock. What the fuck?

There were three large cocoon-like structures hanging off the wall. He approached one of the cocoons and cut it open with a batarang. Then he peeled back the strange organic shell, revealing a man’s face. The person was an older man with a white mustache. One of the three scientists had the exact same face. Bruce glanced at the two other cocoons as his thoughts raced anxiously. These were the real scientists. So, who were the imposters?

When he heard a dog barking, Batman quickly used his grappling gun and swung up to the ceiling. From the ceiling, he watched as a large dog ran into the office. The dog growled viciously and barked at Bruce.

Damn it. Batman stared at the doorway, expecting the fake scientists to return. Suddenly, the dog began to morph and change shape. Instead of fur, the creature developed scales all over its body and its eyes glowed yellow. The monster growled again, revealing two rows of razor sharp teeth. What the hell is that? Bruce watched the transformation in surprise.

The creature leapt towards him, then Batman quickly threw a flash grenade at its open mouth. The monster chomped down on the grenade as the device exploded with a bright flash of light. During the explosion, Batman fired his grappling gun and swung out of the office. The force of the blast propelled him forward, then he crashed into a wall and fell to the ground.

Groaning, Batman immediately stood, scanning the office while the dust settled. When he saw the three cocoons, he let out a sigh of relief. Since the cocoons were still intact, the people trapped inside were probably protected from the blast. Unfortunately, his relief was short-lived once he heard the growling again.

“Shit,” Bruce cursed under his breath as the monster reappeared, sprinting towards him on all fours.

He hurled a batarang at the beast, but it bounced off the creature’s scales. Then the monster leapt at him, knocking Bruce to the ground. Bruce struggled to push the creature away as it snapped its jaws at him, trying to bite off his face. While he wrestled with the beast, he reached towards his utility belt once again and pulled out a stun baton. He whacked the monster with the baton, electrocuting it with a high voltage. The creature let out a horrible wail, then Bruce kicked it away.

Now the monster laid limp on the floor. Batman staggered to his feet, breathing heavily. He still had no idea what that creature was, but it was strong and it had the ability to change shape. Bruce
glanced at the office again, at the three cocoons. The fake dog wasn’t the only shape-shifter. S.T.A.R. Labs have been infiltrated by these… things. Bruce had never encountered something like this before. They must be from another world. That’s why they were messing with the satellites… They’re fucking aliens.

Suddenly, the stun baton was knocked from his grasp as he was hit from behind. Batman flew across the room, crashing into a table full of lab equipment. Glass beakers shattered on the floor as the table flipped over. Wincing in pain, Batman stood and faced his attacker. It was the fake scientist with the white mustache along with the other two imposters.

The average-looking beings began to morph, their lab coats ripping to shreds as the aliens showed their true form. They were large muscular gray creatures with red eyes and pointed teeth. Batman reached for his utility belt as they charged straight at him. Bruce threw a couple smoke bombs, then fired his grappling gun at the ceiling. He swung away from them, above the cloud of smoke. Suddenly, one of the aliens zoomed out of the smoke. Now the thing had wings on its back. Bruce’s eyes widened in shock as the alien struck him.

Batman crashed into a wall, moaning in pain. His whole body ached. This was bad. He was outnumbered and these aliens had super strength. He needed to fight fire with fire, and sic his own alien on these bastards. Bruce pulled out the Bat-Comm and called Superman.

“Clar-!”

He was interrupted when an alien hit him and sent him flying across the room. Batman landed on the floor with a thud. Then another alien quickly grabbed him by the throat, lifting him into the air. Bruce choked as he yanked on the alien’s arm, trying to free himself. He wasn’t getting enough oxygen. Soon, he could see spots flash before his eyes. He was about to pass out.

Suddenly, he heard a loud bang as something burst through a nearby wall. Then a blue blur zoomed towards them and ripped the alien off of him. Batman collapsed to the floor while Superman sped around the room, punching the aliens until they couldn’t move anymore. It only took a couple seconds. Meanwhile Batman staggered to his feet. He wasn’t badly injured, but he felt sore after being knocked around like a ping pong ball.

After Clark defeated the aliens, he left them in a pile of debris and hurried to Bruce’s side.

“Are you okay?” The hero looked worried.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” Bruce grumbled.

“What happened here? What are those things?”

“Aliens.” Batman crossed his arms as he explained, “We could be dealing with a full scale invasion. Last night, I noticed security breaches in-”

“Aah!” Superman unexpectedly grimaced in pain while holding his head.

“Clark, what’s wrong?” Bruce grabbed onto his friend, steadying him.

“It-It’s just a headache. I-” He screamed and fell to his knees.

“Clark!” Bruce kneeled beside him, panicking.

He held onto Superman as he scanned their surroundings. There was no kryptonite around. What was hurting Clark? What the hell was causing this?! Clark groaned in agony while Bruce watched
fearfully. He rarely saw Superman in physical pain, and kryptonite was always involved. But there was no kryptonite here! What can I do to stop this? What can I do?!

Superman abruptly froze, becoming completely silent. Bruce watched him, worried sick.

“Clark?” He shook the Kryptonian’s shoulder.

Suddenly, Clark grabbed his hand, seriously meeting his gaze. “We have to go.”

Bruce blinked in surprise. “Go where?”

“Come on.” Clark quickly picked him up and zoomed out of the building.

SxB

Wind rushed past them as they flew across the sky. Superman was carrying Batman bridal style as usual. It didn’t even annoy Bruce anymore. He was so accustomed to it. While they flew, Bruce stared at Clark’s face, studying him. Clark looked determined like he was on a mission of some kind. And he was flying incredibly fast. Usually, Clark would fly at slower pace while carrying him…probably for Bruce’s comfort. The wind was hitting them hard.

Bruce shut his eyes, turning his face away from the strong wind.

Clark held him closer. “Sorry. We have to hurry.”

After a few more seconds, Superman abruptly stopped and landed on the ground. Clark let go of him as Batman stood, examining the area. They were at the bottom of a canyon, in the middle of nowhere.

“Why are we here?” Bruce asked.

“I’ll show you.” Superman walked to the side of the canyon and punched the wall of rock.

The rock crumbled away, revealing a large steel door. Clark kicked the door down, then headed inside a dark metallic room. Curious, Batman followed him. The metallic room had fluorescent lighting that was motion activated. The further they walked, the more the room lit up. The place looked like a secret government facility.

When they reached another steel door, Superman punched it a few times until it broke open.

Inside the room, there were various machines and a piece of equipment Bruce had never seen before. It looked like a stasis pod, but that technology didn’t exist. At least it wasn’t supposed to exist. As more lights turned on, Bruce got a better look at the pod and saw a body standing inside. It was a green humanoid body.

Bruce let out an aggravated sigh. “Great. Another alien.”

Clark walked to the control panel and started pushing buttons. “He’s been trying to reach me telepathically, but the stasis pod interfered. When his message finally broke through, I knew I had to rescue him.”

“What’s he doing here?” Bruce asked.

“The invasion,” an unknown voice spoke inside Bruce’s mind. “I came to warn you, but they imprisoned me here.”
The stasis pod opened, then the green alien stepped out. Bruce watched him carefully while resting a hand on his utility belt, ready to fight.

“I sense you do not trust me. Perhaps this will help you.” The alien changed his appearance, forming a more human-like face and a blue cape. He approached Bruce and extended his hand. “I am J’onn J’onzz.”

Batman glared at the alien, refusing to shake his hand.

Superman smiled and shook hands with the alien. “Don’t take it personally, J’onn. He doesn’t trust anybody.”

“A wise policy.” J’onn walked past Bruce, heading towards the exit.

As he strolled away, Bruce and Clark followed him out the secret facility. Outside, J’onn gazed up at the night sky like he was searching for something.

Batman crossed his arms impatiently. “You mentioned an invasion.”

“Yes, they are already here. And more will come.” J’onn explained solemnly, “They invaded my planet too. Thousands of years ago, Mars had been peaceful before they came, but my people learned to fight. Eventually, we drove them away, but the cost was too high… I am the only Martian left, the last survivor of my kind. After the war, I placed myself in stasis, so I could fight in case they ever returned. When I first encountered them, they weren’t interested in Earth, but much has changed. Now they are determined to take this planet.”

“How do we stop them?” Bruce demanded.

“It may already be too late,” J’onn admitted grimly. “They have been planning this invasion for quite some time.”

“You keep saying they. What are we dealing with? Who are they?” Clark asked.

“Darkseid.” J’onn gazed up again as several comets fell from the sky. “The invasion has begun.”
Darkseid

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark make new friends. Darkseid arrives.

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! Thanks for reading! E. Prince commented that this is like a mix of JLA War and episode 1 of JLA the animated series, which is completely correct. LOL

In Metropolis, winged aliens swarmed around the city, grabbing people off the streets. After the comets fell, a large tower had formed next to the bay. Metropolis was ground zero of the invasion. Superman, Batman, and Martian Manhunter had flown straight to the city.

Now Batman was standing on the roof of the Daily Planet, watching all the chaos. High above the city, Superman was soaring across the sky, fighting the winged aliens. Red lasers shot from his eyes as several enemies plummeted to the Earth. But more aliens quickly came to replace them. Clark was severely outnumbered.

Bruce crossed his arms, frowning. His Batplane was still in Gotham and the nearby buildings weren’t tall enough to reach the fight. He had to help Clark somehow.

J’onn landed next to him on the roof. “Darkseid’s army is invading through a portal. The swarm appears to be coming from the west.”

Batman looked westward and spotted a large sign for S.T.A.R. Labs in the distance. The aliens had infiltrated the company’s location in Gotham. They must have done the same here. “I know where the portal is.”

“Where?” the Martian asked.


“You don’t want my assistance?”

“Assist Superman. He’s fighting an entire army on his own.”

J’onn tilted his head to the side with a curious expression. “The Kryptonian is strong enough to protect himself. Whereas you are much weaker. I find your concern for him quite interesting.”

“Just go!” Bruce snapped angrily.

“Very well.” J’onn levitated off the roof, then shot into the sky towards the battle.

While Superman and Martian Manhunter fought the swarm of aliens, Batman fired his grappling gun and swung to an adjacent building. Leaping rooftop to rooftop, Bruce hurried across the city,
towards the laboratory. As he ran, he saw a group of winged aliens, kidnapping people and flying upwards. The people were screaming in terror, begging for help.

Batman decided to make a detour. He fired his grappling gun at one of the aliens, then propelled himself towards the beast. Then he took out a knife and slashed one of its wings. The alien plummeted to the ground, dropping the woman it had been carrying. Bruce quickly grabbed the woman, fired his grappling gun again, and swung her to safety. He set her down on the roof of a building while she gaped at him in shock. The woman looked pale and terrified, but she was unharmed.

Batman stood on the ledge of the building, ready to attack the aliens again and rescue more people. But then a green dragon suddenly appeared in the sky. *What the fuck?* Bruce watched as the long green dragon circled the aliens, trapping them. Then the dragon morphed into a green rocket launcher that fired at each of the aliens. While the aliens were blasted away, all the innocent people fell towards the ground.

Reacting quickly, Batman took out his grappling gun, about to swing towards them. Then a giant green baseball glove appeared underneath the citizens, catching them. Next, the baseball glove changed into a green elevator that transported the people up to a rooftop. The green elevator door opened, releasing the group of shaken, scared people.

As soon as the elevator disappeared, a green light shined on Batman, illuminating the area around him. Bruce squinted at the bright light while a man floated in front of him. The brown-haired man was wearing a green mask and a green suit with a symbol of his chest. The light was shining from a green ring on his finger.

The man looked surprised. “Batman? You’re real?”

“Turn that damn thing off. You’re giving away our location,” Batman growled while wincing at the light.

“What are you doing here?” the man asked. “I thought Gotham was your city.”

Suddenly, a winged alien appeared behind the green clad man and breathed fire at him.

“Watch out!” Batman quickly leapt at the man, pushing him out of the way.

They both crashed onto the concrete roof, barely dodging the fire. Then Batman immediately jumped to his feet and threw a batarang at the alien’s wings. The batarang hit its target and exploded. While the alien fell, Batman glared at the idiot with the ridiculous green outfit.

If Bruce hadn’t saved him, the man would be dead right now. How could he let his guard down so easily? What a rookie mistake. Obviously, this guy lacked experience and Bruce didn’t have time to babysit him.

“Take your glow stick and go home. Superman and I have this covered.” Batman fired his grappling gun, then swung down to the street below.

After Bruce landed on the empty street, he walked towards a manhole cover. There were too many aliens flying around. It would be faster to travel through the sewers.

Before he could reach the manhole, the green clad man flew down and landed in front of him.

The man angrily gestured towards his ring. “*This* is not a glow stick. I’m Green Lantern, dammit! And I’m not going anywhere until you tell me what the hell is going on!”
Annoyed, Batman crossed his arms as he explained tersely, “Aliens are invading. They’re coming through a portal. I’m going to close it.”


“Hmph. I don’t think so.” Bruce walked around him and yanked off the manhole cover.

Then Batman jumped down into the sewers and continued walking. Green Lantern flew down, following him.

“Just tell me where the portal is. I can handle it on my own. The Green Lantern can do anything,” he boasted.

“Except shut up, apparently,” Batman grumbled.

“Wow.” Green Lantern huffed. “Someone forgot to take their True Blood tonight.”

“I’m not a vampire.”

“Seriously? I thought with the darkness and the vanishing then the, what, super strength?”

“No.” Batman turned around a corner and kept walking.

“Can you fly?” Green Lantern asked.

“In a plane.”

He froze, staring at Bruce in disbelief. “Wait. You’re not just some guy in a bat costume, are you?”

Batman glanced over his shoulder and smirked.

Green Lantern zoomed towards him, shouting, “Are you freaking kidding me?!”

Crossing his arms again, Bruce glared at the idiot.

“What? Nobody asked you to prom, so now you dress as a bat and prowl around your parents’ basement?” Green Lantern jeered while Batman swiped the green ring off his finger.

“What’s this do?” Bruce held up the ring.

“Huh?” His eyes widened in shock as his green suit and mask disappeared. Now Green Lantern was wearing an Airforce flight suit with Hal Jordon on his nametag.

“No buttons.” Bruce studied the ring. “I assume it works off concentration.”

“How’d you do that?” Hal demanded.

Batman smirked. “You weren’t concentrating.”

The ring quickly flew back to Hal’s hand, then the green suit reappeared. Green Lantern growled at him, “You won’t do that again.”

“Unless I want to.” Bruce turned to walk away.

“That’s it! Let’s rumble, spooky!” Hal furiously launched himself at Batman.
Reacting swiftly, Bruce whirled around, grabbed Hal, and slammed him against a wall. “I don’t have time for this!” Batman snarled. “The whole world is at stake. Get over yourself!”

Hal’s eyes widened, then he replied seriously, “Earth is under my protection. Let me help you.”

“Just don’t get in my way.” Bruce released him and stormed away.

“God, you’re such an asshole,” Green Lantern complained as he followed the vigilante deeper into the sewer.

SxB

When Batman finally climbed out of the sewer, the S.T.A.R Labs facility was across the street. Green Lantern flew out of the sewer and stood next to him. Hundreds of aliens were pouring out of the laboratory, soaring into the sky. Bruce studied the outside of the building, searching for other entry points. Somehow, he needed to sneak inside.

Suddenly, a green box enclosed around him. Damn it! Batman hit the green barrier, testing its strength. Green Lantern floated in front of him.

“Sorry, but this looks dangerous and you don’t have any powers.” Hal smirked. “Wait here. You’d only get in the way.”

Green Lantern flew towards the laboratory while Batman watched him, seething with anger.

Hal charged into battle and formed a large green robot that shot missiles at the aliens. He was able to rush past the swarm and enter the building. But, within a few seconds, Green Lantern was hurled outside. Hal crashed into the street, tearing up the pavement. Then the green box around Bruce disintegrated.

Idiot. Batman fired his grappling gun at the laboratory and swung up to a third story window. He glanced over his shoulder at Green Lantern who was back on his feet, fighting the swarm of winged aliens. At least he’s a good distraction.

Batman broke through the window and snuck into the building. Inside the S.T.A.R. Lab facility, he ran down a long hallway and found several cocoons hanging on the wall. The aliens must’ve captured the scientists here too, replacing them with imposters. Bruce carefully headed downstairs to the first floor and hid in the darkness, behind a pillar.

There was a steady stream of aliens flying out of one room. The portal must be inside. But how could he get in? Suddenly, Batman heard an explosion and glanced around the pillar. Green Lantern was inside the laboratory again, riding a green fighter jet.

“Come on! Is that all you got?! Get some!” Hal shouted as he shot down several aliens with green bullets.

While Green Lantern kept the aliens busy, Batman dashed into the room. Inside, there was a giant dark portal, surrounded by lab equipment. More and more aliens continued to fly out of the portal. When some of the aliens zoomed towards him, Batman quickly threw a smoke grenade and fired his grappling gun. He propelled himself towards a piece of machinery next to the portal. Under the portal, there was a strange square device that looked alien. Is that how they created the portal?

Flying through the smoke, the winged aliens charged towards him. Batman quickly threw a batarang that exploded in front of them, pushing them back. Bruce stared down at the square device again. He didn’t know how to turn it off, but he could probably destroy it. Bruce reached
into his utility belt and placed a high-power explosive on the device. Then he set it to detonate in ten seconds.

As soon as the timer started, Batman fired his grappling gun and swung across the room. Meanwhile Green Lantern was laying on the floor, completely surrounded by aliens. Obviously, he had been overpowered. Before an alien could roast him with fire breath, Batman snatched Hal off the floor as he swung through the air.

When they landed on the ground, outside the room, Hal latched onto Bruce, staggering on his feet.

“Shield us. Now!” Batman ordered.

A green sphere instantly formed around them both. Less than a second later, a powerful explosion roared through the building. The force of the blast launched the green sphere miles through the city. Bruce and Hal bounced around inside the sphere as it burst through several buildings. Eventually, the sphere shattered and they both crashed onto an empty street.

Groaning, Batman stood and surveyed the area. He was near the bay again. Above him, he could see a blue blur zooming through the sky as defeated aliens plummeted to the Earth. Superman was still fighting and winning. Bruce smiled with relief.

“Holy shit. What the hell just happened?” Green Lantern stood, looking worn out and exhausted.

“I destroyed the portal.”

“Good. So, that’s it, right?” Hal sounded hopeful. “We won. No more aliens can get here.”

Batman gazed up at the sky again, then his blood ran cold. There was another large swarm of winged aliens coming from the east. Coming from Gotham… There were S.T.A.R Labs all over the globe. The company had multiple locations. If every laboratory had been infiltrated…

“There’s more than one portal,” Bruce concluded grimly.

“What?!” Hal shouted in outrage. “What the fuck are we supposed to do?! Nuke every portal?!”

“I don’t think that’s possible.” Batman sighed. “We need to plan and regroup.”

Another cluster of aliens flew down towards them. Green Lantern quickly formed a green train that knocked most of the enemies away. One alien dodged the attack and breathed fire at Batman. Bruce swiftly jumped out of the way then kicked the alien in the head. As its head was tilted down, the alien caught itself on fire.

Suddenly, an alien appeared behind Hal, about to attack. Before the alien could spew any fire, a red blur sped by and punched the alien several times. Batman recognized the red suit from the news.

After the alien collapsed, Flash smiled at Green Lantern. “Looks like you could use a hand.”

“Flash! My boy. Great to see you.” Hal bumped fists with the other hero, then gestured towards Bruce. “Oh, yeah, and that’s Batman.”

Flash’s eyes widened in surprise. “Batman’s real?”

“Yeah, he’s over there.” Green Lantern shrugged.

“Wait. What?” Flash excitedly zoomed towards Bruce, grinning. “It is a real honor to meet you, sir, Batman, Sir Ba-Batman, sir.” He nervously extended a hand.
Hal scoffed, “Don’t bother. The guy’s a total tool.”

Batman shook hands with Flash. “I’ve followed your efforts in Central City, Flash. You do tight, efficient work.”

The speedster beamed happily while Hal mocked him, “Hey, Barry, you, uh, got a little something on your nose.”

Barry glared at him.

Soon, another large swarm of aliens were flying towards them.

“Get ready. Here they come,” Batman warned.

“For Darkseid!” An alien screeched as the swarm approached. The aliens landed and retracted wings.

Before the aliens could attack, a dark-haired woman suddenly leapt down from the sky and charged at the swarm. The woman pulled out a sword, then she slashed her way through the horde, easily defeating the monsters. She fought with incredible skill.

Flash and Green Lantern both gaped at her in awe while Batman studied her face. He had seen this woman before. She was known as Wonder Woman. Bruce had researched her. There was evidence of her fighting the Nazis in World War II.

After Wonder Woman defeated the horde of aliens, she shook the blood off her sword and sheathed her weapon.

Hal glanced at Barry and whispered, “Dibs.”

“You can’t call dibs,” Flash complained.

“Too late. I just did.” Green Lantern smiled at Wonder Woman and called out, “Hey, there, beautiful! That was awesome!”

She approached them. “Greetings fellow warriors. I am Diana, princess of-”

“Themyscira,” Batman finished her sentence.

Diana looked surprised. “You know who I am?”

“There are records of your involvement in World War II,” Bruce explained.

“Wait, World War II?” Hal gawked at Wonder Woman in disbelief. “How old are you?”

She gave him an amused smirk. “Isn’t that a rude question to ask a woman?”

“He has no manners,” Batman stated matter-of-factly.

Flash laughed while Green Lantern objected angrily, “Excuse me?! I have better manners than you!”

Ignoring Hal, Bruce gazed up at the sky. He could still see Superman high above the city, blasting enemies with his heat vision. Clark seemed like he was uninjured, but he must be wearing himself out. Bruce clenched his fists, feeling frustrated. He should be up there helping Clark.
While he watched Superman, Bruce noticed someone flying towards them. It wasn’t another winged alien though. This alien had a blue cape.

Martian Manhunter flew down and landed on the street, in front of them.

Wonder Woman immediately drew her sword. “Alien!”

“Wait.” Batman grabbed her arm, stopping her. “He’s with me.”

She eyed the green alien suspiciously, but sheathed her sword.

J’onn wisely stayed at a distance. “I sense that you closed the portal.”

“The one in Metropolis is gone.” Batman crossed his arms. “But there are other portals, aren’t there?”

“Yes. Seventeen of them,” J’onn confirmed.

“Shit,” Hal cursed under his breath.

“Do you know what’s going on?” Flash asked the Martian. “What do these aliens want?”

“They want to terraform the Earth,” J’onn said gravely.

“That fits,” Batman concurred.

Green Lantern gave him a curious look. “How do you figure?”

“Well, for one thing, the ocean’s on fire.” He pointed to the Metropolis Bay.

Next to the city, there was a large ring of fire inside the bay. Suddenly, the flames spiked in intensity, then a platform arose from the ring of fire. A bright red light shined from the platform, shooting into the sky. The city shook as more alien towers rose up all around Metropolis. Batman scanned the area anxiously. This was not good.

Above the platform, in the bay, a swarm of the winged aliens flew in circles around the pillar of red light. It seemed like they were opening another portal. Before the portal could open, a huge tidal wave unexpectedly engulfed the platform.

Batman watched in surprise as a man shot up from the sea. The man was carrying a weapon of some kind. In the air, he grabbed onto an alien and stabbed it, then he leapt onto another alien. The man moved with great precision, leaping from one alien to another, killing dozens of them.

The man stood on the back of one alien as it flew away from the bay and crashed into the street. Now the man was much closer. Batman studied him cautiously. The blond man was wearing an orange scaly top and green pants. And he held a large trident in his hand.

“Who the hell are you?” Green Lantern asked bluntly.

The blond man marched toward them, announcing, “I am Aquaman, king of Atlantis, ruler of the seven seas.”

“Atlantis is real?” Flash’s face lit up excitedly. “That’s so cool!”

“Who is attacking my kingdom? Answer me!” Aquaman demanded with a snarl.
“An alien known as Darkseid is invading Earth,” Batman explained.

Aquaman scowled darkly as sparks of electricity whirled around his weapon. “I will kill this
Darkseid with the Trident of Neptune.”

“Neat.” Flash curiously eyed the trident.

The conversation was interrupted when Superman suddenly slammed into the street. His body hit
the ground so hard that it formed a small crater.

“Ow…” Clark groaned as he sat up.

Bruce hurried towards him, searching his body for any major injuries. The Kryptonian wasn’t even
bleeding. Relieved, Batman grabbed Superman’s hand and helped him to his feet.

“How are you holding up?” he asked.

“I’m okay.” Clark smiled at him, then glanced at the group of people watching them. “Friends of
yours?”

“Something like that,” Bruce replied.

“Great! We can use all the help we can get.” Clark walked towards the group, grinning brightly.

“Hi, I’m Superman.”

Green Lantern crossed his arms, looking unimpressed. “We all know who you are.”

“Whoa. It’s the Superman.” Flash gaped at the Kryptonian with wide eyes.

Hal snapped at the speedster, “I swear if you have another fanboy moment, I’m going to hit you.”

Wonder Woman stepped toward Superman and extended a hand. “It’s an honor. I am Diana,
princess of Themyscira.”

With a smile, Clark happily shook her hand. “Hi, Diana.”

“Hi.” She smiled back, appearing charmed.

For a few long seconds, they continued to hold hands while gazing into each other’s eyes.

Bruce felt a surge of anger as he snapped, “We don’t have time for this!”

“Right, sorry.” Clark quickly let go of her hand and focused on Bruce. “What’s the plan?”

Bruce relaxed somewhat, feeling his irritation dissipate. “Well, we can’t close every portal on
Earth. There isn’t enough time.” He glanced at the Martian. “J’onn, any suggestions?”

“Cut off the head, and the rest will fall,” J’onn advised.

Batman nodded. “Alright. We’ll take out their leader.”

“Okay, awesome plan. But where is the leader?” Flash asked.

At the Metropolis bay, the platform rose up from the sea once again and shot a red light into the
sky. The sky seemed to open up as dark rift appeared. Then a giant figure emerged from the rift,
flying above the city. The large grey alien was wearing blue armor and had bright red eyes.
Flash groaned. “I just had to ask…”

“Darkseid has come,” Martian Manhunter announced.

“He’s dead.” Aquaman immediately took off running, charging headfirst into battle.
The Justice League

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark save each other. Plus the world.

Darkseid levitated towards the city with his army of winged aliens flying behind him. As Darkseid approached, a group of military jets zoomed across the sky and fired missiles at him. The missiles hit him, but they caused no damage. Then red lasers shot from Darkseid’s eyes and zigzagged through the air, destroying every single jet. Apparently, the lasers were able to track their targets.

When Darkseid landed in front of them, he spoke in a deep booming voice, “I am Entropy. I am Death. I am Darkseid.”

Without a moment’s hesitation, Aquaman leapt through the air, launching himself at Darkseid. Aquaman swung his trident down, about to stab the enemy. Suddenly, lasers shot from Darkseid’s eyes again, hitting the trident. Then Aquaman was blasted away. He zoomed through the air, crashing into the pavement.

“Stand back and peep the light show. Green Lantern’s got this.” Hal said cockily as he formed a large green fist with spikes.

Green Lantern flew at Darkseid and punched the alien in the chest. The large green fist instantly shattered as he hit the alien, then Darkseid smacked him away. Hal was sent flying into a building. When he collapsed onto the ground, a horde of winged aliens attacked him, punching and kicking him.

In a red blur, Flash rushed over and knocked the enemies off of Hal. Now all the other winged aliens were attacking. Batman, Superman, Martian Manhunter, Wonder Woman and Flash all fought off the army. Aquaman quickly returned and joined the battle, stabbing aliens with his trident. While they fought the swarm, Hal staggered to his feet.

“That all you got? Not all I got.” Green Lantern glowed and formed a large green train.

He charged at Darkseid, ramming into him with the train. But, as soon as the green train hit Darkseid, it shattered like glass. Enraged, Hal formed a giant green mallet and swung it at the alien. Darkseid easily broke the weapon, then he grabbed Hal’s right arm. Hal screamed in agony as Darkseid crushed his arm and flung him away.

Next, Wonder Woman lunged at Darkseid and swung her sword at him. She slashed at his chest, but her attack had no effect. Then Darkseid punched her and sent her flying. Superman caught her in the air and set her down on the street.

Then the Kryptonian charged at Darkseid. Superman punched the grey alien a couple times, causing him to stumble back. But Darkseid quickly snatched the hero’s red cape, swung him around, and punched him. Superman crashed into the street, tearing apart pavement.

Damn it! After throwing an exploding batarang at a winged alien, Batman ran towards Superman and kneeled beside him. “Clark, do you think you can beat him?”
Superman sat up, wincing in pain. “I-I don’t know. He’s strong.”

Down the street, Darkseid glared at the heroes as his eyes glowed red. Two lasers shot from his eyes, zooming towards them. Flash sped down the street as the lasers chased after him. Then one of the lasers veered to the side, aimed at Superman and Batman.

“Get down!” Clark shoved Bruce to the ground and leaned over him, shielding him with his body.

When the laser struck, Clark screamed in pain. Meanwhile Bruce stared up at him with wide horrified eyes. Afterwards, Superman collapsed on top of him.

“Clark?” Bruce sat up, holding the Kryptonian in his arms. His heart raced anxiously as he gazed down at Superman. The hero was still breathing, but he was definitely unconscious. “Clark?!”

Two winged aliens rushed toward them and latched onto Clark, trying to fly away with him.

“Back the fuck off!” Bruce furiously punched one of the aliens away then kicked the other one. He couldn’t let these bastards take Clark!

More and more winged aliens came, trying to pry Superman away from him. Batman fought like a madman, flinging explosives, batarangs, and knives. He used almost everything in his utility belt to keep the aliens at bay. He had to protect Clark at all costs. Clark was hurt because of him.

Eventually, one of the aliens slipped past Batman and grabbed Clark. Then the alien flew away while Superman dangled limply in the air, still unconscious. Batman quickly fired his grappling gun at the alien and took off, into the sky. While the alien flew, Bruce hung in the air, below Superman. He retracted the wire in the grappling gun, propelling himself upwards. Then Batman took out a knife and stabbed the alien. With a screech, the alien released Clark.

As Superman fell from the sky, Batman leapt off the injured alien and zoomed down towards him. Bruce stretched out his hand, reaching for Clark while they both plummeted towards the ground. His fingers barely grazed Clark’s hand when another winged alien appeared. The alien snatched Superman and soared away.

No! God dammit! Batman pulled out his grappling gun again, but the alien and Clark were too far away. Instead he fired the grappling gun at a nearby building and swung down to the street below. He landed on the ground next to a huge pile of rubble. The whole city looked like a war zone.

In the sky, he could see hundreds of the winged aliens carrying people towards the portal above Metropolis Bay. Those people were being captured alive for a reason. The aliens must be harvesting them. Bruce clenched his fists as he watched Clark being carried through the portal. The aliens had been determined to capture Superman. What did they have planned for him?

A red blur whizzed by, then Flash stopped abruptly and stared up at the sky. “Oh, no! They have him. They have Superman.”

“I’m getting him back,” Batman growled as he marched away.

“Hey, wait up, spooky.” Green Lantern flew down and stood in front of him. “I’ll get Superman back. Going through that portal could be a suicide mission and you don’t have any powers.”

“Hmph. And you have a broken arm.” Batman snapped, “Get out of my way. Superman is my responsibility.”

Hal quickly formed a green cast around his arm. “I can handle it. And what do you mean he’s your
responsibility? What is he? Your boyfriend?”

Batman silently glared at him.

Green Lantern paused. “Wait. Is he really your boyfriend?”

“No, you idiot! He’s a friend.” Bruce tried to walk around Green Lantern, but Hal stubbornly blocked his path again.

“Well, as touching as that is, I still can’t let you go.”

Batman sighed in frustration. “I know what I’m doing, Hal. You just have to trust me.”

Hal gave him a surprised look. “I never told you my name.”

“I saw it on your flight suit.”

He huffed. “Okay, spooky.”

Batman crossed his arms. “I’ve been doing this kind of thing for a while, Hal. Much longer than you have. I know my limitations. And I know I can’t stop Darkseid on my own… But, over the years, I’ve learned that you have to focus on what you can do. And, I can save Superman. I will save him no matter what,” he declared with determination in his voice. “While I’m gone, you and the others must continue the fight down here. I’m counting on you. Stall Darkseid as long as you can. I will return with Superman, then we’ll finish this war together. Understand?”

Hal seriously met his gaze, then he smiled. “You can count on me. Like I said, The Green Lantern can do anything.”

Bruce smirked. “Don’t die before I come back.”

Offended, Hal angrily flipped him off. “Thanks for the vote of confidence, you phenomenal douchebag.”

Batman chuckled at the insult and picked up a tattered hoodie from the rubble. Then he tied his cape around his waist. “Regroup with the others and fight as a team. You’re loud. They’ll listen to you if you’ve got something to say. At least try to sound smart.”

Bruce climbed to the top of the rubble and took off his cowl while turning away. With his back facing Green Lantern, Bruce yanked the hoodie over his head. Now he looked like a regular civilian. Bruce whistled and held his arms up in the air, waiting.

Soon, a winged alien swooped down and grabbed him. While the alien carried him away, Hal watched with smirk.

“Moron’s crazier than I am.”

SxB

Soaring through the sky, the winged alien carried Bruce towards the portal, above Metropolis Bay. Bruce didn’t know what to expect or what was on the other side, but he knew Clark was there. That’s all that mattered. Finding Clark and bringing him home safe.

As the alien flew through the portal, Bruce braced himself for anything. On the other side, there was a long, steel bridge leading to a dark, ominous tower. The winged alien flew Bruce over the
bridge, towards the tower. Inside, the walls were lined with thousands of cocoons. People were trapped inside the cocoons just like the scientists at S.T.A.R. Labs.

Reaching into his utility belt, Bruce pulled out a grenade and twisted in the alien’s grasp. He shoved the explosive in the alien’s mouth, then climbed onto the alien’s back. After the grenade exploded, the alien crashed onto the ground and Bruce took off running. He yanked off the hoodie, untied his cape, and pulled on his cowl.

Batman dashed though the tower, passing by rows and rows of cocoons. Then he turned around a corner and heard someone talking. There was a voice coming from inside a nearby room.

“The parademon hives on Earth were ill-equipped to process your flesh, my prize. But here in my personal laboratory, I can splice your Kryptonian genetic code to create a new form, a super parademon in the service of Darkseid,” the voice hissed.

Batman approached the room and peered inside. There was a pale, lanky alien dressed in robes, standing by a control panel. In front of him, Superman was trapped inside a metallic pod with wires and blue tendons snaked around him. Clark struggled against the restraints in vain.

“And once we have our champion, we will seize the other supers and break them as well,” the alien boasted with pride. “All hail Darkseid.”

Clark screamed in agony as the wires dug into his skull.

“True, the metamorphosis is painful. But soon you will never feel anything ever again,” the alien said menacingly.

Enraged, Batman barged into the room and charged at the lanky, robed alien. The alien pulled out a knife, but Batman quickly disarmed him. Then he grabbed the alien by the throat.

“Let him go,” Bruce growled.

The alien’s deformed face twisted into an ugly smile. “I am impressed by your resourcefulness, Earthling. But once the transformative process is set in motion, nothing can stop it. Your friend is gone. With the help of the Kryptonian, I’ll see to it that your world will be just another that has fallen to Darkseid.” The alien cackled evilly.

Bruce had heard enough. He slammed his fist into the alien’s face, knocking him out. Then he studied the control panel and found the power button. He turned off the pod and rushed to Clark’s side.

Superman was still standing in pod with his head hanging down like he was unconscious.

“Clark! Clark, wake up!” Bruce grabbed onto him, trying to shake him awake.

When Superman opened his eyes, they immediately glowed red. Batman leapt out of the way as lasers shot from Clark’s eyes. The lasers hit the control panel and the ceiling, destroying most of the room. Then Superman screamed while he pried himself out of the pod, blue tendons snapping as he broke free.

Now Clark’s eyes were glowing a metallic blue, the same color as the strange tendons from the pod. That damn alien had messed with his head. Superman screamed again as he staggered forward and swung a fist at Bruce.

Batman quickly back-flipped away, dodging the attack. “Clark! It’s me, Bruce! I know you can
Superman lunged at him again, trying to hit him. Bruce barely dodged, jumping to the side. Then Superman shot his heat vision at him. Batman evaded the blasts every time until a section of the ceiling collapsed. The ceiling fell next to Bruce, causing him to lose his footing.

Batman crashed onto the floor while Superman approached him with glowing blue eyes. The Kryptonian raised a fist, about to attack again.

“The world needs you, Clark.” Bruce sat up as he pleaded, “I... I need you.”

Superman threw another punch, but he stopped mid-swing. He froze, staring down at Bruce.

“Clark?” Batman stood as he reached out and grabbed Clark’s arm. Superman was trembling all over. Obviously, he was trying to fight what the aliens had done to him. Clark shut his eyes as he stumbled on his feet, still shaking like a leaf.

Concerned, Bruce pulled Superman into a hug and held him. “It’s okay, Clark. I got you.”

“Bruce...” Clark’s eyes returned to normal as he hugged Bruce back, clutching him tightly. “Thank you. I-I almost lost myself. Thank you for saving me.”

“Hmph. You saved me first.” Bruce pulled away from the embrace. “Come on, we have to go.”

“Right.” Clark nodded while Batman turned toward the exit. “Did you mean what you said?”

Bruce gazed back at him questioningly.

“Do you need me?” Clark asked.

His eyes widened as Bruce blushed underneath his cowl. “The- The whole world needs you, Clark.”

“Yeah, but what about you specifically?”

Batman huffed in annoyance. “We don’t have time for this right now.”

Clark grabbed his hand and looked at him pleadingly. “Please, Bruce.”

“Yes, I need you.” Bruce admitted before yelling, “I need you to hurry up and move your ass! Satisfied?!”

“Yep.” Clark smiled. “Let’s go.”

Superman quickly snatched Batman off the ground and zoomed out of the room.

SxB

They flew through the portal, returning to Metropolis. Superman soared across the sky, carrying Batman in his arms as they approached the city. In the distance, Bruce could see Green Lantern and the others still fighting Darkseid. Hal had actually followed Batman’s orders. Now Green Lantern, Flash, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and Martian Manhunter were all working together as a team. They had done well and stalled Darkseid.

Before joining the fight, Superman set Bruce down on the roof of a building.

“Don’t hold back. Take him down,” Batman ordered.
“Got it.” Superman nodded, then rushed into battle.

The Kryptonian punched Darkseid several times and fired heat vision in the alien’s face. Darkseid howled in pain, then knocked Superman away. Clark landed on his feet and zoomed towards Darkseid again, yelling as he punched the alien. Aquaman, Wonder Woman, and the others followed his lead, attacking Darkseid all at once.

Bruce smirked as he watched the fight. Then he heard a jet and glanced up. When he spotted the Batplane, his eyes widened in shock. What the hell?! Batman chased after the plane, leaping from rooftop to rooftop.

Soon, the Batplane landed on the roof of the Daily Planet. Batman fired his grappling gun and swung onto the roof of the building. Then he cautiously approached the Batplane with his hand on his utility belt.

The door to the Batplane opened and Robin jumped out, looking exhausted.

“H-He.” Dick smiled. “The ride over here was crazy.”

“What the hell are you doing here?!” Bruce shouted at the teen.

Robin winced guiltily. “Don’t be mad, okay? I-I know this sounds insane, but I heard a freaky voice in my head. It told me to come here and bring this.”

The boy pulled out a square alien-looking device. Bruce instantly recognized it. He had seen that technology before at S.T.A.R. Labs, underneath a portal. But why did Dick have it?

Martian Manhunter flew up to the roof and landed next to them. “You did well, child.”

“That’s the freaky voice!” Robin pointed at the green alien.

Batman glared at Martian Manhunter. “You spoke to him telepathically?”

“It was necessary.” J’onn explained, “That piece of technology is called a Mother Box. I believe I can use it to send Darkseid and his army away via Boom Tubes.”

“Via what?”

“Portals,” J’onn clarified.

Batman snatched the Mother Box away from Robin and threw it at the Martian. “Get started then.”

J’onn caught the device and studied it. “I will require a large source of electrical power.”

Bruce remembered the way electricity whirled around Aquaman’s weapon when he first appeared.

“Aquaman’s trident can do that. I’ll get him for you.” Batman walked to the ledge of the building. “Robin, stay here.”

“But I can help,” Dick offered.

“No. It’s too dangerous. Stay here or you're grounded for a year,” Bruce threatened.

“What?! Seriously?!” Robin yelled while Batman fired his grappling gun and swung away.
Batman landed on the street, next to the battle. Flash was running in circles around Darkseid, keeping him distracted while Superman hurled Wonder Woman through the air. The Amazon princess collided with Darkseid while thrusting her sword through his eye. Darkseid roared in pain and smacked her and Flash away. Green Lantern caught Wonder Woman and Flash in a large green baseball glove. Then Aquaman stabbed Darkseid in the back with his trident, electrocuting him. Darkseid reached around, grabbed Aquaman, and flung him away. Next, Superman punched Darkseid in the face repeatedly.

Aquaman crashed into the pavement. Then he immediately staggered to his feet and marched back towards the fight.

Batman stood in his path. “Aquaman, listen to me.”

“Get out of my way,” Aquaman growled as he pushed Bruce aside.

Batman followed him. “Martian Manhunter has a way to get rid of Darkseid. He needs your help.”

Aquaman stopped and glanced back at Bruce. “Where is he?”

Batman pointed to the top of the Daily Planet. Without saying another word, Aquaman ran towards the building and jumped high into the air, landing on the roof. A few minutes later, a lightning bolt shot down from the sky, above the Daily Planet.

Suddenly, several portals opened all over Metropolis, sucking the winged aliens away. A portal appeared down the street as well, close to Darkseid. The portal was drawing Darkseid in, but the large alien struggled against its pull, staying on the street.

“Get him in there!” Wonder Woman shouted.

Superman zoomed towards Darkseid and punched him over and over, forcing the alien closer to the portal.

“Kick his ass!” Green Lantern yelled as he fired a green light at the enemy.

In a red blur, Flash sped towards Darkseid and hit him several times. Meanwhile Wonder Woman leaped through the air and kicked the alien in the jaw. Now Darkseid was half-way through the portal, but he was still struggling to stay outside.

Come on, J’onn. Close the portal! Batman gazed up at the roof of the Daily Planet. Martian Manhunter was flying in the sky now, holding up the Mother Box. Another lightning bolt struck, hitting the alien device.

Superman charged at Darkseid and punched him again. Darkseid stumbled back then grabbed onto Clark, pulling the hero down with him.

Clark! Batman dashed toward the portal and leapt onto Darkseid. He took off his utility belt, pressed a button, and flung it around Darkseid’s neck. The utility belt exploded while Superman successfully broke free from Darkseid and kicked the alien away. Darkseid fell through the portal as Clark grabbed Bruce and flew to safety.

The portal instantly closed, sealing Darkseid on the other side. All the around Metropolis, the alien towers began to crumble and fall apart. Then more portals opened above the bay and thousands of civilians began to fall from the sky.

“I got this.” Green Lantern quickly formed several green platforms, catching all the innocent
people.

After the people were safely returned, all the portals closed again. Martian Manhunter flew down and landed next to them while Aquaman walked towards them, staring at the sea. With his kingdom safe, Aquaman appeared much calmer.

“We did it. We won.” Superman grinned happily and flung an arm over Batman’s shoulder.

Bruce smiled back at him, then he noticed a large crowd of people approaching them.

Flash looked worried. “We should leave before they blame us or-”

Unexpectedly, all the people started cheering for them and clapping.

Hal smirked. “What’s your hurry, Flash?”

Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Green Lantern, Flash and Martian Manhunter all stood together while the crowd continue to cheer and snap photos.

A few weeks after Darkseid’s failed invasion, Batman summoned Superman and the other heroes to the Watchtower. The Watchtower was a space station orbiting Earth that Wayne Enterprises had built. The station had been under construction for months and it was finally complete. Its original purpose was for research, but now Bruce had a new plans for the space station.

Ever since the fight with Darkseid, people all over the world have been talking about the heroes who stopped the alien invasion. The people had already given the group a name—The Justice League. Everyone seemed to expect the Justice League to stick around and continue to protect the world... And Bruce thought that sounded like a good idea. He decided to make the Watchtower the new headquarters for the Justice League.

Inside the Watchtower, Batman waited while the other members arrived. One by one, they all came—Superman, Wonder Woman, Martian Manhunter, Aquaman, Green Lantern and Flash. While the group talked amongst themselves, Clark walked over to Bruce.

Superman and Batman stood by a large window, overlooking the Earth.

Clark grinned. “I’m glad you brought everyone here. This place is really cool.”

“It will serve as our headquarters,” Bruce explained. “The world needs the Justice League. If another threat like Darkseid appears, we need to be prepared.”

Superman nodded in agreement while gazing out the window.

“This team will need a leader. It should be you, Clark.”

Clark blinked in surprise and gaped at him. “What? Me? But you’d make a better leader. You’re better at planning and-”

“It needs to be you,” Batman insisted. “Superman is the strongest force in the Justice League, and the most well-known. Everyone will feel safer if you’re the leader.”

Superman was silent for a while, then he sighed. “Fine. I’ll be the leader on one condition.”
“What is it?”

“I have no idea what I’m doing,” Clark admitted sheepishly. “You have to help me lead.”

Batman smiled and extended a hand. “Deal.”

“Deal.” Clark happily took his hand, then he pulled Bruce into a hug.

Embarrassed, Bruce quickly pushed him away, blushing. “Not here.”

“What?” Clark glanced to the side and spotted Green Lantern, Flash, and Wonder Woman all staring at them.

Hal had a shit-eating grin on his face. “Aw, spooky. That’s so cute.”

“Shut up, Lantern,” Batman growled.

“Can I get a hug too? I didn’t know you were so cuddly.” Hal approached Bruce with outstretched arms.

Superman protectively stood in front of Batman and glared at Green Lantern. “Let’s start the meeting.”

“Yes, finally,” Aquaman said impatiently. “Can we get down to business? I have a kingdom to run.”

The seven heroes all sat down at the round table and began the very first Justice League meeting.
Spooky and the Boy Scout

Chapter Summary

Batman and Superman attend a meeting, then they have alone time.

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the support and encouragement! :)

Green Lantern walked across the Watchtower, heading towards the conference room. The Justice League has been working together for a year now, and it was time for their weekly meeting. Attendance was required and enforced by Batman. The grumpy vigilante was a stickler for rules. Everyone always came to the meetings because no one wanted to face Batman’s wrath. Even their leader, Superman would bend over backwards to make Batman happy. Spooky always got his way. It was so annoying.

At the end of the hall, Green Lantern entered the conference room and took his assigned seat at the round table, next to Flash. Hal had arrived early. So far, only Flash, Aquaman and Martian Manhunter were here. Most of the time, these meetings were fairly boring. But at least it gave him an excuse to hang out with Barry.

Hal happily slapped Flash on the back. “Hey, Barry! What’s up?”

Barry frowned at him.

“What?” Hal gave him a confused look.

“I told you to call me Flash at meetings,” Barry complained.

Green Lantern snorted. “Why does it matter? We’ve been doing this for a year. We all know each other’s names.” He gestured to himself then everyone else in the room. “Hal, Barry, Arthur, J’onn.”

“You don’t know Batman’s name,” J’onn pointed out.

“Yeah. That’s because he’s a paranoid tight-ass,” Hal scoffed.

Arthur shrugged. “Batman is serious about protecting his identity. I can respect that.”

Green Lantern crossed his arms. “Hmph. Whatever. I bet Clark knows his name.”

Flash blinked in surprise. “Really? You think so?”

“Yeah, of course. Superman and Batman are inseparable.” Hal joked, “They’re like the King and Queen of the Justice League.”
Barry chuckled. “Which one’s the queen?”

“Shouldn’t Wonder Woman be the queen?” J’onn asked.

Green Lantern smirked. “Nah, it’s definitely Batman.”

Suddenly, he heard Batman growl behind him, “Who’s a queen?”

“N-No one!” Hal almost fell out of his chair while Batman casually walked around the table towards his seat.

“Wonder Woman is,” Flash said quickly, trying to help.

Batman sat down while Aquaman looked at Hal and Barry like they were both idiots. Then Diana entered the conference room.

“Actually, I’m still a princess, but I will inherit the throne of Themyscira.” She took her seat at the round table. “Shall we begin the meeting? Where is Superman?”

“He’s running late…again,” Batman grumbled angrily.

Green Lantern leaned close to Flash and whispered, “Hell hath no fury like a scorned queen.”

Barry cracked up, laughing at his awesome joke. Suddenly, Batman hurled a batarang at Hal’s head.

“Ow!” Green Lantern clutched his head in pain. Spooky was such an asshole.

“We’ll start the meeting without Superman,” Batman announced. “I’ll fill him in later.”

“Yeah, fill him in good,” Hal quipped.

Flash laughed again while Batman glared at them.

“Do I need to separate you two?” he threatened.

Barry lowered his head, looking guilty. “No, sir. I’m sorry.”

Green Lantern huffed. “Hmph. I’m not-”

In a blur of super speed, Flash slapped a hand over Hal’s mouth to shut him up. “We’re both sorry.”

Green Lantern gave the speedster an annoyed look, then Flash removed his hand. Now Batman seemed to be ignoring them.

Batman turned toward Martian Manhunter and asked, “Any luck finding Darkseid?”

“No. His whereabouts are still unknown, but I believe he is far away from Earth,” J’onn answered.

Green Lantern smiled. “Well, that’s something.”

“Darkseid fears us,” Aquaman boasted. “He knows returning here will mean certain death.”

Flash raised an eyebrow. “You know killing’s not really our style, right?”

“I agree with Aquaman.” Wonder Woman argued, “Some enemies cannot be spared. Back in World War II, I had to kill Ares. I had no other choice.”

Flash gave her a questioning look. “Ares?”

“The god of war,” she clarified.

Hal’s eyes widened in surprise. “Wait. You killed a god?”

Diana shrugged. “His death was necessary.”

“We do not kill,” Batman said decisively. “As long as you’re part of the Justice League, I expect all of you to follow that rule. If anyone steps out of line, I will personally handle the situation.”

Aquaman crossed his arms. “And what can you do?”

Batman scowled at him. “I have full-proof plans to destroy everyone in this room. If any of you become a threat, I won’t hesitate to neutralize you.”

Everyone sat in silence. The air was thick with tension. Hal swallowed nervously while the other league members looked uncomfortable. Flash looked downright scared. Meanwhile Aquaman and Batman were still glaring at each other.

“Geez, spooky.” Green Lantern broke the silence, trying to lighten the mood. “Take a chill pill. We’re heroes, not murderers.”

Flash chimed in, “Yeah, we’re the good guys, remember. Can you relax a bit?”

“In my research of Earth culture, I’ve read that yoga can be very relaxing.” Martian Manhunter said helpfully.

Hal shuddered and covered his eyes as unwanted mental images flashed through his mind. “Oh, God. I just pictured Batman in yoga pants.”

Barry laughed while Diana offered, “I will practice yoga with you, Batman.”

Unamused, Batman stared at them blankly. “No thanks.”

Doors swung open as Superman rushed into the room. “Hey, guys! Sorry I’m late. There was an emergency.” He walked to the round table and sat down next to Batman.

Batman gave him an irritated look. “Was it a real emergency or were you rescuing a cat from a tree?”

Superman grinned. “Actually, I was helping an old lady cross the street.”

Green Lantern and Flash both burst into laughter while Wonder Woman smiled in amusement.

“Seriously?” Batman sighed, looking annoyed.

“A car almost hit her!” Clark said defensively.

“Whatever. Let’s continue the meeting.”

Batman steered the conversation back to the meeting, then they all discussed Justice League matters.
After the meeting, Green Lantern and Flash left the conference room and stood in the hallway, talking. This was always the best part of visiting the Watchtower. When meetings were over, Hal and Barry would hang out for hours sometimes. Over the past year, they’ve become best friends. They could talk about anything. And lately, they’ve enjoyed gossiping about Batman and Superman. Spooky and the Boy Scout had the most hilarious bromance going on. Hal loved teasing Batman about it.

When Batman walked past them, Green Lantern quickly stepped in front of him, blocking his path. “Hey, spooky. Can you settle a bet for us?”

Flash smiled nervously. “We’re just wondering. Do you and Superman hang out a lot? Like outside of the league?”

Batman glared at them. “That’s none of your business.”

Down the hall, Superman and Wonder Woman stepped out of the conference room together.

“Hey, Supes!” Hal called out, “Do you and Batman hang out?”

“Yeah, all the time!” Superman replied as he walked towards them.

Clenching both fists, Batman scowled angrily at Clark.

“Uh… Did I do something wrong?” Superman gave him a confused look.

Without saying anything, Batman turned and stomped away. Green Lantern and Flash laughed hysterically while Superman chased after the angry man.

“Wait, Batman!” Superman whined, “Come on. What did I do?”

Lex Luthor was such a pain in the ass. Superman had to fight the villain yet again tonight. After Darkseid’s failed invasion, Luthor had managed to get his hands on some of the alien’s advanced technology. For the past year, the evil billionaire has been experimenting with the technology, building weapons to use against Superman. Luthor’s latest creation was called the Warsuit.

Tonight the villain had worn the large suit of powered armor and wreaked havoc in Metropolis. While wearing the suit, Luthor was physically as strong as a Kryptonian. During the battle, Superman had received various cuts and bruises. Beating Luthor wasn’t easy, but eventually Superman disabled the Warsuit.

Now Luthor was in jail, but the rich bastard would undoubtedly post bail soon. Then Superman would have to fight him again. It was like an endless cycle.

With a sigh, Superman flew through the night sky, feeling discouraged. Every time they fought, Luthor was becoming harder and harder to beat. The villain was so determined to kill him. What would happen if Superman actually lost? If he killed Superman, would Luthor go after the Justice League next? Would he go after Batman?

Worried, Clark stopped in the sky and turned towards Gotham. It was late at night, but he was too anxious to sleep. Batman was probably still awake. Without a second thought, Superman zoomed away, heading towards Gotham. He could hear Bruce’s heartbeat inside Wayne Manor.
Clark flew to the manor and entered through a first story window. Then he walked down the hall until he found Bruce on a couch near the fireplace. The room was dark with the only source of light coming from the fire. Bruce was wearing a black robe while he sat alone, drinking a glass of scotch.

When Bruce noticed him, his gaze immediately focused on the Kryptonian’s injuries. They were just cuts and scrapes, but Bruce set down his glass, looking genuinely worried.

“Clark, what’s wrong?”

“I-I had a really rough day. I just need…” Clark stared at him pleadingly.

“Okay,” Bruce agreed before he could even ask.

Clark walked over to the couch and sat down next to Bruce. Then he leaned to the side and rested his head on Bruce’s lap. For a moment, Clark waited to see if Bruce would shove him away. Instead, Bruce simply picked up his glass of scotch and continued to drink. Clark let out a sigh of relief, relaxing a bit. Whenever he really needed affection, Bruce was usually kind like this.

While drinking his scotch, Bruce casually petted Clark’s head, running a hand through his hair. “What happened?”

Clark smiled, feeling content under Bruce’s touch. “It’s Luthor again. He never leaves me alone.”

“Should I pay him a visit?” Bruce asked darkly.

Clark laughed. “No, I handled it. Thanks for offering though… Why were you drinking alone?”

“I suppose I had a rough day too,” Bruce admitted. “Dick and I are fighting.”

“Over what?”

Bruce sighed in frustration. “Dick wants to leave and form his own team like a teenage justice league. But I don’t know if he’s ready to lead.”

“How old is he now?” Clark asked.

“Fourteen.”

“Wow. It seems like he was twelve yesterday.”

“Yeah, tell me about it.” Bruce complained, “And now, I have Barbara to deal with too.”

“Who’s Barbara?”

“Barbara Gordon. She’s the commissioner’s daughter. She found out that I’m Batman, and now she wants me to train her,” Bruce explained. “I’m not sure if it’s a good idea. She has no fighting experience whatsoever. It may be too dangerous for her.”

“Maybe you should give her a chance. You can at least teach her how to defend herself.”

“Yeah, I’ll probably start teaching her soon. I don’t know if I’ll ever let her patrol with me though.”

“So, she wants to be like a second Robin?”
“She wants to be Batgirl.”

Clark chuckled. “Batgirl?”

“She came up with the name. Not me,” Bruce grumbled. “To make matters worse, Dick has a crush on her and keeps nagging me for advice.”

“Sounds like you have your hands full.”

“You have no idea.”

Clark smiled happily. “Thank you.”

“For what?”

“Not pushing me away.”

“We’re friends, Clark,” Bruce said like that explained everything.

*Friends don’t do this.* Clark was going to argue, but he kept his mouth shut. He didn’t want to push his luck.

Time slowed ticked by while they stayed on the couch. Bruce continued to drink and pet Clark’s head in silence. Meanwhile Clark enjoyed the affection too much to say anything. He was afraid Bruce would stop if he tried to have a conversation about it.

Eventually, Bruce’s hand came to a stop, resting on top of Clark’s head. Then Clark glanced up and noticed that Bruce had fallen asleep. His eyes were closed and his head was lolling to the side. Clark gently moved Bruce’s hand and sat up. Then he took the empty scotch glass from Bruce’s other hand and set it down.

“Bruce, I’m going to carry you to bed, okay?” Clark whispered.

“’Kay,” Bruce mumbled before falling back to sleep.

With a smile, Clark gathered Bruce in his arms and scooped him off the couch. Bruce’s head slumped against Clark’s shoulder while he slept peacefully. Clark carried him down the hall and up the stairs towards his room. Once they reached the bedroom, Clark carefully placed Bruce on the bed and pulled a blanket over him.

In his sleep, Bruce rolled onto his side, facing Clark. His heart ached with longing as Clark reached a hand toward Bruce and cupped his cheek. Bruce stirred slightly in his sleep, nuzzling his face against Clark’s hand. Clark swallowed hard as he watched Bruce. More than anything, he wanted to lean down and kiss the other man. But Bruce was unconscious. And Clark had promised to be patient…

Restraining himself, Clark removed his hand. It took every ounce of his self-control to step away.

*How long are you going to make me wait, Bruce?*

He headed towards the balcony and flew back to Metropolis.
After their latest mission, the Justice League returned to the Watchtower to recuperate. Yesterday, a new villain called Brainiac had appeared. The alien android was extremely intelligent and dangerous. The Justice League had taken a beating, but they successfully defeated Brainiac and drove him away.

Following major battles, the league would usually have a meeting to debrief and review what they had learned. There was a lot of new information about Brainiac that they needed to discuss. But after the huge battle, everyone was too exhausted for a meeting. So, they all decided to rest first. At the Watchtower, everyone had their own separate sleeping quarters.

In the morning, Bruce woke up in his private quarters and took a shower. Then he changed into a clean Batsuit and left his room.

While he walked down the hall, he spotted Green Lantern and Flash hunched over a magazine, gossiping.

“They look good together. I’m happy for Supes.” Barry smiled.

“Man, and I thought I had a chance with her,” Hal complained.

Barry snorted. “Yeah, right. She’s obviously into Superman.”

Batman frowned as he approached them. “What are you two doing?”

“Look!” Flash handed him the tabloid magazine.

On the cover, there was a photo of Superman and Wonder Woman hugging with a sunset in the background. Bruce’s eyes widened as he stared at the picture. It didn’t look photo-shopped. It was real. The photo was real… Suddenly, Bruce felt sick to his stomach.

“Supes and Diana were voted the most popular couple of the year. Isn’t that cool?” Flash grinned.

Batman angrily clenched the magazine, crinkling the pages. Then he threw the magazine at Flash and growled, “Put that away. It’s unprofessional.”
While Bruce stormed away, he heard Hal whisper, “Wow. Somebody needs to get laid.”

Batman stopped and turned around, glaring at Hal. “What was that, Lantern? If you have something to say, say it to my face.”

“Fine.” Green Lantern crossed his arms as he sneered, “You need to get laid, spooky. You have a huge stick up your ass. Why can’t you just chill out?”

Batman charged towards him, snarling, “Oh, I should be more like you? An easily distracted, bumbling idiot?”

Furious, Hal uncrossed his arms as he yelled, “You asshole! I’m not-!”

While Green Lantern was distracted, Bruce quickly snatched the green ring off his finger. Hal’s green suit disappeared as his eyes widened in shock. Then Batman swiftly grabbed Hal’s arm and threw him to the ground. Hal hit the floor with a loud thud. He groaned in pain while Batman dropped the ring on him.

“Easily distracted,” Batman spat as he walked away.

Behind him, he could hear Hal scrambling to his feet while complaining to Flash, “Why didn’t you help me?!”

“Hey, it’s not my fault!” Barry yelled back. “Batman is scary when he’s pissed off!”

Smirking to himself, Batman turned around a corner and continued walking. It was always satisfying to put Hal in his place. That idiot really needed to watch his mouth. Usually, Bruce could tolerate Hal’s antics, but he wasn’t in the mood for it right now.

His chest tightened painfully as he remembered the photo of Superman and Wonder Woman hugging. Maybe the embrace didn’t mean anything. Clark was an affectionate person. He hugged everybody… But this wasn’t the first time the media claimed Superman was in a relationship with Wonder Woman. There have been several articles about the so-called super couple.

Bruce knew that Clark and Diana were close. Diana had a lot respect for Superman. She was always willing to follow his lead. Whenever Batman and Superman had a disagreement, Diana sided with Clark every single time… They were definitely friends. But were they more than friends?

As he walked down the hall, Bruce saw the door to Diana’s quarters swing open. Then Wonder Woman and Superman both stepped out together. Batman froze in shock, staring at them. What the hell was Clark doing in Diana’s room?! Superman noticed Bruce and smiled at him. “Hey, Batman. Did you sleep well?”

“Yeah. Fine.” Batman looked at Wonder Woman who was standing very close to the Kryptonian.

She smiled too, then rested a hand on Superman’s shoulder. “We all fought well yesterday.”

Bruce shifted anxiously while his gaze focused on her hand. Clark didn’t seem to mind Diana touching him at all. Why were they in her quarters? Why?! Bruce felt physically ill as he looked away. Did Clark and Diana really have feelings for each other? Just the thought made his stomach turn.

Clark studied him with concern “Batman, are you okay? You look kinda pale.”
“We’ll debrief in ten minutes. Tell the others.” Bruce hurried down the hall, avoiding Clark’s gaze.

In the conference room, the Justice League sat at the round table, debriefing on their last battle. Batman and Martian Manhunter were both explaining all the information they have gathered on Brainiac. Apparently, the alien android was from a planet called Colu and he had Twelfth Level intellect. Whatever the hell that meant. Superman didn’t care about the villain’s life story. He had more important things on his mind.

While J’onn gave a short history lesson about planet Colu, Clark glanced over at Bruce, watching him. Batman had been acting strangely today. Clark was worried about him. Could he be sick? Bruce had looked so pale earlier and his heart had raced like he was anxious or upset about something. What was bothering him?

After Martian Manhunter finished talking about Brainiac, Batman announced, “Before you all leave, there is a new rule you must agree to.”

Green Lantern groaned dramatically. “Another rule? Seriously?”

“What is it now, Batman?” Aquaman demanded.

Batman declared, “There will be no romantic relationships between members of the Justice League.”

What?! Superman gaped at him in shock.

Meanwhile everyone else was staring at Diana, probably because she’s the only female member. Wonder Woman frowned, clearly unhappy with the attention.

“Uh… Diana, are you okay with this?” Flash asked nervously.

She crossed her arms, looking indignant. “Superman is our leader. If he accepts the rule, so will I.”

Now everyone was staring at Clark, except for Bruce who was deliberately looking away. Superman shifted uncomfortably in his chair, unsure what to say. Part of him wanted to scream ‘No!’ and argue against the rule. But Batman must of have done this for a reason… Was this Bruce’s way of rejecting him? Did he want Clark to give up all hope?

Clark stared at Bruce, but the other man was still avoiding eye contact with him. This wasn’t fair. Why didn’t Bruce warn him that he was going to announce this new rule? And why did Bruce have to make this public? Now Clark couldn’t say what he wanted to because everyone else was watching. If Clark made a scene and publicly declared his love, it would just anger Bruce… He was so private. Bruce wouldn’t want the others to know.

Now wasn’t the time to talk about this. Clark would have to confront Bruce later when they were alone.

Superman grumbled reluctantly, “Yeah, I accept the rule. For now.”

“Then it’s settled. Meeting adjourned.” Batman stood and hurried out of the room.

At the Watchtower, Superman stood by a tall window, overlooking the Earth. He had been sulking
for hours. It was almost 5 PM, but he still hadn’t left the Watchtower. Ever since the meeting, he had been agonizing over what to do. Clark knew that he needed to talk to Bruce, but he didn’t know what to say. Why did Bruce announce the no-dating rule? He did that to reject Clark, didn’t he? If Bruce truly didn’t want him, there was nothing Clark could do to change that.

Was it time to give up?

Clark felt his throat tighten as his eyes stung with unshed tears. He quickly wiped the moisture from his eyes, refusing to cry. He had waited so long for Bruce. Clark had really tried to do everything right. But, apparently, it wasn’t enough.


Superman wiped at his eyes again and cleared his throat, trying to seem normal. “H-Hey, Flash.”

Barry gave him a sympathetic look and patted him on the shoulder. “How are you holding up, big guy?”

“I’m fine,” Clark muttered.

Barry sighed. “Man, I’m sorry about Batman’s stupid rule. Personally, I don’t think it’s any of his business if you’re dating Diana.”


“Well, that’s why Batman created the rule, isn’t it? So, you can’t date Wonder Woman.”

Clark’s eyes widened in shock. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing. “I don’t want to date Diana.”

Now Barry looked surprised. “Really? But you always seemed so close to her.”

“She’s just a good friend.” Suddenly, Clark remembered the strange way Bruce had acted in the morning. It all started after Bruce saw Clark and Diana leaving her quarters together. Oh, my God. Did Bruce think-?!?

“I have to go.” Superman turned to walk away.

In a blur, Flash quickly appeared in front of him. “Wait a second. If you don’t want to date Diana, then why does the rule bother you so much?” He pried, “Do you want to date someone else? Diana is the only woman in the league, so who else-?”

Barry froze as his eyes widened with the realization. “Holy shit. It’s Batman.”

Damn it. “Don’t say anything to anyone,” Clark growled.

“I won’t. I won’t, I swear.” Flash held up his hands in a placating gesture, then he rambled excitedly. “Wow. I can’t believe it. You and Batman. I mean, it was an inside joke that you two secretly had the hots for each other. But I didn’t actually think-”

“Flash, shut up.”

“Right. Sorry.”

“Batman is a very private person. Don’t tell anyone about this. I mean it,” Superman ordered seriously.
Flash nodded. “You got it, Boss.”

“I really have to go.” Clark stepped around Barry and hurried down the hall.

“Good luck!” Flash called out, “Go get your Bat.”

Clark glanced over his shoulder and smiled. “Thanks, Barry.”

Soaring through the sky, Superman flew as fast as possible to Wayne Manor and entered the Batcave through the secret outside entrance. Inside the cave, Batman was sitting in front of the Batcomputer, typing. He was dressed in Kevlar, wearing all of his Batsuit except for his cowl.

Clark marched toward him and demanded, “Why did you make the rule?”

“What rule?” Bruce continued typing, refusing to look at him.

Angry, Clark grabbed Bruce’s chair and spun him around. “You know what I’m talking about. The no-dating rule. Did you do that so I couldn’t date Diana?”

Bruce sighed and crossed his arms. “I was protecting the league. The consequences of dating her—”

“Are you serious right now?!” Clark shouted in outrage. “You really think I want Diana?!”

Bruce blinked in surprise, then stared up at him with a confused expression. “…Don’t you?”

“NO!” Clark clenched his fists as he yelled, “I want you! I’ve always wanted you! I thought I made that very clear. How could you even think I wanted Diana?”

“Well, I…” Bruce faltered before arguing, “I’m not the only one. Plenty of people think you’re dating Diana. There are several articles about you two dating and you’ve never disputed it.”

“Because they’re just stupid tabloids!”

“They have photos too,” Bruce claimed.

“Of me and Diana hugging? Yeah, I know. I’m a hugger. In case you haven’t noticed, I like hugging people,” he snapped defensively. “She’s just my friend. I didn’t do anything wrong!”

“Fine!” Bruce shot out of his chair and started to stomp away. “Forget I said anything.”

In a flash, Clark appeared in front him, blocking his path. “No. We’re aren’t done talking.”

“I’m done,” Bruce growled angrily as he stepped around Clark.

“You can’t treat me like this,” Clark complained. “It isn’t fair! You make me wait forever, but obviously you don’t want me to date anyone else.”

Bruce turned toward him and hissed, “I don’t give a shit who you date, Clark.”

“Really?” Clark gave him a skeptical look. “Then why are you jealous of Diana?”

“I’m not jealous!” Bruce screamed. “Like I said before, I’m protecting the Justice League from needless drama.”

“So, if I date someone outside the Justice League, you won’t care?”
“That’s right.” Bruce snarled, “I. Don’t. Care.”

That stung. His chest ached as he glared at Bruce. Clark was so sick of Bruce’s denial. He wanted to make the stubborn man eat his words.

“Okay.” Clark threatened, “Since you don’t care, maybe I’ll ask out Lois.”

Bruce raised an eyebrow, looking confused. “Lois is just your friend.”

“Yeah, but she had a crush on Superman for a really long time. And I had a crush on her too before I met you.” Clark walked toward the desk by the Batcomputer. “I’m gonna call her real quick. Can I borrow your phone?”

Bruce shrugged while crossing his arms. The jerk was still acting like he didn’t care.

Clark grabbed Bruce’s personal cellphone off the desk. He had no intention of actually calling Lois, but he didn’t want Bruce to know that. Clark turned his back to Bruce and dialed his own number. Since Clark’s phone was still at his apartment, Bruce wouldn’t hear it ring.

After calling his own voicemail, Clark put the phone to his ear. “Hey, Lois. I was wondering if you’re free on-”

Bruce suddenly ripped the phone away, threw it on the floor, and stomped on it. His whole body shook with rage as he shouted, “Don’t call her, you ass!”

Clark gaped at him in surprise. “I-I didn’t. I called my own voicemail.”

Bruce’s eyes widened. “What?”

Clark glanced down at the destroyed phone. “Sorry. Was that phone expensive? I wasn’t expecting you to break it.”

Bruce looked like he was in shock. He stumbled to the chair and sat down. Then he stared down at his hands with a disconcerted look on his face.

Clark felt guilty. “I’m really sorry. That was mean. I shouldn’t have tricked you. But you kept saying that you didn’t care and-”

“You’re right,” Bruce muttered.

“Huh?”

Bruce ran a hand through his hair as he admitted, “This isn’t fair… I have no right to stop you from dating. I-I have no claim to you.”

Clark smiled. “Sure, you do. As long as you want me, I’m all yours.” He kneeled next to Bruce’s chair and stared at him pleadingly. “Can we please start dating now?”

“I… I don’t know.” Bruce tilted his head down as he confessed, “I’m sorry. I don’t know what to do.”

Clark felt a sting of disappointment, but he still smiled and rested a hand on Bruce’s shoulder. “That’s okay. I’ve already waited this long. I can keep waiting.”

Bruce shook his head, frowning. “No, you’ve waited long enough. You deserve an answer.”
Clark insisted, “Bruce, seriously. If you’re not sure, it’s okay.”

“Just give me a day. Let me think about it. I’ll give you my answer tomorrow.”

Clark’s eyes widened. “Tomorrow? Really?”

Bruce nodded silently.

“Uh, wow. Okay.” Clark stood, suddenly feeling very nervous. “Even if you say no, we’re still friends, right?”

“Of course.”

“Good.” Clark relaxed somewhat and grinned. “And just so you know. If you say yes, I will be the most awesome boyfriend ever.”

Bruce gave him an amused look. “Okay, Clark.”

“I guess I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Bruce nodded. “Same time. Same place.”

“Yes, I’ll be here.” Clark shifted anxiously on his feet. “Okay. Well, bye.”

He zoomed out of the Batcave and flew through the sky towards Metropolis. His heart raced as he replayed Bruce’s words over and over in his head.

“I’ll give you my answer tomorrow.”

Tomorrow… Tomorrow, the waiting would finally be over.

Clark smiled to himself, overcome with joy.

SxB

After meeting with his legal team, Luthor left LexCorp and stepped into his limo. Two bodyguards and his personal assistant, Mercy Graves, sat in the backseat with him. During the ride home, Luthor crossed his arms while glaring out the window.

Ever since his last battle with Superman, Luthor has been dealing with the aftermath. The Assistant District Attorney of Metropolis had charged Luthor with several crimes, from destruction of city property to attempted murder. Thankfully, Luthor’s team of lawyers had fixed the problem and paid off the judge. It was an expensive hassle though.

Luthor clenched his fists as he thought of Superman. That damn Kryptonian had caused him so much trouble. No matter how times Luthor tried to kill him, Superman always prevailed. The bastard was like a cockroach. He just kept coming back. Even when Luthor used kryptonite, Superman would find a way to win. The alien’s buddy Batman would come to the rescue.

Fucking Batman… Luthor needed to kill him too.

When they arrived at the high-rise luxury apartment building, Luthor, Mercy and the two bodyguards headed inside. They took the elevator up to the highest floor, then walked to the front door of Luthor’s penthouse.

Luthor unlocked the door and stepped inside. Then he froze.
In the living room, the Joker was sitting on the couch with his feet propped up on the coffee table. He waved casually and smiled. “Heya, Lexy.”

Luthor’s bodyguards immediately drew their firearms.

“Lower your weapons,” Luthor ordered.

The bodyguards reluctantly holstered their guns while Mercy objected, “But, sir—”

“Wait outside.” Luthor glared at his assistant. “All of you.”

Mercy and the bodyguards left the penthouse, stepping into the hallway. Then Luthor slammed the door and faced the Joker. The insane clown bounced off the couch, snickering in amusement.

“Did ya miss me, Lexy?”

Luthor crossed his arms as he replied seriously, “You and I share a common interest. The alliance between Superman and Batman must end.”

“Oh, you got that right,” the Joker agreed. “It’s just awful, Lexy. I bet my Batsy and Supes are together right now in an Alpha/Omega love nest, knotting each other and having ass babies.”

“What?” Luthor stared at him in confusion. The lunatic wasn’t making any sense.

“Heheh, my, uh internet history is a little different from yours,” the Joker quipped.

“You think they’re in a relationship?” Luthor asked.

“Are you kiddin’ me? Superman follows my Bats around like a love sick puppy. He wants Batsy bad.”

“Interesting.” Luthor smirked as he considered how to use this new information.

Years ago, when Zod attacked Earth, the Kryptonian general had two followers. During the chaos, Luthor had managed to capture one of Zod’s men. Luthor had experimented on the Kryptonian soldier for months before finally killing him. One of the most fascinating experiments had involved red kryptonite.

“If you’re right, red kryptonite could be useful,” Luthor claimed.

“Hm?” The Joker looked intrigued. “What’s the red stuff do?”

“When exposed to red kryptonite, Superman won’t be able to control himself. He’ll take whatever he wants. No matter if Batman consents or not.”

The Joker tilted his head to the side. “Are you saying that Superman could rape my Bats?”

Luthor shrugged. “It would ruin their alliance.”

The Joker’s face twisted into a nasty grin as he cackled. “Oh, Lexy. I like the way you think.”
Red Kryptonite

Chapter Summary

“When Kal-El is exposed to red kryptonite, he cannot control his impulses. He will act without guilt, empathy, or honor.” –Jor-El.

Chapter Notes

WARNING: This chapter contains Attempted Rape. The rape doesn’t happen, but it almost does. Mainly, Clark beats the shit out of Bruce. It’s violent, scary, and fucked up. You’ve been warned…

Thanks for reading!

After a night of patrolling Gotham, Bruce woke up around 2 PM. For a while he lay in bed, staring up at the ceiling. Today he was supposed to give his answer to Clark, and he still didn’t know what he was going to say. Logically, Bruce knew that dating Clark was a bad idea. But, emotionally… Bruce hated the idea of Clark with anyone else. He couldn’t deny being jealous anymore. Not after he broke his own phone just to stop Clark from calling Lois.

God damnit. Bruce rolled onto his side, hiding underneath his blanket. That had been so fucking embarrassing. He still couldn’t believe that Clark had tricked him. Gullible, innocent Clark had out-smarted him for once. Now Bruce had to face his feelings.

He didn’t want Clark to date Diana or Lois. Bruce wanted the Kryptonian all to himself. Clark belonged to him.

With a sigh, Bruce sat up and held his head in his hands. He couldn’t afford to think like that. Even though he wanted Clark, he couldn’t have him. It was too dangerous. Their enemies would use their relationship against them. Bruce knew that. Rationally, he knew that. Yet, he still wanted Clark.

Frustrated, Bruce shot out of bed, pulled on a black robe, and left his room. As he walked down the hall, he could hear loud music playing in Dick’s bedroom. Hopefully, the teen was actually doing his schoolwork like he was supposed to.

Bruce headed downstairs and walked into the kitchen. Alfred was standing at the kitchen counter, cutting vegetables.

The butler greeted him, “Good afternoon, Master Wayne. Would you like some coffee?”

“Yes, please.” Bruce sat down at the kitchen table.

While Alfred prepared the coffee, Bruce sat in silence, lost in thought. He was still arguing with himself in his head. What should he say to Clark? Should Bruce take the risk and yes? Or should
he act responsibly and say no?

Eventually, Alfred set down a cup of coffee in front of him. Then the butler sat next to him at the table.

“You seem preoccupied, Master Wayne. What is troubling you?” Alfred asked, perceptive as ever.

Bruce sighed and stared down at the cup of coffee. The smell of coffee actually reminded him of Clark. Bruce thought of all the times they drank coffee together, and how much he had grown to cherish those moments.

“Clark still wants to date me. I told him that I’d give him my answer today,” Bruce divulged.

“I see.” Alfred smiled. “And what will you tell him?”

“I don’t know.”

The butler was silent for a moment before he asked, “What if Mr. Kent wasn’t Superman and you weren’t Batman? What would your answer be?”

Bruce gave him a confused look. “That would completely change the situation.”

“No, it wouldn’t,” Alfred insisted. “If you didn’t carry the burden of being Batman, what would your answer be? Would you date him?”

“Yes,” Bruce admitted.

“Ah, and the truth comes out.” Alfred crossed his arms.

“But I—”

“No,” Alfred cut him off. “No more excuses. You deserve to be happy, Master Wayne.” He implored, “You’ve sacrificed enough. Let yourself have this.”

Bruce silently stared down at the coffee again. Then Alfred placed a hand on his shoulder and stood.

“I understand that you’re afraid, Master Wayne. But, please don’t deprive yourself of a good thing.”

The butler walked away, leaving Bruce alone with his thoughts.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Clark sat his desk, staring at his computer screen. He had so much work that he needed to do, but he couldn’t focus. His thoughts kept circling back to Bruce. He couldn’t wait to hear the man’s answer. Even though the possibility of rejection scared him, Clark remained optimistic. He was so excited. After today, Bruce may actually be his boyfriend!

Clark grinned happily to himself.

“Kent, get your head out of your ass and get to work!” Perry yelled across the office.

“Yes, sir. Sorry.” Clark winced guiltily as he typed on his computer.

For a while, he focused on his job until he heard a woman scream on the other side of town.
“HELP!”

Answering the call of distress, Clark immediately rushed to the bathroom, changed into his Superman suit, and flew out the window.

SxB

On top of a tall building, the Joker grinned wickedly while examining the ring that his good pal Lexy had given him. Inside the ring, there was a shiny piece of red kryptonite. The Joker snickered to himself. This was going to be so much fun.

“What’s the ring for, Mr. J?” Harley Quinn bounced up and down next to him, giggling. “Are you gonna propose to me?”

“No, my dear. This ring far too important for that.”

Harley Quinn frowned, pouting.

The Joker smiled at her. “I need you to do something for me.”

She instantly brightened. “Anything for you, Puddin’.”

The Joker handed her the red kryptonite ring. “When Superman comes, I need you to put this ring on him.”

“Oh, okay. When is Supes coming?”

“You’re going to call him here, sweetheart.” The Joker grinned viciously.

Harley Quinn blinked in confusion. “I am? How?”

Without warning, the Joker suddenly grabbed onto Harley Quinn and dragged her to the edge of the roof.

She stood on the ledge, staring at the Joker with wide terrified eyes. “P-Puddin’?”

“Don’t forget to scream.” He smiled as he pushed her off the building.

Harley Quinn fell several feet in the air, screaming like a good girl. “HELP!”

Before she could hit the ground, a blue blur zoomed by and caught her. Superman flew to the roof of the building, carrying Harley Quinn in his arms. The hero glared at the Joker.

“I know you’re a killer, Joker. But you can’t murder your girlfriend. I won’t let you,” Superman said sternly.

The Joker smiled at Harley Quinn. “She knows I didn’t mean it. My Harley would do anything for me.”

She grinned and quickly slipped the red kryptonite ring on Superman’s finger. As soon as the ring touched the alien’s skin, Superman dropped Harley Quinn and held his head in his hands. The hero groaned as if he was in pain.

Harley Quinn rushed to the Joker’s side and excitedly latched onto his arm. “I did good, didn’t I, Mr. J?”
“Yes, pumpkin. Very good.” He patted her on the head.

In a blur of super speed, Superman zoomed toward the Joker and grabbed him by the throat. Harley Quinn shrieked in terror as Superman lifted the clown in the air, choking him.

There was nothing but pure hatred in Superman’s eyes. He had the eyes of a killer now. It made the Joker so proud.

“You wanna kill me, Supes? I get that.” The Joker rasped, “But there’s something you want more, isn’t there? A certain Bat. Hehehe.”

Superman’s eyes widened at the suggestion.

“Oh, yeah. You want him bad, don’t you? What are you waiting for? Take him,” the Joker sneered. “Plow that tight ass until he screams.”

“Shut up!” Superman furiously flung the Joker across the roof. “Don’t talk about Batman. He’s mine!”

The Joker crashed onto the concrete while Superman suddenly disappeared, flying towards Gotham. The red kryptonite was working like a charm.

Thrilled, the Joker sat up, laughing hysterically.

“Oh, Batsy is gonna be sore tomorrow. Hahaha!”

SxB

It was almost 5 PM. In the Batcave, Bruce nervously paced back and forth. He was dressed in his Batsuit, but he doubted that he would go on patrol tonight. After Clark hears his answer, Bruce would probably be busy for the rest of the night.

His heart raced as Bruce smiled excitedly. He could imagine Clark’s reaction. Superman was going to be so happy.

Bruce had decided to say yes.

Even though it was risky and stupid, Bruce didn’t care anymore. This was something that he really, truly wanted. He was still worried about what could happen. But like Alfred said, Bruce didn’t want to deprive himself of a good thing. And for the past couple years, Clark has been one of the best things in his life.

Clark made him happy. Genuinely happy. Bruce couldn’t imagine living without him. Clark had become so important that Bruce would give anything to keep the man around. And, Bruce was planning to give everything. Now that his mind was made up, Bruce wouldn’t deny Clark anything anymore. Whatever Clark wanted from him, Bruce would give freely.

When Bruce felt a gust of wind, he knew Superman had flown into the cave. Bruce turned around and faced the hero. Clark was standing in the shadows, watching him.

Bruce smiled and walked towards him. Before he could say anything, Clark suddenly zoomed towards him and pinned him against the wall. Bruce’s eyes widened in surprise as Clark kissed him roughly, invading his mouth. After a moment of hesitation, Bruce wrapped his arms around the Kryptonian and kissed him back.
A low growl came from Clark’s throat, then he grabbed Bruce’s legs, lifting him off the floor. Bruce gasped when Clark spread his legs apart and grinded against him. Pleasure shot through him as he broke from the kiss and clutched Clark’s back, breathing heavily.

“C-Clark, wait a second. I have to tell you-”

His words were muffled when Clark kissed him again, shoving him against the wall. A shiver ran down his spine as Clark growled again. The Kryptonian was dominating the kiss, plunging his tongue into Bruce’s mouth. Clark was being really rough with him. Something wasn’t right.

Bruce turned his face away, breaking from the kiss. “I said wait.”

Clark grabbed onto his chin and tilted Bruce’s head back. Then he kissed Bruce again, forcing his way into Bruce’s mouth. Bruce felt a jolt of panic as he struggled.

He shoved Superman away, shouting, “Clark, stop it!”

Then he noticed the ring on Clark’s index finger. Bruce froze in horror as his blood ran cold. On Clark’s right hand, he was wearing a ring with a red gem in the middle. *Red kryptonite!*

Bruce immediately reached for his utility belt, then Clark grabbed his arm and twisted it to the side. Bones in his arm cracked as Bruce screamed in pain. After breaking Bruce’s arm, Clark ripped off his utility belt and hurled it across the cave. Now Bruce was defenseless.

Clark abruptly dropped him on the floor. Bruce grimaced as he landed on his side. His right arm was throbbing where Clark had broken his elbow. Bruce sat up, cradling his arm while his mind raced anxiously. He knew he couldn’t stop Clark on his own. Especially with a broken arm and his utility belt out of reach.

Bruce glanced to the side at the emergency switch on the wall. He needed to contact the Justice League. Bruce staggered to his feet and lunged at the switch. But before he could reach it, Clark quickly snatched him by the throat and pinned him against the wall.

Superman’s hand was crushing his throat, making it impossible to breathe. Bruce struggled against the strong grip in vain as he rasped, “L-Let me go.”

“No. You aren’t running this time.” Superman stared at him coldly.

“Clark, you’re hurting me. Stop,” he pleaded.

The Kryptonian finally loosened his grip, so Bruce could take a deep breath. It was a relief to breathe again, but Clark still had a firm grasp around his neck.

“That ring is affecting you. You need to take it off,” Bruce insisted.

“Hmph. I don’t need to do anything.”

“Clark, you aren’t yourself. Just listen to me. You-” Bruce choked when Clark tightened his grip again.

“I don’t take orders from you anymore.” Clark roughly slammed him against the wall as Bruce winced in pain.

Then he released Bruce, letting him slide down to the floor. Bruce defensively curled his legs close to his chest while holding onto his broken arm.
Clark glared down at him. “You’ve denied me long enough. I’m taking what’s mine.”

“What?”

“You are mine,” he snarled.

Bruce’s eyes widened as he stared up at the Kryptonian, completely horrified. He knew where this was headed, and it terrified him.

Suddenly, he heard Alfred’s voice on the intercom, “Master Wayne, would you like some tea?”

Before Bruce could respond, Clark slammed a hand over his mouth to shut him up. Bruce let out a muffled scream and bit down on Clark’s hand, but Superman wouldn’t release him.

On the Batcomputer, he could see Alfred on the screen, standing in the kitchen. The butler spoke into the intercom again, “Master Wayne, is everything all right?”

Then Dick appeared next to Alfred on the computer screen. “I’ll go check on him.”

No! Bruce panicked as he thrashed wildly in Clark’s grip. He was scared out of his mind. Bruce couldn’t even protect himself. How was he supposed to protect Dick?!

Clark laughed wickedly. “Your heart is beating so fast. Like a hummingbird.” He smirked. “Don’t worry, Bruce. I won’t let them interrupt us. Let’s go somewhere a little more private.”

He suddenly snatched Bruce and flung him over his shoulder. Then Superman zoomed out of the cave. He flew through the sky, high above Gotham, heading north. Bruce continued to struggle against the Kryptonian’s hold. This was bad. His utility belt was gone, and now Clark was kidnapping him. Bruce had no way to defend himself or to call for help.

Clark chuckled and patted Bruce on the ass. “Settle down, Bruce.”

“Let go of me!” Bruce struggled even more, kicking Clark in the chest.

“Hm. Not a good choice of words.” Superman abruptly released him.

Bruce screamed as he plummeted towards the ground. He had no grappling gun. No parachute. No tools. He was going to die. Air rushed past him as he continued to fall. The pavement was approaching fast. Bruce shut his eyes, bracing himself for impact.

Suddenly, something yanked sharply on his ankle, then he felt the joint pop. Bruce screamed in agony while Clark hovered in the air, holding him by his injured ankle.

The Kryptonian looked amused. “It’s a shame you break so easily.”

Bruce groaned, gritting his teeth. Now his ankle was dislocated. His chances of escaping were dwindling by the second. Clark was soaring through the sky again, heading north. Meanwhile Bruce was dangling upside down, held by his throbbing ankle. He was in so much pain. Bruce bit his bottom lip, refusing to cry out.

Soon, the temperature dropped and Bruce shivered as his breath became visible. Underneath him, he could see fields of snow and ice. He knew where they were headed. Clark was taking him to the Fortress of Solitude.

Fuck. Bruce was so screwed. The fortress was a secret. Only Clark and Bruce knew about that place. No one else knew of its existence. Even if the Justice League realized Bruce and Clark were
missing, they wouldn’t know where to look. Bruce would be completely isolated at the ice fortress. His situation seemed hopeless. Bruce trembled from the cold, feeling sick with anxiety.

When they reached the Fortress of Solitude, Superman flew inside and dropped Bruce on the floor. Bruce gasped in pain as his broken arm hit the hard ground. He quickly sat up, cradling his aching arm. When Clark walked towards him, Bruce frantically scrambled away.

Clark laughed. “Where do you think you’re going? You can’t run from me here.”

In a flash, Clark appeared above Bruce and straddled him, pushing him down. Bruce thrashed underneath him, punching and kicking the Kryptonian. Of course, his attacks didn’t hurt Superman at all. Clark merely looked annoyed. He grabbed both of Bruce’s wrists with one hand and wrenched them back, pinning them over Bruce’s head. Bruce yelped in pain when his broken arm was pulled up.

Clark smirked at him. “I always hoped you were a screamer.”

Bruce yelled desperately, “Clark, this isn’t you! Take off the ring!”

“Don’t tell me what to do.” Superman’s eyes flashed red.

Bruce shut his mouth, watching Clark fearfully. Then Clark’s eyes reverted back to their natural shade of blue.

Superman smiled and pulled off Batman’s cowl, revealing his face. “That’s better.”

He leaned down like he was about to kiss Bruce again. But before Clark could kiss him, Bruce spat at his face defiantly. Clark blinked in surprise, then wiped the spit off his face.

“You shouldn’t have done that,” he growled dangerously.

Clark suddenly punched Bruce in his side. Bruce felt a couple of his ribs break as he cried out in pain.

“The more you fight me, the uglier this is going to get,” Superman warned him.

Tears began to well in his eyes as Bruce pleaded, “Clark, please stop. Please-”

Clark snickered. “You’re begging now? I wonder what else I can make you do.”

He started to rip the Kevlar, peeling off Batman’s armor like it was made of tissue paper.

“Stop!” Bruce screamed as he thrashed frantically. “If you rape me, it’ll destroy you! You will never forgive yourself!”

“Shut up,” Clark snarled.

Bruce tried to reason with him. “You don’t want this! I know you don’t want our first time to be like this! Just take off the ring, and I’ll fuck you willingly, I swear!”

“Don’t lie to me!” Clark roared as he banged Bruce’s head against the ground.

For a moment, Bruce almost blacked out. The whole world was spinning and Bruce felt nauseated. His head ached horribly with a splitting pain. He probably had a concussion now. He may even have a skull fracture.
Bruce trembled when he heard Clark ripping off more of the Kevlar. Tears rolled down his face while Bruce laid limply on the ground. He couldn’t fight Clark. He wasn’t strong enough. This was going to ruin both of them if Bruce didn’t think of something.

Soon, the lower half of Bruce’s body was completely exposed. Then Clark pulled down the pants of his Superman suit. He positioned himself between Bruce’s legs, getting ready to penetrate him.

“Wait, Clark.” Bruce pleaded unexpectedly, “Let me kiss you.”

Clark froze, staring at him in confusion. “What?”

“I-I won’t fight anymore. Please let me kiss you.”

“No. I’ve done fighting,” Bruce tried to convince him. “You’re right. I…denied you for too long. That wasn’t fair.”

“Is this a trick?” Clark looked suspicious.

“No, it wasn’t.” Clark leaned over him, studying his face. “I want proof of your cooperation.”

Bruce swallowed nervously. “Okay.”

“Say that you belong to me.”

His eyes widened. “What?”

“Say that you’re mine,” Clark demanded.

Bruce hesitated while his heart pounded in his chest. Superman was staring at him with smoldering, possessive eyes. A part of Bruce actually relished being underneath that gaze. Suddenly, he felt himself becoming erect. W-What the fuck?! Bruce froze, confused by his own reaction.

Clark had a smug grin on his face. “Looks like your body agrees with me.”

Superman thrust toward him, rubbing their erections together. In a jolt of pleasure, Bruce arched his back, moaning. Even though it would hurt his pride, he knew what he had to do. He needed to submit so Clark would lower his guard. This was the only way.

While Clark continued to rub their erections together, Bruce finally caved in, “Y-Yours. I’m yours.”

Clark grabbed onto his chin, tilting his face up. “Say it again.”

“I’m yours. Yours. Yours,” he panted. “I belong to you.”

Clark kissed him, releasing Bruce’s arms. Instead of fighting, Bruce opened his mouth widely, letting Clark dominate the kiss. While Clark ravaged his mouth, Bruce sneaked his left hand to the side. Then Clark positioned himself at Bruce’s ass again, eager to thrust inside.

Right before Clark could rape him, Bruce quickly yanked the ring off his finger and punched Clark in the face. The Kryptonian toppled off of him while Bruce scrambled away, putting distance between them.

Bruce leaned against a wall, shaking and holding the red kryptonite ring tightly in his grasp.
Clark blinked a few times as his surroundings came into focus. He felt like he was waking from a nightmare. He staggered to his feet and pulled up his pants. Superman felt sick to his stomach when he realized he still had an erection. Images of Bruce crying and screaming flashed through his mind. Then he noticed the tattered pieces of Kevlar on the icy floor. It wasn’t a nightmare. He remembered saving Harley Quinn and talking to the Joker, back in Metropolis.

He had been exposed to red kryptonite. Clark gazed across the room and spotted Bruce huddled in the corner. Bruce was shaking while clutching the red kryptonite ring. His Batsuit was ripped to shreds, and he was badly hurt. Using his x-ray vision, Superman quickly studied all of the injuries. Bruce’s right arm was broken, his left ankle was dislocated, two of his ribs were broken, he had bruises around his neck, and his skull was slightly cracked.

*I did that…* Clark felt his heart drop, horrified by what he had done.

“B-Bruce?” He stepped toward him.

“Stay back!” Bruce yelled as he pressed himself against the wall.

Clark stopped and stumbled back. He could see the fear in Bruce’s eyes. Clark had never seen Batman like this before. Bruce looked so terrified. Terrified of him…

“I…I’m sorry.” Clark staggered away and stepped outside the Fortress of Solitude.

He fell to his knees in the snow. His whole body shook as more images flashed through his mind. He could remember all of it. Everything he had done to Bruce. Clark felt so disgusted with himself.

*I almost raped him. I almost-* Clark felt a wave of nausea as he leaned over and vomited in the snow. He emptied his stomach while tears streamed down his face. *How could I do that to him? How could I?!*

Clark let out a blood-curdling scream.
For a while, Clark sat outside in the cold, wallowing in misery. Then he finally stood and wiped the tears from his eyes. He didn't have time for this right now. Bruce was injured and he needed medical attention. Somehow Clark had to get the wounded man home. He could fly Bruce home, but he didn't feel comfortable touching Bruce right now. Not after...what happened. He doubted Bruce would feel comfortable with it either.

Clark could possibly fly to Gotham and carry the Batplane here. Then maybe Bruce could fly himself home. That could work. But Bruce was badly injured. Flying the Batplane might be too dangerous for him. What if he passed out while flying the plane?

With a sigh, Clark trudged back into the Fortress of Solitude. He needed to figure out something. He couldn't leave Bruce here.

Inside the fortress, Bruce was still huddled in the corner, shivering. Most of his Kevlar had been torn off. He was practically naked. Clark felt a stab of guilt and averted his gaze, unable to look at Bruce. Unable to look at all the damage he caused...

Superman took off his red cape and tossed it to Bruce. “Here.”

Bruce quickly wrapped the cape around himself. The poor guy must've been freezing. Even with the cape, Bruce was still shaking. He watched Clark with distrustful eyes.

“If you want, I can fly you home,” Clark offered reluctantly.

“No,” Bruce snapped.

Clark nodded in understanding. He had expected that. “If I bring the Batplane here, can you fly yourself home?”

“Yes,” Bruce answered tersely.

“Are you sure? You’re really hurt.”

“Just bring the damn plane,” he growled.
“Fine.” Clark turned and walked away.

He left the fortress and zoomed across the sky, heading back to Gotham as fast as possible. Within a few seconds, Clark arrived at the Batcave. Thankfully, the cave was empty. Clark couldn’t face Dick or Alfred right now. They would hate him so much if they knew what he had done. And Clark would deserve it.

After Superman grabbed the Batplane, he flew out of the cave. He soared through the sky while carrying the plane over his head. Clark rushed back to the Arctic and set the Batplane down on the snowy ground, near the Fortress of Solitude.

When Clark entered the fortress, he was surprised to see Bruce standing. Bruce had tied the red cape around his body like a toga and he was slowly moving across the room. While leaning against the wall, Bruce hopped on his good foot towards the exit. Clark knew Bruce had to be in an excruciating amount of pain. Batman was so tough. It was truly amazing.

For a moment, Bruce almost lost his balance. Clark stepped toward him, reaching a hand out to help.

“Don’t!” Bruce hissed.

Clark froze and quickly pulled his hand away. “I-I’m sorry.”

Bruce stared at him and sighed. “I’m still carrying the ring. You shouldn’t get too close to me.”

Clark nodded, feeling guilty. “You’re right. I’m sorry.”

“Is the plane outside?” Bruce asked.

“Yes.”

“Good.” Bruce hobbled past him, heading outside.

Clark stood at a safe distance while he watched Bruce hop to the Batplane and crawl inside. Then Bruce started the plane and took off into the sky. While Bruce piloted the plane, Clark flew in the air behind him. He was still worried that Bruce could potentially pass out. If something happened and Bruce lost control of the plane, Clark was ready to catch the aircraft.

It was a long flight back to Gotham. Clark flew at a leisurely pace while he followed the Batplane. His thoughts returned to Bruce’s injuries. With a heavy heart, Clark recalled how much Bruce had screamed and begged him to stop. Tears welled in his eyes again as Clark felt an indescribable sorrow. It felt like he had a huge gaping hole in his chest. It was so painful that Clark just wanted to die.

How could he hurt Bruce like that? Clark was a monster. An evil fucking monster. He deserved to die.

After Bruce flew the plane into the Batcave, Clark stopped in the air, hovering above Wayne Manor. Bruce was home safe. That was all that mattered right now. Bruce’s wellbeing… Clark didn’t give a damn about himself. The world would be a better place without Superman. Bruce would definitely be safer.

Clark flew back to Metropolis, tormented by his own thoughts.

SxB
After he landed the Batplane, Bruce stumbled out of the aircraft and collapsed on the floor. He groaned in pain while holding onto his broken arm. Everything hurt. His whole body felt bruised and beaten. With every breath, his broken ribs ached horribly. It was so difficult to breathe. He hoped he didn’t have a punctured lung.

Across the Batcave, Alfred was rushing towards him. “Master Bruce!”

The butler quickly kneeled by his side and helped Bruce sit up. “What happened? How badly are you injured?”

Bruce pulled out the red kryptonite ring and handed it to Alfred. “Take this. Lock it in the kryptonite vault. I’ll have to destroy it later.”

Alfred shoved the ring in his pocket. “This can wait. Tell me what happened.”

“No, it can’t wait,” Bruce snapped. “Lock it in the vault right now!”

“If you say so, Master Wayne.” Alfred frowned as he stood and walked toward the kryptonite vault.

The butler unlocked the vault with a secret passcode, then he placed the red kryptonite ring inside. After locking the vault again, Alfred hurried back to Bruce and kneeled beside him.

“Now will you tell me what happened, Master Wayne? Why did you leave without your utility belt? And what happened to your Batsuit?” Alfred’s eyes widened in horror as he stared at the red cloth wrapped around Bruce’s body. “Is that Superman’s cape?”

Bruce ignored all the questions and ordered, “Bring me some clothes from my room. I need to go to the hospital.”

“Where is Mr. Kent?” Alfred scowled darkly. “Did he do this to you?”

Bruce shut his eyes as a wave of dizziness hit him. He felt sick to his stomach like he was about to vomit. “Please, Alfred,” he muttered weakly. “Just get me some clothes.”

“We will talk about this later, Master Bruce.” The butler stormed away.

A few minutes later, Alfred returned to the Batcave with a pair of sweatpants and a baggy shirt. He handed the loose-fitting clothes to Bruce, then turned around. Alfred stood with his back facing Bruce, giving him privacy. By now, the butler knew better than to ask if Bruce wanted help getting dressed. No matter how much pain Bruce was in, he was always too stubborn to accept any help.

While sitting on the floor, Bruce untied the red cape and flung it aside. Then he struggled to pull the shirt over his head. He groaned in agony when he pulled his broken arm through a short sleeve. Next, he reached for the sweatpants and started to pull them on. When Bruce gazed down, he saw the bruises on his hip bones. The discoloration was in the shape of Clark’s hands. Another wave of nausea hit as Bruce shuddered. He finished yanking the pants on, but he couldn’t stop trembling.

“Master Bruce, are you decent?” Alfred glanced over his shoulder, then he noticed the way Bruce was shaking. “Master Bruce?” Alfred looked worried as he kneeled beside him.

Bruce forced himself to stop trembling. He couldn’t break down now. He still had matters to attend to. “W-Where is Dick?”

“He is out looking for you,” Alfred answered. “We were about to call the Justice League.”
“Don’t call them,” Bruce ordered. “I don’t want anyone to know about this, Alfred. That includes Dick.”

“How will we explain your injuries?”

“If Dick asks, I lost a fight with Bane. If anyone else asks, I crashed my private jet and I’m lucky to be alive.”

“Duly noted.” Alfred gritted his teeth as he asked angrily, “Is the alien beast still a threat to you?”

Alien beast? For a second, Bruce was confused until he realized that Alfred was referring to Clark. Apparently, he wasn’t Mr. Kent anymore. Just alien beast…

Bruce swallowed uncomfortably while looking away. “N-Not right now.”

Alfred’s gaze softened with sympathy. “I will help you into the manor. Then we need to call an ambulance.”

“Okay.”

Alfred stood and offered a hand to Bruce. “Can you stand, Master Bruce?”

“Y-Yeah.” Bruce took Alfred’s hand and struggled to stand on his good foot.

He groaned in pain while leaning against Alfred. It was going to be a long walk to the manor.

SxB

When Bruce opened his eyes, he could see sunlight coming through a window. He was in a hospital room with an IV pole next to his bed. His body was still sore, but the pain wasn’t nearly as bad. He was probably receiving morphine. Bruce raised his left arm and stared at the IV in his hand. His right arm was in a cast. Last night, Bruce must’ve passed out after Alfred called for an ambulance. He couldn’t remember the ride over here.

“Look, he’s awake!” Dick suddenly rushed into the room and sat next to Bruce’s hospital bed. “How are you feeling, Bruce?”

Bruce shrugged. “I’ve been better.”

“Yeah, I bet.” The teen smiled, looking so relieved.

Next, Alfred entered the room and stood behind Dick. “You’ve suffered a skull fracture, Master Wayne. The doctor insists on keeping you here for observation.”

Bruce frowned. “When can I go home?”

“That is the doctor’s decision, Master Wayne.” Alfred said sternly, “You will not leave the hospital until the doctor deems it safe.”

“Yeah, that’s right,” Dick agreed. “We’ll drag you back here if we have to.”

“Very well,” Bruce grumbled unhappily.

“So, what happened last night?” Dick asked. “Alfred said that you fought Bane.”

“Yeah, and I lost. It happens.” Bruce shrugged again, trying to act casual.
Dick gave him a suspicious look. “But why didn’t you bring your utility belt? I found it in the Batcave and thought you might’ve been kidnapped.”

“I left it on purpose,” Bruce lied. “I brought a new belt with me. It was a prototype I was testing.”

“And what happened to the new belt?”

“It exploded.”

Dick blinked in surprise. “Oh, shit.”

“Yeah. After the equipment failure, I was lucky to escape the fight alive. At least Bane didn’t break my back or cause any permanent damage,” Bruce continued to lie while Alfred stared at him disapprovingly.

Dick was silent for a while until he said, “I was just wondering… How did you leave the cave so fast? I know you didn’t take the Batmobile.”

Bruce swallowed nervously. “I took the Batplane.”

“But I saw the Batplane in the cave too.”

“I took the new Batplane,” Bruce lied.

“Oh, the new one,” Dick scoffed angrily. “Was it a prototype like the secret new belt you never told me about?”

Bruce sighed and looked away.

“I’m not an idiot. Tell me the truth,” Dick demanded.

Bruce shook his head. “There’s nothing to tell, Dick. I fought Bane and lost. End of story.”

“What the hell are you hiding?” Dick glared at him.

“Nothing.”

Dick crossed his arms indignanty. “I checked your utility belt this morning, and I found a piece of kryptonite missing. Care to explain that?”

“What?” Bruce’s eyes widened in shock.

“The kryptonite and its lead container are both gone. I know you always carry that on your belt. Why is it missing?”

Bruce could feel his heart pounding as his thoughts raced anxiously. His utility belt had been left inside the Batcave overnight. The only people who had access to the cave were Alfred, Dick, Barbara, and… Clark. Bruce froze in horror as he realized what had happened. Clark must’ve returned to the Batcave and stolen the green kryptonite. Bruce remembered how guilty and upset Clark had looked last night. Oh, no. Was Clark planning to…?

Dick watched him with a worried expression. “Bruce? Are you all right?”

“I’m sorry,” Bruce muttered. “I need to rest. Can you come back tomorrow?”

“Well, yeah,” Dick said reluctantly. “If that’s what you want.”
“Come along, Master Dick.” Alfred rested a hand on Dick’s shoulder.

“Alfred, can you leave your phone here?” Bruce asked. “I don’t have mine with me.”

“Of course, Master Wayne.” Alfred handed him the phone and ushered Dick out the door. “Sleep well. We’ll return tomorrow.”

As soon as Alfred and Dick left the room, Bruce dialed Clark’s number on the cellphone. Then he held the phone up to his ear and waited nervously.

A robotic message played, “We’re sorry. You have reached a number that is disconnected or no longer in service. If you feel you have reached this recording in error, please check the number and try-”

“God dammit, Clark!” Bruce hung up, panicking. He knew how fucked up Clark must be right now. Bruce never should’ve left him alone. Someone needed to check on Clark as soon as possible.

Bruce quickly dialed Lois’s number.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Lois sat at her desk inside her office. She was typing on her computer, working on her newest article. So far, it had been a fairly boring day. It was around noon, but Smallville still hadn’t come to work. Superman was probably busy, out saving the world. Ever since he joined the Justice League, it seemed like he was always missing work. Clark was lucky that Bruce owned the Daily Planet. Even though it was technically possible to fire Clark, it was heavily implied that there would be hell to pay.

When her phone rang, Lois glanced at the caller ID. It was a number that she didn’t recognize.

She answered the phone. “Hello?”

“Lois, where is Clark? Did he come to work today?” Bruce demanded.

With a sigh, Lois leaned back in her chair. “Hey, Bruce. I’m doing great. Thanks for asking,” she complained sarcastically. “If you wanna talk to your boyfriend, why don’t you call his phone?”

“Is he at the Daily Planet or not?!” Bruce shouted angrily.

She winced at his tone. “Jesus Christ. Calm down. No, he isn’t. Clark totally skipped work.” Lois paused, feeling worried. “Wait, is something wrong?”

“You need to find him. Go to his apartment.”

“Uh, Bruce, what’s going on?”

He revealed gravely, “I think Clark is planning to kill himself.”

Lois shot out of her chair, yelling, “What?! Why?!”

“It’s complicated. Just find him. Go to his apartment right now.”

“I’m going! I’m going!” Lois grabbed her purse and rushed out the door.

“Call me back if you find him.” Bruce hung up.
Lois ran into the elevator and descended to the first floor. Then she hurried out of the building and hailed down a cab. She jumped into the taxi and told the driver Clark’s address.

“Drive through all the stoplights and I’ll pay double. It’s an emergency,” she said frantically.

“Yes, Ma’am.” The taxi driver stomped his foot on the accelerator, then they sped down the street.

In the backseat of the taxi, Lois dug through her purse until she found the spare key to Clark’s apartment. Her heart was racing as she tightly gripped the key in her hand. Lois felt so scared that she could barely think straight. Please be alive, Smallville.

SxB

Clark sat at his kitchen table inside his apartment. On the table, there was a glowing piece of green kryptonite. Early in the morning, Clark had flown to the Batcave and taken the kryptonite from Bruce’s utility belt. Thankfully, the kryptonite was in a lead container when he found it. Otherwise, Clark wouldn’t have been able to carry it away.

Ever since last night, Clark had been planning how to end his own life. Now he had all of his affairs in order. He wrote his own will, leaving all of his money and belongings to his parents. He was sure that his Ma and Pa would want to bury his body at the Kent farm. They could use Clark’s money for the funeral so it wouldn’t burden them. Clark had also dressed for his own funeral. He was wearing a black suit, so no one would have to change his clothes after he died.

Clark reached a hand towards the kryptonite, then he felt faint like he was about to pass out. He pulled his hand away while leaning back in his chair. He felt light-headed and his whole body ached from being so close to the green kryptonite.

He planned to swallow the kryptonite. It would destroy him from the inside out, decimating all of his internal organs. It would be a painful death. A death he deserved…

Clark reached for the kryptonite again, but his hand fell on the table, too weak to reach its target. Damn it. Clark staggered to his feet and walked to the kitchen counter. He opened a drawer and took out a spoon. Then he sat back down at the table.

Using the spoon, Clark managed to scoop the kryptonite off the table. His hand shook and he grimaced in pain as he lifted the kryptonite towards his mouth. He just needed to swallow the kryptonite, then all of this would be over. This horrible nightmare would end.

Clark remembered Bruce’s screams and the fear in his eyes. This was the right thing to do. There was no coming back from what he had done. No redemption. No forgiveness. Clark had to die.

He opened his mouth, about to swallow the kryptonite.

Suddenly, the door swung open and Lois barged into the apartment. She ran towards Clark and smacked the spoon out of his hand. The kryptonite fell onto the floor next to Clark’s chair. No… Clark sadly gazed down at the glowing green rock. He had to reach the kryptonite. He had to end this.

“What the hell, Clark?!” Lois screamed at him, “Are you seriously trying to kill yourself?!”

“You don’t understand. I have to die.” Clark leaned to the side, trying to reach the kryptonite on the floor.

Lois furiously stomped on the kryptonite. “Suicide is never the answer! No matter what
Clark leaned against the kitchen table, trying to keep his balance. The whole room was spinning. He was about to fall over. “You don’t understand,” he muttered weakly.

“Then make me understand! Why would you want to kill yourself? What the fuck happened?!”

“I almost raped Bruce.”

“You what?” She gaped at him in shock.

“I kidnapped him, brutally beat him, and tried to rape him. Will you let me die now?” Clark stared at her with tears in his eyes.

Lois looked so confused. “W-Why? Why did you-?”

“The Joker exposed me to red kryptonite… Then I went berserk.”

“Red kryptonite makes you violent?”

“It makes me a monster. I-I can’t let it happen again, Lois. I have to die.” Tears streamed down his face as Clark begged, “Please understand. It’s the only way to protect Bruce. Please let me die.”

Clark finally lost his balance and fell from the chair. He felt so weak from being near the kryptonite. Everything faded out as he lost consciousness.
Lois begged Clark to live. Diana makes a promise.

Lois paced back and forth in Clark’s apartment, panicking. Clark was still unconscious on the floor and she had no idea what she was supposed to do. All of this felt so surreal. She couldn’t believe what Clark had told her. Clark had attacked Bruce? He had tried to rape Bruce? That couldn’t be right. Clark loved Bruce more than anything. And Clark would never do that someone. Clark was a good guy. A hero. Superman.

When she started feeling light-headed, Lois realized that she was hyperventilating. She forced herself to take a deep breath and sat down at the kitchen table.

“Oh, my God. This can’t be happening.” Lois held her face in her hands while she focused on slowing her breathing.

Clark had also mentioned red kryptonite. That stuff must’ve had a strong effect on him. Under normal circumstances, Lois knew that Clark would never ever attack Bruce. He couldn’t have been in his right mind.

Lois gazed down at Clark who was still laying on the floor. How long was he going to be out? Lois needed to do something before he woke up. But what?

She grabbed her purse and frantically took out her phone. She looked at her recent calls and found the number that Bruce had used. Then she called him back.

On the second ring, Bruce answered, “Lois, did you find him?”

“Y-Yeah,” Lois replied shakily. “You were right. He was about to kill himself. I stopped him.”

“What he is doing now?”

“He passed out. I think he was close to the kryptonite for too long,” she explained.

“Is he still suicidal?”

“Yeah, I think so.”

“Stay there and watch him,” Bruce ordered. “Keep the kryptonite close by, so he won’t be strong enough to leave. Tie him to a chair if you have to.”

She blinked in confusion. “What?”

“Don’t let him leave the apartment, Lois. If you let him, he’ll just find another way to kill himself.”

“So, I have to hold him captive?”

Bruce sighed. “Do you have any better ideas?”
“N-No,” she admitted.

“Make him listen to you. Try to talk some sense into him.”

“Maybe you should talk to him.”

Bruce paused for a moment. “I can’t.”

Lois winced guiltily. “Shit. I’m sorry. This has to be really hard for you too. Clark told me what happened…with the red kryptonite.”

“Did he say how he came in contact with it?” Bruce asked.

“Yeah. It was the Joker.”

There was complete silence on the phone.

She swallowed anxiously. “Bruce? Bruce, are you still there?”

“Of course. Fucking Joker,” he growled. He sounded furious, but his voice was also trembling like he was on the verge of crying.

“Are you okay?”

“Just take care of Clark.” Bruce hung up abruptly.

Lois glanced down at Clark, who was still unconscious on the floor. She needed to hurry before he woke up. Lois stood and searched through the kitchen. Since she was going to follow Bruce’s advice, she needed to find something to tie Clark up with.

When Clark awoke, his head was pounding and he felt incredibly weak. He was sitting at the kitchen table and Lois was seated across from him. She was watching him with pity in her eyes. Clark avoided her gaze and tried to move from the chair. Then he realized that his arms were trapped behind his back. What the hell? He was tied to the chair with electrical cord. Clark struggled against the restraints until Lois tossed the piece of green kryptonite on the table.

“Don’t even think about escaping, Smallville. I can’t leave you alone right now.”

Clark winced in pain as he felt the kryptonite draining his strength. “Lois, what is this?”

“Suicide watch.” She crossed her arms. “I’m staying here until you start thinking clearly.”

“I am thinking clearly. I need to die.”

“No!” Lois snapped angrily. “Don’t talk like that. I understand that you’re depressed, Clark. But you can’t kill yourself. I won’t let you.”

“I deserve to die for what I did,” Clark argued.

“You weren’t in your right mind when you attacked Bruce. The red kryptonite was affecting you, right? You’re still a good person.”

Clark shook his head sadly. “No, I’m not. I’m a monster.”
Lois sighed, then stood up. “Well, it looks like I’m going to be here for a while. Do you have anything to eat?” She walked across the kitchen and opened the refrigerator, glancing inside.

While she took out a frozen pizza, Clark glared at her. “You didn’t see me when I was exposed to the red kryptonite. You don’t understand what I’m capable of.”

“We’re all capable of doing bad things, Smallville. That includes saints like you.” Lois placed the frozen pizza in the oven and started cooking it.

“Hmph. I’m no saint.” Clark grumbled, “I can never forgive myself for hurting Bruce.”

“You said the same thing after the Joker drugged you with fear toxin.”

Clark frowned. “This is different.”

“How?” Lois demanded as she crossed her arms. “You were under the influence of something else. It sounds pretty much the same to me.”

“When I was drugged with fear toxin, I was hallucinating. But this time, I…” Clark tilted his head down in shame. “I hunted Bruce down and hurt him because I wanted to.”

“Bullshit. You would never want to hurt Bruce.”

“But I have to wonder…”

“Wonder what?”

“How much of it was the red kryptonite and how much was just…me,” he said fearfully. “What if that’s really who I am?”

“Oh, Clark.” Lois gave him a sympathetic look and sat down next to him at the table. “I know you. Trust me, you’re a good man. Maybe the red kryptonite took your desires and twisted them into something sick and wrong. But that isn’t on you. You weren’t in your right mind.”

Clark sat in silence for a while, mulling over what Lois had said. He wanted to believe her. He truly wished he was still a good person… But he wasn’t sure if that was possible. A good person would never do what he had done. Maybe the red kryptonite didn’t turn him into a monster. Maybe he was already a monster on the inside.

After twenty minutes, the pizza was done. Lois took the pizza out of the oven, then prepared two plates of food. She sat down at the table and set a plate in front of Clark.

“Have you eaten at all today?” she asked.

“No.”

Lois picked up a slice of pizza and held it up to his face. “Come on. Eat.”

“I’m not hungry,” Clark muttered.

“I won’t eat until you do.” She stubbornly kept the pizza in front of his face. “Are you really gonna let me starve, Smallville?”

Clark sighed and took a bite of the pizza. After he ate the entire slice, Lois started eating the pizza on her plate. When she offered him another slice, Clark silently shook his head and she didn’t push it. Once Lois was done eating, she grabbed the two plates and walked to the sink. She washed the
dishes before sitting back down at the table.

Lois looked at him expectantly. “Well? Have you come to your senses yet?”

“Even if I’m not to blame…” Clark asked, “What happens if I’m exposed to red kryptonite again?”

She shifted uncomfortably. “We-We’ll deal with it.”

“The way I attacked Bruce was so brutal. I could’ve easily killed him. I can’t let that happen.” He said decisively, “I’m sorry, but I have to die. It’s the right thing to do.”

“No, it’s not. We’ll figure out a way to deal with the red kryptonite. You don’t have to die,” she argued.

“I’m sorry, Lois. But you can’t watch me forever. I’ve made up my mind. I will kill myself. It’s only a matter of time.”

“You selfish asshole!” Lois shot from her chair as she yelled, “Do you have any idea how many people you’ll hurt if you kill yourself?! What about your parents? What about all the people who love you? You know, Bruce doesn’t want you to die either. He’s the one who sent me here! He still cares about you.”

_Bruce sent her?_ Clark felt a modicum of hope, but he quickly stamped it out. “Bruce is a good person. He doesn’t want anyone to die. Even the people who deserve it.”

“But you don’t deserve it!”

“Yes, I do!” he yelled back.

“And what gives you the right to decide that?! Your life affects other people. What about all the good you do? What about the Justice League?”

“Bruce can lead the Justice League. They’ll be fine without me.”

“I won’t!” Lois screamed with tears in her eyes. She looked so devastated. Lois held her face in her hands as she broke down and cried. “You’re my best friend. I don’t want you to die.”

Clark watched her guiltily. He felt horrible. It broke his heart to see her like this. “Lois, I’m sorry. Please stop crying.”

She wiped at her eyes, but the tears continued to fall. “Do you love your friends, Clark? Do you love your parents?”

“Of course, I do.”

“Then don’t hurt them like this. Don’t kill yourself. Please,” Lois begged. “If you won’t live for yourself, can you please live for me? Live for everyone who loves you.”

Clark hesitated for a moment. He envisioned his Ma and Pa standing over his grave, crying. His parents didn’t deserve that. They would suffer just like Lois was suffering. Clark didn’t want to cause any more pain. He had already hurt Bruce. He couldn’t bear hurting anyone else he loved.

“I…I’ll try. For you.” Clark caved in, “I’ll try to live.”

_SxB_
Alone in the hospital room, Bruce sat on his bed, in the dark. He had closed the curtains and he had pulled the IV from his hand. He didn’t want any more morphine. It would only cloud his thoughts, and the pain kept him focused. Bruce stared down at the phone in his lap. He was still waiting to hear back from Lois. He hoped she’d be able to handle Clark on her own. If the situation had been different, Bruce would’ve gone to help Clark himself, but…

He couldn’t face Clark right now.

His body still ached where Clark had hit him. His ribs hurt, his right arm hurt, his left ankle hurt, his neck hurt, his hips hurt. Everything fucking hurt. But it was nothing compared to the hollow pain in his chest at the mere thought of Clark’s face. Bruce recognized this pain all too well.

Loss… He had lost Clark. Even if Clark recovered from this, nothing would ever be the same between them. Bruce couldn’t stomach touching Clark now. And Clark could barely even look at him. What they had was gone… Taken away by the Joker.

The fucking Joker. To acquire the red kryptonite, the Joker must’ve had help. Red kryptonite was extremely hard to find. But Bruce could think of someone who had the money and resources to get it. Lex Luthor must’ve teamed up with the Joker. Now Batman and Superman’s enemies were working together. This was the second time that the Joker had targeted Superman. There had to be a reason for that.

The Joker must’ve known how much Batman cared about Superman. Just like Bruce feared, his relationship with Clark had been used against him. Bruce should’ve seen this coming. He did see something like this coming. Yet, he failed to stop it.

Bruce had failed. Again. Now Clark was so fucked up that he was trying to take his own life.

Tears welled in his eyes until they spilled down his face. Bruce didn’t bother to wipe the tears away. He was alone. There was no one around that he had to appear strong for. Minutes passed as more and more tears fell. He couldn’t stop crying. He didn’t even try.

Bruce remembered how hopeful he had been yesterday. Before the attack, he had been so excited. So happy. And so fucking stupid.

He choked back a sob. Bruce didn’t want to cry too loudly.

How could he be dumb enough to actually think he could have Clark? It was doomed to fail from the start. Batman couldn’t have relationships. Bruce knew that. And he still placed himself and Clark at risk. Bruce should’ve pushed Clark away a long time ago, but he didn’t.

Now everything was ruined. If Clark actually kills himself over this… Bruce didn’t know what he would do.

When the phone rang in his lap, Bruce quickly answered the call.

“L-Lois.” He cleared his throat, trying to sound normal. “How is Clark?”

“He’s awake. I talked to him for a long time, and he’s calmer now.” Lois explained. “Clark said that he’ll try to live. I think that’s probably the best we’re going to get.”

Bruce let out a sigh of relief. “Good… That’s good, Lois. Thank you.”

“It’s a step in the right direction. Clark is still really upset.” She asked worriedly, “How are you doing, Bruce? Are you okay?”
“I’m fine,” he lied.

“You sound like you’ve been crying.”

Bruce immediately hung up.

SxB

In Metropolis, Superman stood on top of a tall building, overlooking the city. He had stayed up all night and now the sun was rising. The sky was a mixture of different shades of pink and purple.

Clark took in a deep breath, trying to find some semblance of peace. At least now he had a plan. If he was going to live, there was something he needed to take care of first.

Lois was still at his apartment, sleeping on the couch. After she had fallen asleep, Clark had left the apartment and headed to LexCorp. Last night, Superman had broken into Luthor’s armory, where he stole a valuable piece of equipment. A special kind of weapon.

Clark held the sheathed sword in his hand, studying it. The sheath was made of lead and the blade was created by Luthor himself. This weapon was built for a single purpose. Killing Superman.

Soon, Clark spotted Wonder Woman in the sky. She was piloting her invisible jet and appeared to be sitting on nothing but air. Clark had called her earlier and she had agreed to meet him here.

After Diana landed her jet on the roof of the building, she jumped out and walked towards him. “It’s early, Superman. What’s wrong?”

“I need to talk to you about something,” he replied.

“It couldn’t wait for the weekly meeting?”

“No…” Clark sighed. “I won’t be attending the Justice League meeting.”

Diana gave him a worried look. “Batman won’t be attending either. Is this related?”

Clark blinked in surprise. “You’ve heard from Batman?”

“Yes, he just sent a message to everyone. He said he’ll miss the meeting this week because he’s being hospitalized.”

“Did he say how he was hurt?”

“He was injured during a fight with Bane.”

_Bane_? Superman frowned while shaking his head. “That’s not what happened.”

“What do you mean?”

“I attacked Batman,” Clark admitted.

Her eyes widened in shock. “You attacked him? Why? I don’t understand. He is your friend! Why would you-?!”

“The Joker exposed me to red kryptonite.”

“What’s red kryptonite?” she asked, looking confused.
“It’s a different kind of kryptonite,” Clark explained. “It doesn’t weaken me. It...changes me. I do horrible things when I’m exposed to it. And I would rather die than touch red kryptonite again.”

Diana nodded with determination. “We must find all of this red kryptonite and destroy it.”

“That’s not so easy. It’s difficult to find. But somehow the Joker got his hands on it. He could have more.”

“Then we shall find the Joker and make him talk.” She placed her hand on her hip, gripping the Lasso of Truth.

“Diana... That’s not why I asked to meet you,” he said solemnly.

“You have a different plan?”

“I need you to do something for me.” Clark handed her the sheathed sword.

She took the weapon and pulled the blade from its sheath. Clark instantly felt weaker as he grimaced in pain. The blade had glowing green lines of kryptonite welded into the metal. Diana quickly sheathed the sword, covering the kryptonite. Clark’s physical discomfort disappeared as soon as the blade was encased in lead.

“Where did you find this?” Diana demanded.

“I took it from LexCorp. If I’m exposed to red kryptonite again, I want you to kill me.”

Wonder Woman paled with a horrified expression on her face. Then she shoved the sword towards him. “No. I can’t.”

“Diana, please. I’m sorry. But you’re the only one who can do it,” Clark pleaded. “Batman would never kill me. He can’t. He doesn’t believe in killing. But you’re a god killer. You killed Ares, didn’t you? If you can kill a god, I know you’re strong enough to kill me. Especially with this sword.”

She glared at him. “I will not kill a friend.”

“I’m asking you to do this as a friend. For me, being affected by red kryptonite is worse than death.”

“Then I shall destroy red kryptonite, not you.”

Clark sighed. “There’s no guarantee that we could ever find it all. The threat of red kryptonite will always be hanging over my head. I can’t live like that. I need to know that someone will kill me if I’m exposed to red kryptonite again. Please give me that peace of mind.”

“And if I say no?”

“Then I can’t live,” he said gravely.

“So, either I kill you or you kill yourself?!” She snapped angrily. “That isn’t a fair choice, Clark.”

“I know. And I’m sorry to put you in this situation. But I need this. I can only live if I know Batman and everyone else will be safe from me. Please, Diana.” Clark insisted, “When... If I’m exposed to red kryptonite again, you have to kill me.”

She sadly lowered her gaze. “This is what you need...”
“Yes.” He said seriously, “More than anything.”

After a moment of hesitation, Diana took the sheathed sword. “I’ll protect everyone if you come in contact with red kryptonite again. And if I must, I will kill you. As a last resort.” A single tear streaked down her cheek as she vowed, “You are one of my dearest friends. So, even though it pains me, I will do this for you. I promise.”

Relieved, Clark gave her a small smile. “Thank you, Diana.”
Unwanted Visitor

Chapter Summary

Hal visits Bruce at the hospital

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the comments and kudos!! Love you guys <3

Late at night, Superman hovered in the sky, outside Gotham General Hospital. He could hear Bruce’s steady heartbeat inside the building. Thankfully, the curtains to Bruce’s hospital room were closed, so the vigilante couldn’t see him.

Clark let out a long sigh. He had been in Gotham all night, keeping the city safe. Ever since the local villains figured out that Batman was gone, the crime rate had spiked. Superman felt obligated to protect Batman’s territory. After all, it was his fault that Bruce was injured. Babysitting Gotham was the least Superman could do.

In the corner of his eye, Clark spotted a burst of green light and glanced to the side. Green Lantern was flying towards him.

“Hey, Supes!” Hal smiled while hovering in the air next to him. “What’s up? Did you come to visit Spooky?”

Clark looked away uncomfortably. “No. Batman is resting.”

“Is Batman in there?” Hal stared at the hospital with interest and pointed at the room with closed curtains. “Is that his room?”

“Stop! Let go! Help! Somebody help me!” A woman screamed frantically on the other side of Gotham.

“I have to go.” Superman zoomed away, flying towards the woman in distress.

SxB

In the hospital room, Bruce laid in bed with his eyes shut. He had been trying to sleep for hours, but he was still wide awake. His thoughts kept circling back to Clark. Bruce wondered how the hero was doing. Part of him wanted to call Lois again, but he couldn’t deal with her right now. She’d always ask Bruce if he was okay, and treat him like a victim. Bruce didn’t want her fucking pity. He just wanted an update on Clark.

How was Clark handling everything? Was he recovering? Did he still blame himself? Did he still want to die?

Bruce could feel his heart pounding in his chest. He was too anxious to sleep. He wanted to see
Clark, but he knew that was a bad idea. He couldn’t see Clark. Not now. With his broken bones and bruises. Looking at Bruce now would only make Clark feel worse. Bruce needed to heal first. He needed to appear strong and show Clark that he was totally fine. Because Bruce was fine…

Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice. “Hey, Spooky!”

Bruce instantly opened his eyes and sat up. Green Lantern was standing in his room, next to the open window.

“Holy shit. Is that really you?” Hal gaped at him in surprise. “So, this is the big secret? You’re Bruce Wayne.”

Bruce huffed in annoyance. He was not in the mood for this. “Go away, Hal.”

Instead of leaving, Hal sat in the chair next to Bruce’s bed. “I can’t believe it’s you. I mean, you’re so young. I always thought you were a grouchy old man underneath that cowl. But you’re only a couple years older than me.”

“Is there a point to this conversation?” Bruce grumbled.

“And you’re a playboy too!” Hal laughed in amusement. “That’s so crazy. Is it true that you’ve banged over a hundred women?”

“No.”

“Oh.” Hal looked a little disappointed.

“More like fifty,” Bruce admitted.

“Damn, Spooky!” Hal grinned. “Were they hot? Were they all models?” He quickly changed his mind. “No, don’t tell me. It’ll just make me jealous.”

“Hal, if you don’t have a reason for being here, I’d rather be left alone.”

“I’m just checking on you, man.” Hal crossed his arms while staring at Bruce’s injuries. “Bane really whooped your ass.”

Bruce glared at him. “Well, as you can see, I’m still alive. Now go.”

“Fine. Whatever.” Hal stood and walked towards the window. “I’ll leave you to your brooding.”

“I’m not brooding.”


Green Lantern flew out the window, leaving Bruce alone in the room.

SXB

It was time for the weekly meeting. At the Watchtower, Green Lantern walked down the hall and entered the conference room. Then he sat down next to Flash. All the other Justice League members were already seated at the round table, except for Batman and Superman. Hal knew that Bruce was still at the hospital. But where was Clark?

“Let’s begin the meeting,” Wonder Woman announced.
“Shouldn’t we wait for Supes?” Flash asked.

Diana shifted uncomfortably in her chair. “Superman…needed some time off. He won’t be coming.”

“I was under the impression that these meetings were mandatory,” Aquaman complained. “I understand that Batman is injured. But what is Superman’s excuse?”

“He needed the time off.” Diana snapped, “He does not owe you an explanation.”

Aquaman glared at her while Martian Manhunter scolded them, “This hostility is not necessary.”

Hal spoke up, “I saw Clark last night and he seemed all right. Batman, on the other hand, looked like shit.”

Barry looked surprised. “You saw Batman?”

“Yeah, I found his hospital room.” Hal smirked proudly as he bragged, “I know his secret identity now. I’d tell you, but it’s private, you know.”

“Is he Bruce Wayne?” Barry asked abruptly.

“What?” Hal’s eyes widened in shock. “How did you know that?”

“I had a hunch.” Barry explained, “Back before we formed the league, there were some articles about Bruce Wayne dating Clark.”

“They were dating?!” Hal screeched in disbelief.

“Well, I don’t know about that. I think it was just gossip. But Bruce and Clark were definitely spotted together.” Barry sighed. “Their relationship is way more complicated than you’d think.”

Diana nodded in agreement. “Yes, very complicated. I worry for them both.”

“Wait.” Hal dramatically held up both hands. “Did everyone here already know that Bruce Wayne is Batman?”

“I suspected.” Diana shrugged.

“Me too,” Arthur admitted.

“I have telepathy, so I always knew,” J’onn revealed.

“Seriously?!?” Hal yelled in frustration. “I’m the last one to figure it out?”

All the other league members either shrugged or looked away silently.

“Oh, this is bullshit!” Hal huffed while crossing his arms.

SxB

That night, Green Lantern stood on the roof of a tall building, across from Gotham General Hospital. He stared at the window to Bruce’s room, unsure of what to do. After the Justice League meeting, Hal had flown back to Gotham, where he spent most of the day hunting down Bane. Hal had decided to beat up the villain who attacked Batman. He figured that would put him on better terms with the Dark Knight.
There was only one problem… Bane wasn’t the one who attacked Bruce.

Hal clenched his fists while he remembered his conversation with the villain. With his weird-ass distorted voice, Bane had laughed when he heard Batman was badly injured. Bane had denied attacking Batman and said that he wished he had ‘broken the Bat’. It seemed like Bane actually wanted to take credit for hurting Bruce, yet he didn’t. Hal believed that the bastard was telling the truth.

But if Bane didn’t attack Bruce, then who did? And why did Bruce lie about it?

Hal needed to know. Determined, he flew off the roof, heading towards Bruce’s window. Hal opened window and entered the dark hospital room. Bruce was laying in bed, thrashing from side to side. His eyes were shut tightly and he was grimacing like he was pain. Was he having a nightmare?

Worried, Hal slowly approached the bed. “Hey, Bruce.”

Bruce continued to jerk and shake in his sleep. It almost looked like he was trying to fight someone.

“Come on. Wake up.” Hal grabbed Bruce’s shoulder.

Suddenly, Bruce shot up and snatched Hal by the throat. “Don’t touch me!”

Hal choked, unable to breathe. Then Bruce blinked a few times as he woke up.

He stared at Hal in surprise and finally released him. “Oh, it’s you.”

“Yeah, it’s me!” Hal coughed while holding onto his aching neck. “What the fuck, Bruce?”

“You shouldn’t sneak into my room.”

“I wasn’t sneaking!” Hal rasped. “I just came here to visit. Remind me to never wake you again, psycho.”

Bruce gave him an irritated look. “I never asked you to visit.”

“Well, too bad. We need to talk.” Hal sat in the chair next to Bruce’s bed.

“About what?”

“I spoke to Bane. I know he didn’t beat your ass, so who did?”

Bruce immediately tensed, looking uncomfortable. “It’s none of your business.”

“Yeah, it is,” Hal argued. “It’s the whole league’s business. Anyone who can hurt you this badly is a serious threat. We should know about it.”

“I can deal with it on my own.”

“Obviously, you can’t. That’s why you got your ass handed to you,” Hal said harshly.

Bruce glared at him. “Get out of my room.”

“Just tell me what happened.”
“No. Get out.”

Hal stubbornly crossed his arms. “I’m not going anywhere until you talk to me. Who hurt you? He must’ve been really strong.”

“Get. Out.”

“Does anyone know the truth about what happened? At the very least, you told Clark, didn’t you? He knows, right?”

“Don’t you dare talk to Clark about this,” Bruce growled.

“So, he does know?” Hal stood and headed towards the window. “Fuck it. I’ll just ask him.”

“Wait!”

Hal stopped and turned around. “What?”

Bruce looked genuinely scared as he pleaded, “Please leave Clark alone.”

Hal gaped at him disbelief. Please? He wasn’t sure if he heard that correctly. Batman would never beg for anything. Something was seriously wrong. “What the hell is going on with you?”

“I’ll tell you what happened if you promise to leave Clark alone.”

“Okay, fine. I promise.” Hal walked back to the chair and sat down. “So, what happened?”

Bruce hesitated before saying, “The Joker exposed Clark to red kryptonite…”

“What?” Hal gave him a confused look. “What’s red kryptonite?”

“It takes away Clark’s control, his conscience. He can’t control himself when he’s exposed to it.”


Bruce sighed. “Yes, but it’s not his fault.”

“Shit. And, this red kryptonite is just out there, laying around?”

“Yes, unfortunately. I destroy red kryptonite whenever I find it. But there’s still some I haven’t located.”

“I can find it for you,” Hal offered. “I’ll look everywhere.”

“Red kryptonite is not easy to find. It’s extremely rare.”

“I’ll find it, Spooky. Don’t worry. You can count on me,” Hal said reassuringly.

Bruce gave him a small smile. “Thanks.”

Hal blinked in surprise. “Did you just thank me?” He poked Bruce in the head. “Wow. Clark must’ve hit you really hard.”

“Shut up, Lantern.” Bruce smacked his hand away.

“I still don’t get it though. Why would Clark attack you? You’re like his best friend. Why didn’t he attack Luthor or someone he hates?”
Bruce avoided his gaze. “I don’t know.”

Hal leaned closer and touched the dark bruise on Bruce’s throat. “Damn. Did he choke you out too?”

Bruce quickly slapped his hand away. He glared at Hal while trembling slightly. “Back off.”

Hal froze, staring at him in alarm. Something seemed off. He remembered what Bruce had screamed when he first woke up. “Don’t touch me!” Suddenly, Hal was struck by a disturbing thought.

“When Clark attacked you, did he say anything?”

“Hal, just drop it,” Bruce snarled.

He cautiously reached a hand towards Bruce. Then Bruce smacked his hand away again.

“What did Clark do to you?” Hal asked in horror.

“I told you. He attacked me.”

“Is that all he did?”

Bruce paled, looking anxious. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“I think you do.” Hal threatened, “Tell me or I’ll ask Clark.”

Bruce glared at him with hatred burning in his eyes. “You fucking asshole.”

“Tell me what happened.”

“He tried to rape me,” Bruce snapped angrily. “Are you satisfied now? Will you leave me the fuck alone?”

“Oh, my God.” Hal felt guilty for prying. “Bruce, I-I’m sorry. Are you okay?”

“Don’t talk to me like that,” Bruce hissed.

“Like what? Like I care?”

“Just go away.”

Hal shot out of his chair, full of righteous anger. He tightly clenched his fists while pacing back and forth. “I don’t understand you, Bruce. I’m trying to help and you push me away. But you protect the man who tried to rape you?!”

“Clark isn’t responsible for what happened,” Bruce argued.

“Bullshit! I don’t believe it!” Hal yelled furiously. “A piece of kryptonite can’t turn someone into a rapist. He must’ve wanted to do that already.”

“Hal, shut up. You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Hitting you is one thing. But rape? I don’t give a shit what Clark’s excuse is. He should pay for what he did!”

“No, he shouldn’t. And you will leave him the hell alone!” Bruce yelled back.
“Clark tried to rape you!” Hal shouted in frustration. “Why are you still protecting him?! You must be fucked up in the head.”

“Get out! NOW!” Bruce screamed at the top of his lungs.

“Mr. Wayne, is everything all right?” A female voice called from the hallway.

Now footsteps were approaching the door. For a moment, Hal and Bruce glared at each other. Then Hal quickly flew out of the window before a nurse could enter the room.
The Meeting

Chapter Summary

Bruce calls for a meeting. Clark tries to quit the Justice League

At Wayne Manor, Bruce sat in a chair by the fireplace, drinking scotch. It was 9:30 PM and normally Batman would be on patrol by now. Unfortunately, he was still too injured to go out and protect Gotham. A month had passed since the attack. Bruce wasn’t in the hospital anymore but he was still recovering. His left ankle and his ribs were mostly healed. However, his right arm was still in a cast.

Bruce took another sip of the scotch. He preferred alcohol over the pain medication. He didn’t need any damn pills. His body just needed to hurry up and heal. At times like these, Bruce was envious of the heroes with powers. Usually, they could heal so fucking fast.

He sulked in silence until Alfred walked into the study.

“You have a visitor, Master Wayne,” the butler announced unexpectedly,

“What?” Bruce set down the glass of scotch and stood. “Who?”


Suddenly, a green light shined in the doorway as Hal entered the dark room.

“Hey, Bruce.” Hal smiled nervously. “Can we talk?”

Bruce glared at him, surging with anger.

“I will leave you two gentlemen alone.” Alfred quickly excused himself and left the room.

“What do you want, Lantern?” Bruce growled.

Hal sighed and shifted uncomfortably on his feet. “Before you start yelling at me, I just wanted to say I’m sorry. Given what you’ve been through… I should’ve been nicer or whatever. Also, I brought a peace offering.”

He held up a glowing piece of red kryptonite. Bruce’s eyes widened in shock as he hurried towards Hal and took the kryptonite.

“Where did you find this?” Bruce held the red kryptonite in his hand, studying it.

“At a LexCorp warehouse. I scanned it with my ring. It’s the real deal.”

Bruce gave him a grateful look. “Thank you.”

“No problem.” Hal rubbed the back of his neck while looking away. He seemed a little embarrassed as he confessed, “I know I give you a lot of shit, but I actually do care.”

“I know.” Bruce smiled and walked to a statue on the other side of the room. He pressed a hidden
button on the statue, then a bookcase flipped around, revealing a secret entryway.

Bruce headed towards the passageway. ‘I’m going to the Batcave. You coming?’

Hal grinned excitedly. ‘Oh, hell yeah. I wanna see the Batcave.’

At the secret entryway, Bruce gabbed onto a pole and slid down to the Batcave. Hal flew down behind him.

In the Batcave, Bruce walked towards a table and set the kryptonite down. Then he pulled out a container of sulfuric acid. Bruce dropped the piece of red kryptonite into the acid and watched it disintegrate. A sense of peace washed over him as the acid bubbled, destroying the red kryptonite. This was the best Bruce has felt all month.

While he focused on the acid, Hal wandered around the Batcave, staring at all of Batman’s gadgets. After the red kryptonite was destroyed, Bruce closed the container of acid and put it away.

“Have you told anyone what we talked about?” Bruce asked.

“You mean, did I run around and tell everyone that you were almost raped?” Hal huffed indignantly. “No. Of course, not. I’m not that much of an asshole. I figured you didn’t want people knowing.”

“Have you spoken to Clark?”


Hal made stabbing motions with the shiv, then Batman snatched it away. “Give me that. You won’t be shanking anyone.”

“Aw. You’re no fun,” Hal complained.

“Idiot.” Bruce headed towards the kryptonite vault and unlocked it with a secret combination.

When the vault opened, a green light shined into the cave, glowing from the pounds of kryptonite. Bruce placed the piece of sharpened green kryptonite on a shelf, then he closed the vault.


“I could, but I never will.” Bruce turned to face Green Lantern as he spoke seriously, “I can fight my own battles, Hal. If I really wanted revenge, I’d do it myself. But I don’t blame Clark for what happened, so I won’t tolerate any retaliation against him. Do you understand?”

Hal protested, “But he tried to-!”

“I know what happened, Hal!” Bruce snapped, “I was there. You weren’t. Trust me, I have a better understanding of the situation.”

“Fine… Just know that I have your back. And if you ever change your mind, I’d totally shank Superman for you,” Hal offered.

Bruce let out a sigh of exasperation. “I’m sure you would.”
Superman flew to the Watchtower and entered the space station. He felt sick to his stomach as he walked down the long hallway, passing by several windows that overlooked Earth from orbit. It has been two months since Harley Quinn slipped that red kryptonite ring on his finger. Two months since Clark brutally attacked Bruce.

Earlier today, Batman had sent out a message to everyone in the Justice League, calling for a meeting. Clark hadn’t seen him at all since that day at the Fortress of Solitude. Part of Clark wanted to see Bruce. He hoped the Dark Knight was healing well and doing okay. Another, more cowardly, part of Clark wanted to turn tail and run. How could he face Bruce after what he did?

Clark had been avoiding the other members of the Justice League too. He had skipped the meetings for months. Diana was the only member he kept in contact with. But Clark had decided to come to the meeting today. It was time to stop hiding. Even though it would be painful, he had to see Bruce again. He needed to make sure Bruce was okay.

While Clark walked, he spotted Batman and Green Lantern down the hall. They were heading towards the conference room too. Bruce was dressed in his Batsuit with his black cape draped over his shoulders. His left arm was visible, but he was hiding his right arm behind his cape. Using his X-ray vision, Clark quickly scanned Bruce’s body. Most of Bruce’s injuries were healed, but the bones in his right arm were still recovering.

For a second, Clark and Bruce locked eyes, staring at each other. Then Bruce hurried into the conference room.

Clark let out a breath that he didn’t know he was holding. His heart was pounding from just seeing Bruce. He tried to calm down while Hal marched towards him.

Hal leaned close to him and hissed, “I know what you did, you sick fucker. Stay away from Bruce.”

Clark froze in shock. He felt like he was punched in the gut while his blood ran cold. Then Hal turned and walked into the conference room. Now Clark was alone in the hallway. Tears sprang to his eyes, but he quickly blinked the moisture away, refusing to cry.

“You sick fucker. Stay away from Bruce.” Hal’s words replayed in his head over and over, tormenting him.

I can’t do this. Clark turned and walked away. He couldn’t go to the meeting. He just couldn’t do it. He wanted to see Bruce and he did. Physically, Bruce was healing at a normal rate as expected. That’s all that mattered. Now Clark needed to leave.

When Clark turned around a corner, he bumped into Wonder Woman in the hallway.

“Sorry.” He hurried past her.

“Wait. Where are you going?” Diana grabbed his arm, stopping him.

“Back to Metropolis,” he muttered.

“But the meeting is about to start.” She tugged on his arm. “You must attend. You are our leader.”

Clark shook his head. “I can’t.”
Diana gave him a sympathetic look. “What happened with Batman was not your fault. I’m sure he knows that.”

Clark sadly lowered his gaze, unable to look at her.

“Come. I will be by your side.” She pulled on his arm again with more force.

He stumbled forward while Diana led him down the hallway, back towards the conference room.

When they entered the meeting room, everyone else was already seated at the round table. Hal was sitting in Superman’s chair, next to Bruce.

Diana snarled, “Lantern, you are in Superman’s spot.”

“So?” Hal crossed his arms defiantly.

Batman sighed, looking annoyed. “Hal, move.”

“No. No, it’s fine.” Clark quickly sat down in Green Lantern’s chair, next to Flash.

Diana glared at Hal while sitting down at her usual spot. They all sat at the round table in silence, the air heavy with tension.

Then Batman finally broke the silence. “As you all know, I have been unavailable due to my injuries. I am better now, and we will continue our weekly meetings. Today is just business as usual. For the past few weeks, I’ve been monitoring our deep space scanners and found that-”

“Ex-Excuse me,” Clark interrupted him. “Can I say something?”

“What is it?” Bruce asked.

Everyone at the table stared at Superman expectantly.

Clark swallowed nervously and announced, “This will be the last meeting I’ll attend. I’m quitting the Justice League.”

Flash gaped at him in disbelief. “What? Why?!”

“That is most unfortunate,” Martian Manhunter said solemnly.


Diana hissed at Hal, “Shut your mouth before I shut it for you.”

Aquaman looked confused. “What is going on? Why do you want to quit?”

“Personal reasons,” Clark muttered.

Batman shot out his chair and ordered, “Superman, meet me outside. Now.”

When Bruce stormed out of the room, Clark reluctantly followed him. They walked down the hall until they were out of earshot of the conference room. This was the first time they’ve been alone in two months. Clark waited anxiously while Bruce whipped around and glared at him.

“You can’t quit. We had a deal. You said you’d be the leader if I helped you.”

Clark sighed. “Do you really think we can still work together?”
“Why can’t we?”

“Because I…” Clark gave him a concerned look. “Bruce, you can’t pretend that it didn’t happen.”

“What? You expect me to play the crying, sniveling victim?” Bruce growled angrily, “That isn’t who I am, Clark. Bad things happen to me all the time. I move on because I have to. I’m Batman.”

“Bruce…” Worried, Clark reached a hand towards him.

Before Clark could touch him, Bruce flinched as his heart rate spiked. Clark instantly pulled his hand away, feeling guilty. He could hear Bruce’s heart racing. Obviously, Bruce hadn’t moved on. What happened still haunted him, just like it haunted Clark. Bruce was struggling right now, trying so hard to act tough. Clark felt terrible. He would give anything to take away Bruce’s pain.

“You should talk to someone about what happened,” Clark suggested. “I’ve been talking to Lois, and that helped me a lot.”

“I have nothing to say about it. What’s done is done. I won’t let you quit the Justice League over this,” Bruce said stubbornly.

“Aren’t you uncomfortable around me?”

“I don’t see any red kryptonite around here, do you?” he scoffed. “We’ll be fine.”

“We aren’t fine,” Clark argued. “Maybe you can live in denial, but I can’t. I attacked you. I almost raped you.”

Bruce looked away uncomfortably. “You weren’t yourself.”

“That doesn’t change what happened. Bruce, I need you to know that I’m sorry. I am so, so sorry,” Clark apologized from the bottom of his heart. “What I did to you is horrible. And I will never forgive myself for hurting you.”

“You…You didn’t mean to.” Bruce trembled slightly. “I know it was the Joker’s plan. It’s his fault, not yours.”

“Bruce, I’m sorry.”

“S-Stop saying that.”

“I’m so sorry,” Clark consoled him. “You didn’t deserve any of it.”

“Shut up!” Bruce yelled as tears streamed down his face from underneath his cowl.

More than anything, Clark wanted to wrap his arms around Bruce and comfort him. But Clark restrained himself. He remembered the way Bruce had flinched earlier. He couldn’t touch Bruce, couldn’t hug him… It would only make Bruce more upset.

Bruce wiped the tears away as he snarled, “You want to make it up to me? Don’t quit the Justice League. Stay here and do your damn job.”

He stormed away, heading back towards the conference room. Clark watched him, feeling miserable and useless.

SxB
Flash sat at the round table, anxiously waiting to leave. The atmosphere in the conference room was so tense. The meeting had continued after Batman and Superman returned. Bruce had announced that Clark wasn’t quitting, then he acted like the disruption never happened. Bruce and J’onn compared data from the deep space scanners, trying to locate Brainiac.

During the whole meeting, Hal was busy glaring daggers at Clark. The poor Kryptonian sat in silence, looking upset. Meanwhile Diana looked enraged like she might attack Hal at any moment. Aquaman watched the other league members with a confused expression on his face. At least Barry wasn’t the one who was completely lost.

What the hell was going on? They were all supposed to be friends. Obviously, something had torn their team apart. Barry stared at Hal who was still scowling at Clark. Why was Hal acting like this? Why was he so angry at Clark? Superman was probably the least offensive person Barry knew. He doubted that Clark deserved to be treated like this.

Eventually, the meeting came to an end. Batman was the first one to leave like he was fleeing the room. After Bruce disappeared, the other league members stood and slowly headed towards the exit. Clark remained in his chair, looking down at his lap.

Barry stayed behind and placed a hand on Clark’s shoulder. “Hey, are you okay?”

“Y-Yeah. I’m fine,” Clark mumbled. That was the most unconvincing lie Barry had ever heard.

“Well, if you wanna talk about it, I’m here,” Barry offered.

Clark nodded slightly. “Thanks.”

With a sigh, Barry walked away and left the conference room. In the hallway, he found Hal and Diana at each other’s throats, arguing loudly.

“Clark should do us all a favor and fuck off!” Hal yelled viciously.

Diana furiously grabbed the collar of his green suit. “Don’t make me hurt you.”

“I’d like to see you try, princess.” Hal’s ring glowed like he was preparing to attack.

“Stop!” Barry rushed over and yanked Hal away while apologizing to Diana, “I’m sorry. I don’t know what’s wrong with him.”

“What’s wrong with me?!” Hal screamed indignantly. “This bitch knows what Clark did!”

Diana drew her sword as she threatened, “Insult me or Clark again and I’ll cut out your tongue.”

“Whoa! There’s no need for that!” Barry held up his hands in a placating gesture.

“I’m not afraid of you. If you want a fight, bring it on!” Hal yelled, “You cun-!”

In a blur of super speed, Barry quickly slapped a hand over Hal’s mouth, grabbed his arm, and took off, running. Flash zoomed to the other side of the Watchtower then released Hal, letting him crash onto the floor.

Hal jumped to his feet and snapped, “What the fuck, Barry?!”

“You can’t talk to Diana like that!” Barry shouted angrily, “Quit being such an asshole!”

“Oh, I’m the asshole? You have no idea what’s going on!”
“Then tell me! Explain it!”

Hal was about to answer, but then he hesitated and stopped himself. “It’s not my place to say. Bruce wouldn’t want me blabbing about it.”

“Blabbing about what?” Barry pried.

Hal glared at him. “Next time, don’t interfere. I’ll fight whoever the fuck I want.”

Then Hal stomped away. Barry watched him leave, feeling more confused than ever. He didn’t understand any of this. Hal was his best friend. Why was he keeping secrets from him? Barry thought they could talk about anything…

Suddenly, Superman appeared next to him in the hallway. Clark looked so guilty. “I’m sorry you have to deal with all of this.”

“Can you please tell me what the hell is going on?!” Barry yelled in frustration. “Why is Hal being a total asshole?!”

“He’s not. He’s just trying to be a good friend,” Clark defended him.

“What do you mean?”

Clark sighed. “I’ll tell you what happened. I’ll explain everything.”

Alone in the Watchtower, Superman and Flash sat in the kitchen, talking. Clark was a man of his word and he had explained everything. Barry listened, becoming increasingly disturbed by what he heard. Clark explained everything about red kryptonite. How he was exposed to it, how it affected him, and what he had done to Bruce…

It was downright horrifying. That someone as sweet and innocent as Clark could be capable of doing those things. But everyone had a dark side. Even Clark. If the red kryptonite really took away his guilt and empathy, that would’ve changed the hero completely. Superman was nothing without his empathy. It was a huge part of his personality. He truly cared about others.

As far as Barry was concerned, without his empathy, Clark wasn’t really Clark anymore. He would be a different person. People without empathy were psychopaths. They were people like the Joker.

When Clark was done explaining what happened, they sat in silence for a moment.

“Who else knows?” Barry asked.

“You, Hal, and Diana. I’ll talk to Arthur and J’onn too. They need to know about red kryptonite.”

“Okay…” Barry sighed. “I’m really sorry about Hal. He’s just making things worse by blaming you.”

Clark shook his head. “No, it…it’s fine. I understand why he hates me. I hate myself too.”

Barry felt a sharp pang of sympathy. “Clark, come on. Don’t say that.”

“It’s true.” Clark shrugged.

“I’ll handle Hal, okay? He won’t bother you anymore,” Barry said reassuringly. “You and Bruce
need to work this out together. Hal should keep his big mouth shut.”

“I… I don’t know if Bruce and I can ever work this out.”

“You have to try,” Barry insisted.

Clark sadly lowered his gaze. “I think Bruce just needs his space right now.”
Chapter Summary

Batman goes back on patrol

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the comments and kudos! I'm trying to update as fast as possible because I want to get back to a happy part of the story Lol

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, reading reports from the Gotham Police Department database. The database was easy to hack into, and it was the fastest way to obtain information on the city’s latest crimes. Much quicker than talking to Commissioner Gordon.

Batman skimmed through the police reports, feeling frustrated. There has been no sign of the Joker in the months. Where was the insane mass-murderer? What was he waiting for?

A couple days ago, Bruce finally took the cast off his right arm. He was ready to go on patrol again. Ready to face the Joker… Bruce angrily clenched his jaw while staring at the computer screen. When he did find the Joker, he was going to break every bone in the villain’s body. That sick son of bitch was going to pay.

Behind him, Robin and Batgirl were busy training. Dick was trying to teach Barbara a new technique to defend herself in battle.

“Let’s try that again.” Dick critiqued her, “You’re using too much force. When you’re fighting someone bigger than you, you have to use their own strength against them.”

Barbara huffed in annoyance. “Well, maybe that would be easier to practice if I actually was fighting someone bigger than me.”

Dick blushed, looking offended. “Hey, I’m taller than you!”

She crossed her arms. “No, you’re not. We’re like the same size.”

“Whatever. Just try it again.”

“Fine.”

Dick walked behind her while she uncrossed her arms and looked straight ahead. After a few seconds, Robin suddenly ran towards her and grabbed her from behind. As he grabbed her, she swiftly turned to the side and yanked on his arm. Then Barbara flipped Dick over her shoulder and he crashed onto the floor with a loud thud.

“Ugh.” Dick groaned in pain as he sat up. “I think you’re getting the hang of it, Babs.”
She glanced at Batman hopefully. “Can I go on patrol with you tonight? Please, Bruce. I’ve been training every day for months.”

“Yes.” Dick grumbled, “Let her beat up someone else for a change.”

She rolled her eyes. “Oh, quit whining, Dick. You’re fine.”

Batman stood and walked towards them. As he headed past Batgirl, he gave her a small smile of approval. “You can come.”

“Yes, finally!” Barbara grinned excitedly.

“Cool.” Dick smiled too.

Bruce walked to the Batmobile while the two teenagers followed him. When he opened the car door, Barbara gave him a puzzled look. The Batmobile only had two seats.

“Oh, how are we all going to fit?” she asked.

Dick smirked at her. “You can sit on my lap.”

“Not happening,” she scoffed while Dick looked disappointed.

Bruce glanced at her. “You have a driver’s license, right?”

Barbara nodded. “Yeah. I got it last month. Why?”

He reached into his utility belt and tossed her a set of keys. “Take the Batblade.”

She caught the keys while grinning brightly. “Awesome!”

“You don’t let me drive the Batblade,” Robin complained.

“Because you’re fourteen,” Bruce replied.

“So what?” Dick argued, “She’s barely sixteen!”

“And she has a license.”

Barbara hurried towards the Batblade and sat on the motorcycle. Then she put the key in the ignition and loudly revved the engine. “Oh, my God! This is amazing.”

“This is so unfair,” Dick griped.

“Quit whining.” Bruce sat in the driver’s seat of the Batmobile.

“Yes, you whiner!” Barbara called out.

Robin glared at her while she snickered playfully.

“Come on. Let’s go,” Batman snapped.

Dick quickly sat in the Batmobile. Then Bruce drove out of the Batcave while Barbara followed them on the motorcycle.

SxB
After parking the Batmobile and the Batblade in an abandoned alleyway, they began to patrol Gotham. Batman, Robin, and Batgirl ran from rooftop to rooftop, leaping and swinging from grappling hooks. At a large gap between buildings, Batman leapt across with ease while Robin jumped and somersaulted in the air.

Dick landed on the other roof, then he turned around to watch Barbara. She fearlessly ran and leapt across the wide gap, but she didn’t have enough momentum. Batgirl barely landed on the ledge and lost her balance, about to fall off the building.

Robin quickly grabbed her hand and pulled her onto the roof. “Are you okay?”

She smiled gratefully. “Yeah, I’m fine. I’m just not an acrobat like you.”

Dick chuckled. “You’ll get used to all the jumping, trust me.”

Batman stood on top of a gargoyle, waiting impatiently. “Are you two coming?”

“Yeah!” Batgirl took off running again while Robin sighed and followed her.

It seemed like Barbara was always eager to impress Batman. Dick could definitely relate to that, yet it was starting to annoy him… Bruce barely even helped with Barbara’s training. Dick did most of the work. He was the one who taught her hand-to-hand combat. He was the one who showed her how to use batarangs and grappling guns. He even taught her about hacking.

Dick literally taught her everything he knew. He truly wanted her to be successful at this. Also, he wanted her to stay safe…

While they continued to run, Robin trailed behind Batgirl, watching her long red hair flow in the wind. If something happened to her, Dick didn’t know what he would do. He had grown to really care for her.

Suddenly, Dick heard a woman screaming. Then Batman leapt off the roof, into an alleyway. Robin and Batgirl quickly fired their grappling guns and swung down, following him.

In the dark alley, there was a man on top of the screaming woman, pinning her to the ground. Batman forcefully yanked the man away and threw him into a brick wall. Then Batman attacked the man, punching him over and over.

The poor woman was crying, and her dress was torn. It was obvious what that man had tried to do to her.

Barbara kneeled beside the woman and spoke softly, “Are you okay? Are you hurt anywhere? We can help you get to a hospital.”

Meanwhile Batman was beating the shit out of the woman’s attacker. Now the man was covered in blood and his face was barely recognizable. The woman trembled in fear as she watched Batman savagely beat her attacker.

“Ma’am?” Barbara gently placed a hand on the woman’s shoulder.

The woman screamed in terror then ran out of the alleyway. Batman was still hitting the man repeatedly while Barbara gave Dick a worried look.

“That’s enough!” Robin snatched Batman’s arm, stopping him.
Bruce finally released the bloody beaten man, letting him fall to the ground. The man wheezed loudly, struggling to breathe. Most of his ribs were probably broken.

“Fucking rapist,” Batman growled as he stormed away.

Batgirl looked concerned. “Is he always this brutal?”

“No.” Robin frowned. Something was wrong.

SxB

They continued to patrol the city from the rooftops. In downtown Gotham, Batman sat on a gargoyle, overlooking the area. Robin and Batgirl stood at a distance, on the ledge of the same building. While Bruce stared down at the city, Dick and Barbara whispered to each other.

“What is going on with him?” she asked quietly.

“I don’t know,” Dick muttered. “But he’s obviously dealing with some issues. I don’t think he’s ready to be back on patrol.”

“Should we tell him to go home?”

“He won’t listen to us.” Dick sighed.

Suddenly, the Bat Signal flashed in the night sky. Damn it. Robin cursed inwardly.

Bruce instantly fired his grappling gun and swung away. Dick and Barbara fired their grappling guns as well, following him. The Bat Signal was shining above the Police Headquarters as always, but the wail of sirens were in the opposite direction.

Batman followed the police sirens while Robin and Batgirl chased after him. Dozens of sirens were all headed to the same worn-out building in the projects. The old building was surrounded by cops who had formed a wide perimeter around the structure. Apparently, they didn’t want to get too close.

Bruce, Dick, and Barbara swung onto a nearby building and studied the situation from a safe distance.

A policeman with a microphone called out, “You’re surrounded! Let the hostages go and come out with your hands up!”

The front door to the building unexpectedly swung open. Then the Joker stood in the doorway. The homicidal maniac had explosives strapped to his chest. Behind him, there were goons wearing clown masks, holding guns to people’s heads.

“Send in my Batsy!” The Joker yelled, “I’ll only talk to the Bat!”

On the nearby roof, Dick swallowed anxiously and glanced at Batman, “This has to be a trap. Bruce, you can’t-”

Bruce impulsively fired his grappling gun and swung away. He landed on the ground inside the police’s perimeter, directly in front of the Joker.

“Shit, this is bad.” Dick cringed as he watched.

“What do we do?” Barbara gave him a worried look.
Below them, the Joker was laughing loudly. “Aw, my better half. Hehehe! I missed you, Batsy.”

Batman growled, “Let the hostages go. I’m the one you want.”

“Oh, you got that right. It’s always about you, isn’t it?” The Joker grinned wickedly. “We have so much to catch up on. I gave your boyfriend a little red present. Did you two have fun?”

“You sick bastard!” Batman shook with rage.

“A-ta-ta-ta!” The Joker held up the detonator to his bomb vest. “Watch it, Batsy. My finger might slip.”

A little red present? What the hell was the Joker talking about? Dick didn’t understand, but he knew that they needed to act quickly. While the Joker was distracted, Dick needed to sneak inside that building somehow and free the hostages.

“Come on,” Robin told Batgirl as he ran to the other side of the roof.

Leaping from rooftop to rooftop, Dick and Barbara hurried to the other side of the police perimeter. Now they were facing the back of the worn-out building, where the Joker and his goons were keeping the hostages. At the rear of the building, there was a single henchman with a gun, guarding the door.

Perfect. Robin fired his grappling gun at the building and swung towards the henchman, kicking him in the face. The thug fell to the floor, then Batgirl swung down beside Robin. Together, they snuck into the building through a broken window.

Inside the building, there was a group of people huddled together while ten goons with clown masks pointed guns at them. Thinking quickly, Robin spotted an electrical panel on the wall. He pulled out several wires, causing the electricity to shut off.

In the darkness, Robin and Batgirl swiftly attacked the henchmen, taking them down one by one. Dick hit several of them with his bo staff while Barbara punched and kicked them. Once the goons were beaten, Robin ran to the front of the building. The hostages were free, but the Joker still had that damn bomb strapped to his chest!

At the front of the building, Batman and the Joker were still facing each other. Bruce glared hatefully at the Joker while tightly clenching his fists. He looked like he was barely restraining himself.

Meanwhile the Joker still had his finger on the detonator. “Tell me, Bats. I’m curious. How was it? Long and rough? Or was it quick and dirty? Did ya scream?”

Batman roared with anger as he punched the Joker in the face. Then the Joker fell back while pressing the button on the detonator.

“NO!” Robin screamed in terror.

Instead of exploding, spools of confetti popped out of the bomb vest. The explosives had been fake.

“Surprise!” The Joker laughed hysterically.

Batman immediately tackled him to the ground and punched him. Meanwhile Robin breathed out a sigh of relief.
Then a cop yelled through the microphone again, “All of you, get on the ground and show us your hands! Get down or we’ll shoot!”

The police aimed their weapons at Batman, Robin, and the Joker. Dick nervously held up his hands while Bruce ignored the cops and continued to hit the Joker.

“This is your last warning!” The cop yelled into the microphone, “Show us your hands or we’ll shoot!”

Bruce finally released the Joker and stared at Dick. They shared a worried look, then Barbara suddenly ran outside and threw a smoke grenade. The whole area became shrouded in smoke as Batman, Robin and Batgirl fired their grappling guns and swung to safety. The cops fired their weapons, but the trio dodged the bullets as they escaped.

At a safe distance, Bruce, Dick, and Barbara stood on the roof of a nearby building while the smoke cleared. Unfortunately, none of the bullets had hit the Joker either. The lunatic was still rolling on the ground, laughing. Soon, all the hostages came outside, unscathed. Then the cops arrested the Joker and led him away to an armored police van.

On the roof, Batman stared down at the Joker, silently fuming.

Robin gave him a concerned look. “Bruce, what was the Joker talking about?”

“I’m not finished with him,” Bruce growled.

Dick blinked in surprise. “W-What do you mean? The cops have him.”

Without another word, Batman leapt off the roof.

Using his grappling gun, Batman swung from building to building as he chased down the armored police van. His blood was boiling with rage. No matter what, he couldn’t let the Joker get away. Bruce wasn’t finished with that evil sack of shit.

Batman fired his grappling gun again and swung towards the speeding van. He landed on the roof of the police van then reached into his utility belt and pulled out a small laser cutter. With the laser, Batman cut a large hole into the roof of the armored van.

Inside the van, the Joker was out of his handcuffs and three policemen were dead on the floor. The Joker had blood on his purple suit from killing the cops.

He greeted Bruce with a wide, ugly smile. “Miss me already?”

Batman snatched the front of the Joker’s suit and yanked him out of the van. Then Bruce fired his grappling gun at a nearby building and swung away with the villain. They landed on the roof of a tall building, then Batman shoved the Joker down.

The Joker cackled as his head hit the concrete floor. Just the sound of his laughter angered Bruce even more. He stormed towards the villain and punched him in the face. Blood flowed from the Joker’s mouth, but he continued to laugh. Batman hit him again and again, breaking the Joker’s nose and several of his teeth.

Everything else faded out as he attacked the Joker. At that moment, the only thing that mattered was hurting the Joker. Making him pay for what he did. Bruce was so fucking angry. Angry that
Clark had been taken from him. Angry that his own friend had been used against him. Angry that he couldn’t fucking stop it. The damage was done. Whatever he could’ve had with Clark was destroyed. All because of this piece of shit right in front of him.

Bruce screamed as he slammed his fist into the Joker’s face. He could feel the villain’s cheekbone crack underneath his knuckles. Even with all his injures, the Joker wouldn’t stop laughing. That ugly sound only spurred Bruce to hit harder. He wanted that horrible laughter to end. He wanted it all to end.

Enraged, Bruce grabbed the Joker by the neck and strangled him. The laughter finally stopped as the Joker choked. Bruce tightened his grip even more, crushing the villain’s throat. The whites of the Joker’s eyes began to turn red. He wasn’t getting any air, and soon he would never breathe again.

“Stop! You’re killing him! Stop!” Dick yelled as he and Barbara landed on the roof.

Bruce finally released the Joker and glanced at the two teens. Dick and Barbara were both staring at him with wide terrified eyes. Seeing them helped to clear Bruce’s head. His blood ran cold as he realized how close he came to committing murder.

The Joker coughed, spitting up blood. “C’mon, Bats. Hit me. Ya know you want to.”

Batman stood over the villain, glaring down at him. “I won’t kill you, Joker.”

“How, that’s a shame.” The Joker rasped, “Maybe I’ll give Supes another dose of the red stuff. And watch him tear up that ass.”

His self-control snapped as Bruce grabbed the Joker and hit him again.

“Stop! Don’t kill him!” Dick ran towards them and latched onto Bruce’s arm.

“Get out of my way!” Batman shouted as he violently jerked his arm away and elbowed Robin in the face.

Dick crashed onto the ground, then Bruce froze, staring at him. The boy was bleeding from his nose and mouth. Bruce felt horrible. He had been trying to hit the Joker, not Dick.

“Robin!” Barbara rushed to Dick’s side and kneeled beside him. She held onto him while glaring at Bruce.

“I…I didn’t mean to,” Bruce muttered, feeling guilty.

The Joker laughed crazily.

Suddenly, a police helicopter appeared above their heads, shining a spotlight on the roof of the building. Then Batman, Robin, and Batgirl quickly fired their grappling guns and escaped. They left the Joker behind on the roof. The police would take him in. The villain was far too injured to cause any more trouble for the night.

SxB

Dick sat in the front passenger seat of the Batmobile while Bruce drove. They sat in silence, refusing to look at each other. Behind them, Barbara was following on the Batblade. Dick didn’t think his nose was broken, but his face still hurt. His bottom lip was busted and his face was bruised. He’d probably have two black eyes. Bruce had hit him really hard. Even though it was an
accident, Bruce obviously felt bad about it. He hadn’t said anything on the ride back.

When they returned to the Batcave, Bruce parked the Batmobile while Barbara parked the motorcycle next to them.

Bruce finally glanced at Robin, looking guilty. “I’m sorry, Dick.”

“It’s fine. I’ve had worse.” Dick jumped out of the Batmobile and slammed the car door.

Bruce stepped out of the vehicle too, following him. “It’s not fine. It shouldn’t have happened.”

Dick snapped in frustration, “If you’re really sorry, then tell me what the hell is going on.”

“What do you mean?”

“You know exactly what I mean.” Dick glared at him. “What was the Joker talking about? What’s the red stuff?”

Bruce paused, hesitating.

“Tell me, dammit!” Dick yelled.

With a sigh, Bruce took off his cowl. “Barbara, go home. Dick and I need to talk.”

“Uh, okay.” Barbara headed towards the exit.

After she stepped into the elevator and left, Bruce crossed his arms and stared at Dick. He looked uncomfortable like he was reluctant to talk.

“Well?” Dick demanded, “What happened with the Joker?”

“The Joker exposed Clark to red kryptonite.”

“Red?” Dick gave him a confused look. “I thought it was always green. What does red kryptonite do?”

“It…changes Clark.” Bruce explained, “It takes away his conscience, his empathy. Clark isn’t himself when he’s under the influence of red kryptonite. He’s not responsible for his actions.”

“Is Clark the one who attacked you?” Dick asked. Suddenly, all of Bruce’s injuries made sense. If he was fighting Superman, of course he got beaten up.

“Yes, but it’s not Clark’s fault. Don’t blame him.” Bruce insisted, “It’s really not his fault.”

“Okay.” Dick nodded, then he remembered something the Joker had said.

“Maybe I’ll give Supes another dose of the red stuff. And watch him tear up that ass,” the Joker's raspy voice echoed in his mind.

“Did Clark rape you?”

Bruce paled. He looked disturbed by the question yet he answered, “No.”

Dick frowned. “Don’t lie to me.”

“I’m not. Clark tried, but I stopped him…at the last second,” Bruce admitted uncomfortably.
“Shit. And the Joker knew that would happen?” Dick cringed in horror. “He…He wanted Clark to rape you. Oh, my God. That’s so fucked up.”

“Hmph. Tell me about it,” Bruce grumbled.

Dick gave him a worried look as he rambled, “Are you okay? I’m sorry. That’s a stupid question. I just-”

“I’m fine,” Bruce snapped, cutting him off.

Of course, Dick knew that was a lie. Bruce was not fine. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have gone berserk tonight. If Dick hadn’t been there to stop him, Bruce would’ve killed the Joker. He would’ve broken his one rule…

“You know the Joker wants you to kill him, right? He wins if you-”

“I know.” Bruce sighed, looking ashamed of himself. “I lost control. It won’t happen again.”

“Okay.” Dick felt slightly relieved, then he asked, “How is Clark handling all of this?”

“He tried to kill himself.”

Dick’s eyes widened in shock. “He what?”

“The piece of kryptonite that was missing from my belt…” Bruce explained, “Clark took it and tried to kill himself with it. Lois stopped him.”

“Oh, my God.” Dick didn’t even know what to say. This was so horrible. No wonder Bruce has been unstable lately. He was trying to cope with this fucked up situation.

“Bruce, I’m so sorry. I can’t even imagine…”

“What’s done is done.” Bruce turned to walk away.

“Wait.” Dick stood in his path, stopping him. “Have you talked to Clark at all? Are you two okay with each other?”

Bruce shrugged. “We’re still working together. He has a responsibility to lead the Justice League.”

“I mean outside of work. You two should be helping each other through this.”

“I’m fine. I don’t need help,” Bruce said stubbornly.

“Are you kidding me?” Dick argued, “You need all the help you can get.”

“I said I’m fine. This conversation is over.” Bruce stormed away.
Mistakes

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark both make mistakes that drive them further apart

Chapter Notes

Bruce and Clark are going to take a break from each other. It’s all part of the plan. Things will really start to turn around by chapter 44 or so. And, yes, Bruce and Clark do end up together in the end. :)

Pain… Bruce was in so much pain. Clark was on top of him, pinning his wrists above his head. Bruce’s right arm was fractured and throbbing. His left ankle was dislocated. A couple of his ribs were broken. And the back of his head ached from Clark banging him against the floor.

“Say that you’re mine.” Clark stared at him with smoldering, possessive eyes.

Underneath the Kryptonian, Bruce could feel himself becoming erect. His Kevlar was in shreds and the lower half of his body was completely exposed.

Clark noticed the erection and grinned smugly. “Looks like your body agrees with me.”

Superman thrust toward him, rubbing their erections together. In a jolt of pleasure, Bruce arched his back, moaning.

“Y-Yours. I’m yours.”

Clark grabbed his chin, tilting his face up. “Say it again.”

“I’m yours. Yours. Yours,” he panted. “I belong to you.”

Bruce jerked awake, panicking. His heart was pounding as he sat up in bed. He was alone in his room at Wayne Manor. Rays of sunlight shined through a gap between the curtains, illuminating the dark bedroom. Bruce held his face in his hands, trying to slow his breathing. He was dizzy from hyperventilating.

He had another fucking nightmare. Bruce thought he was getting better. It’s been three months since the attack. Why was he still having nightmares? He should be over this by now.

Bruce replayed the dream in his head. He felt ashamed as he remembered how he became erect during the assault. What the hell is wrong with me? Maybe I am fucked up in the head… How could Bruce enjoy being abused like that?

No. No, I didn’t enjoy it. Bruce shook his head, feeling confused. He had been in pain during the attack. He had been scared out of his mind. So, why did he become erect? Was he just a sick freak? Did he like Clark dominating him? Owning him?
He remembered the smoldering look in Clark’s eyes as he demanded, “Say that you’re mine.”

Bruce shot out of bed, pacing back and forth. That wasn’t Clark. Clark wouldn’t do that to me. That wasn’t Clark! His thoughts raced as he trembled anxiously. It was the red kryptonite that caused Superman to do those things. Clark hadn’t been in his right mind.

But, what was Bruce’s excuse? Why did he get aroused? Why did he cry and beg like a little bitch?!

Bruce screamed angrily as he punched a mirror hanging on the wall. The mirror fell, shattering all over the floor. Blood dripped from his hand while Bruce gazed down at the broken glass surrounding him. His reflection was disjointed and fractured among the shards of the mirror.

Tears spilled down his cheeks as he hid his face in his hands.

Bruce was such a fucking mess.

SxB

At the weekly Justice League meeting, Flash sat at the round table, feeling extremely uncomfortable. Green Lantern was sitting in Superman’s seat again next to Batman while Clark was sitting next to Barry. Everyone at the table looked pissed off or upset. Hal and Diana were glaring at each other like they could start fighting at any second. Poor Clark looked completely miserable. Aquaman and Martian Manhunter didn’t seem too happy either.

The only one talking was Batman. Bruce led the meeting as usual, acting oblivious to everyone’s discomfort. Eventually, he ended the meeting, then he stood and rushed out of the conference room.

Clark unexpectedly shot out of his chair and chased after him. Curious, Barry quickly followed them both outside.

In the hallway, Clark was standing in front of Bruce. “Robin called me last night. Can we talk?”

“No.” Batman growled, “That brat should mind his own business.”

Bruce tried to leave, but then Superman stood in his way again, blocking his path. “Dick’s just worried about you. I really think we should talk.”

“Get out of my way.” Bruce glared at him.

Suddenly, Hal rushed into the hallway and shoved Clark away from Bruce.

“Back off! He doesn’t want to talk to you!” Hal yelled at Superman.

Damn it! Flash quickly grabbed onto Green Lantern and yanked him out of the way. “Hal, let them talk!”

“No way! Clark needs to fuck off!” Hal shouted as he ripped his arm from Barry’s grasp.

Then Wonder Woman stormed into the hallway. She drew her sword and snarled at Hal, “I tire of your insolence, you jabbering idiot.”

“You wanna fight, bitch?!” Green Lantern lunged at her while Flash held him back.

“Diana, calm down. Please,” Superman grabbed onto Diana’s sword, pleading with her.
During all of the commotion, Batman turned and walked away. Trying to defuse the situation, Flash latched onto Green Lantern and zoomed away with super speed.

Barry dashed to the other side of the Watchtower, then released Hal, letting him fall to the floor.

Hal jumped to his feet, yelling, “Dammit, Barry! Stop doing that!”

“You need to leave Clark and Bruce alone,” Barry snapped angrily. “They have to talk! You’re making everything worse!”

Hal looked offended. “I’m making it worse?”

“Yes!”

“Oh, I’m the bad guy here? Really?! Do you even know what Clark did?”

Barry crossed his arms. “Yes, he told me. He attacked Bruce while he was under the influence of red kryptonite.”

“Did you know he tried to rape Bruce?”

“No…” When Clark had explained everything, he intentionally left that part out. Barry sighed. “But it doesn’t surprise me.”


“Do you have any idea how red kryptonite works? It twisted Clark’s desires and took away his conscience, his morality. Without a sense of right and wrong, how could Clark possibly stop himself?” Barry defended the Kryptonian, “He is not at fault here. Stop blaming him.”

Hal looked away, frowning. “I just want to protect Bruce. He’s our friend…”

“I know, Hal. And I want to protect him just as much as you do. But don’t forget that Clark is our friend too.”

“Hmph. He’s no friend of mine.” Hal stomped away.

Barry let out a sigh of frustration.

SxB

That evening, Bruce sat alone in the Batcave, fuming silently. He was still angry at Robin for calling Superman. Dick had no right contacting Clark behind his back. Bruce was livid. At dinner, Bruce had a heated argument with Dick, then ordered the teen to go to his room. Tonight Batman planned to patrol Gotham alone.

“Bruce?” Clark’s voice came from Bat-Comm. He sounded worried. “Bruce, I know you can hear me. Dick told me what happened with the Joker. Can we please talk?”

Bruce angrily shut off the Bat-Comm and slammed it on the desk by the Batcomputer.

Ever since the Justice League meeting earlier today, Clark had been trying to contact him. Obviously, he must know that Batman almost killed the Joker a few nights ago. Clark must think that Bruce was losing it, that he couldn’t deal with his own shit.

Well, Clark was wrong. Bruce had everything under control. He didn’t need Superman to swoop in
and save him from himself. He wasn’t that fucking pathetic.

Bruce stood and stormed over to the Batmobile. He sat in the driver’s seat, then sped out of the cave. Batman raced down the street, heading towards the seediest part of Gotham. In a dark alley, he parked the Batmobile, then he fired his grappling gun and swung to the roof of a nearby building.

For about an hour, Batman patrolled the city, leaping from rooftop to rooftop. Gotham was oddly peaceful tonight, which only made him feel more restless. There had to be criminals somewhere.

Eventually, he spotted a familiar face on the roof of an art gallery. Catwoman was cutting a hole into a glass panel on the roof. Probably so she could sneak inside and steal pieces of art.

Batman swung towards the art gallery and landed on the roof. He stood in front of Catwoman, glaring at her.

She smirked when she noticed him. “Oh, my. The big, bad Bat caught me.”

“I won’t let you steal anything,” he growled.

Catwoman instantly pulled out her whip and attacked. She swung her whip at him while Batman jumped out of way. He barely dodged as she cracked her whip over and over. During one attack, Bruce wasn’t fast enough and the whip snaked tightly around his right forearm. Catwoman grinned as she yanked on her weapon, pulling Batman towards her. She swiped at him, trying to claw his face, but Batman quickly grabbed her arm and stopped her.

The villainess suggestively pressed her body against him. “You know, I can think of something much more fun than fighting.”

“You’re only saying that because you’re losing.” Batman smirked as he jerked his right arm away, yanking the whip out of her grasp.

“Aw, come on.” She purred, “Let’s have fun tonight. It’s been so long since I’ve had you.”

Bruce froze, considering her offer. It has been years since he slept with Catwoman. The last time was before he even met Clark.

“My big strong Bat.” She reached down and stroked the Kevlar covering his cock.

Even though he barely felt her touch through the armor, he was already becoming hard. A sense of relief washed over him. Bruce wasn’t a freak. He didn’t get off on being abused. He wasn’t completely fucked up. If he wanted to, he could have sex with Catwoman just like he did years ago.

Catwoman treated him like he was powerful, like he was in control. More than anything, Bruce wanted to feel like he was in control. He was so sick of feeling weak.

When Catwoman pressed her mouth against his lips, Bruce kissed her back.

SxB

Superman was exhausted. After the Justice League meeting, he had spent most of the day fighting Luthor. The evil billionaire had upgraded his Warsuit and wreaked havoc in Metropolis. Today Luthor came close to killing Superman several times. The situation was so bad that Clark had to call Diana for help. Thankfully, Wonder Woman came to the rescue. With her help, Superman was able to beat Luthor.
Now the villain was in jail, and Clark was trying to contact Bruce again. He had called Bruce on the Bat-Comm multiple times, but there was no answer. Clark waited in his apartment for a while, then he finally decided to fly to Gotham. He was really worried about Bruce. Last night, Dick had called Clark and told him about Bruce’s self-destructive behavior.

It sounded like Bruce was falling apart. Clark couldn’t believe Batman had almost killed the Joker. If Bruce actually committed murder, that would ruin him. His one rule was so important to him. Clark couldn’t stand by and let Bruce destroy himself.

Soaring across the sky, Superman headed towards Gotham while listening for Bruce’s heartbeat. Soon, he spotted the Batmobile speeding down the street, towards the Batcave. After Bruce drove into cave, Clark followed him inside and landed on the ground.

Batman stepped out of the Batmobile and glared at Superman. “What are you doing here?”

“We need to talk,” Clark insisted.

“Hmph. I have nothing to say to you.” Bruce stormed across the Batcave.

In a blur of super speed, Superman appeared in front of the vigilante, stopping him. Clark stared at Bruce, studying his Batsuit. The Kevlar had strange scratch marks and his utility belt was crooked like he had dressed in a hurry.

“How was your patrol tonight?” Clark pried.

“Fine.”

“Catch any bad guys?”

Bruce shrugged. “You could say that.”

“Why is your belt crooked?” Clark asked.

Batman quickly adjusted his utility belt and snapped, “It’s none of your business. Get out of here.”

“I’m not leaving until you talk to me.” Clark stubbornly crossed his arms.

Bruce gave him a nasty look. “Do you really want to know what I did tonight?”

“Yes.”

“I fucked Catwoman in the Batmobile.”

“WHAT!?” Clark screamed, in shock.

Bruce immediately jumped back and placed a hand on his utility belt. His heart was racing like he expected Superman to attack.

“How do you have a problem with that?” Batman growled defensively.

Clark gaped at him with wide, disbelieving eyes. Did Bruce really think he was in danger? That hurt... Yes, he was upset that Bruce slept with Catwoman. But Clark would never attack him over this. Offended, Clark clenched his fists as he scowled at Bruce.

“No, I don’t,” Clark said coldly. “Do whatever you want, Bruce.”
In a flash, he zoomed out of the cave and flew away.

SxB

In his apartment, Clark sat on the couch, sulking. He felt so hurt and betrayed even though he had no right to feel that way. They may have acted like a couple at one point, but Bruce was never his boyfriend. He was free to sleep with whoever he wanted. Even a thief like Catwoman.

Clark angrily crossed his arms. Catwoman? Really? After everything that happened, he could understand Bruce wanting to sleep with a woman, but why did he pick a criminal? Talk about low standards. He hoped Bruce had used a condom. Clark wouldn’t be surprised if Catwoman was trying to give him chlamydia or some other disease.

Images flashed through his mind as Clark imagined Bruce kissing Catwoman, fucking her. Furious, Clark stood and paced around his apartment. This was so stupid. He had no right to be jealous. It was over between him and Bruce! It was over…

Clark froze as tears sprang to his eyes. It was really, truly over. The realization was finally hitting him like a ton of bricks. Even, after everything, there was a small part of him that still had hope. He thought that maybe he could fix all of this somehow… But there was no fixing it. Like Bruce had said, what’s done is done.

Tears streamed down his face as he sat back down on the couch. The relationship he had with Bruce was gone. He didn’t even think that they could be friends anymore.

On the coffee table, his cellphone started to ring. He picked up the phone and glanced at the caller ID. It was Lois.

He answered the call, “H-Hey, Lois.”

“Hey, Smallville.” She paused for a moment. “Are you okay? You sound upset.”

Clark quickly wiped the tears from his eyes. “I’m okay.”

“What happened?” she asked perceptively.

Clark sighed. Lately, it has been impossible to hide anything from Lois. She was constantly checking on him.

“I’ve given up on Bruce. Completely. I can still work with him, but I don’t think we’ll ever be friends again,” he admitted sadly. “It’s over.”

“Oh, Clark. I’m sorry,” Lois said with sympathy.

“It’s fine. It’s for the best…”

“I’m coming over.”

He insisted, “No, Lois. It’s fine-”

“I’m coming.” She hung up.

With a sigh, Clark set down his phone. He just wanted to be alone right now, but he knew Lois wouldn’t take no for an answer. Ever since the suicide attempt, she has been spending a lot of time at his apartment. She was a really good friend. Clark didn’t deserve her.
Twenty minutes later, Lois entered his apartment. She used her spare key and didn’t even bother knocking. She barged inside, carrying two large grocery bags. She set the bags on the kitchen table, then took out bottles of vodka and rum.

Clark watched her in confusion. “Uh, Lois, why did you bring alcohol?”

“Well, I don’t know about you, but I like to get wasted after a bad break-up.” She took out two shot glasses and filled them with vodka.

“It wasn’t a break-up,” Clark argued. “Bruce and I never dated. Also, alcohol doesn’t affect me.”

“That’s why I brought this.” Lois pulled out a lead container and opened it, revealing a piece of green kryptonite.

Clark winced, feeling his strength dissipate. “You still have that?”

“Of course.” Lois set the kryptonite on the table. “Now that you’re weaker, maybe you can get drunk for once. It’s worth a try.”

“I don’t know,” he said reluctantly.

“Come on, Smallville.” She handed him a shot glass. “Drink up.”

SxB

After several shots of vodka, Clark was definitely feeling the effects. Now he was sitting on the couch next to Lois. They were both drinking rum mixed with soda. The kryptonite was still on the kitchen table. It was close enough to make Clark feel weak, but there was also enough distance so it wouldn’t cause him pain. Clark felt light-headed as he sipped on the mixed drink. His whole body felt weightless and numb. It was so strange.

“Wow.” Clark waved a hand back and forth in front of his face. “So, this is what being drunk feels like?”

Lois giggled. “Oh, my God. I corrupted you.”

He laughed with her. They were both pretty intoxicated. He was glad Lois had suggested this. All of his worries seemed to melt away. In this drunken stupor, he could almost forget…Bruce. The heartache suddenly hit him all at once.

Tears welled up in his eyes. “I miss Bruce. I loved him so much. But it’s all fucked up now.” Clark held his face in his hands as he cried. “It’s fucked up beyond repair. I can’t fix it.”

“Aww, Smallville. Shh.” Lois wrapped her arms around him, pulling him into a hug. “It’s okay. I’m sorry, but you can always find someone else. You’re a great guy.”

“I’m horrible.” Clark gently pushed her away.

“Nooo. Come on, don’t say that.” She tried to cheer him up. “You’re great. I had the biggest crush on you forever.”

“You had a crush on Superman.”

She rolled her eyes. “Yeah, which is you. Duh.”

He sadly shook his head. “You didn’t like the real me. Clark Kent.”

Clark laughed. “Then why did you say no? When I asked you out years ago…”

She sighed while crossing her arms. “Because you’re like my best friend and I was scared of screwing that up, you know. Then you met Brucindda and started liking guys anyway, so whatever.”

“One guy. Not guys.”

“What?”

“Bruce… He’s the only man I’ve ever been interested in. I still prefer women. Bruce was like…an exception,” Clark explained.

“Oh. Well, shit.” Lois leaned her head back, staring up at the ceiling. “I guess I really screwed up.”

Clark gave her a confused look. “What do you mean?”

“Before you even met Bruce, I had a shot with you and I blew it. I wonder what would’ve happened if I said yes.”

“I… I have no idea,” he admitted.

She glanced at him. “Do you think everything would’ve been better?”

Clark stared into her eyes. “We could still find out.”

Lois leaned forward and kissed him.

SxB

In the morning, Bruce woke up in his room. For a while, he laid on his bed, feeling miserable. What the fuck was he thinking last night? There was a reason why he stopped fucking Catwoman years ago. Because being with her was a mistake. It had always been a mistake. Instead of taking her to jail, Batman had let her go. As soon as he left, she probably returned to the art gallery to steal.

Bruce cringed as he remembered his conversation with Clark.

“I fucked Catwoman in the Batmobile.”

How could he say that to Clark? It was just cruel. Bruce knew how the hero felt about him. Even though they were never officially a couple, Bruce felt guilty… He remembered the hurt expression on Clark’s face and wanted to punch himself. Clark didn’t deserve that. Superman had been trying to talk to him and fix things, and Bruce had acted like an asshole.

“God dammit.” Bruce stood and pulled on a black robe, then he left the bedroom.

In the hallway, Dick was standing outside his room. The teen glared at him while crossing his arms.

“Have you talked to Clark yet?”

Bruce sighed and walked past him. “Just leave me alone, Dick.”

He headed downstairs and entered the study. Bruce pressed the hidden button on a statue, opening
a secret passageway. Then he slid down the pole towards the Batcave.

In the cave, Bruce walked to the Batcomputer and grabbed the Bat-Comm off the desk. For a moment, he hesitated before turning on the device. Then Bruce sat down and took a deep breath, feeling anxious. He knew that he needed to talk to Clark. It was time to fix things.

Bruce called him on the Bat-Comm. “Clark? Clark, can you hear me?”

There was complete silence until he heard Lois’s voice. “Hi, Bruce.”

Bruce blinked in surprise. “Lois, where’s Clark?”

“Uh… Well, he’s in the shower right now,” she said nervously.

“I see.” Bruce frowned. Did Lois spend the night?

She sighed. “This is really awkward. Clark said it was over between you two.”

“It is,” Bruce growled. “He’s yours.”

Bruce furiously threw the Bat-Comm at the wall, breaking it.
At the Watchtower, Green Lantern walked down a long hallway and stood by a window, looking at Earth from orbit. The Justice League had saved the world again. Earlier today, Brainiac had returned, but the heroes beat him. During the fight, Batman took a blow to the head and he had been knocked unconscious for a few minutes. Aquaman and Martian Manhunter had taken some damage too.

After the battle, they all decided to rest at the Watchtower and debrief in the morning. It was late at night. Bruce, Arthur, and J’onn were all in their separate rooms, recuperating. Last time Hal saw them, Clark and Diana were still sitting in the kitchen together, talking. They’d probably go to bed soon too.

Hal continued down the hall until he reached Bruce’s room. Batman’s quarters were right next to Superman’s… That didn’t sit well with Hal. Bruce was injured and vulnerable right now. He shouldn’t be sleeping so close to Clark. It just seemed like a bad idea.

Leaning against the wall, Hal crossed his arms while staring at the door to Bruce’s room. Hal wasn’t tired anyway, and he wouldn’t be able to sleep if he thought Bruce was in danger. For a few minutes, he stood in the hallway, watching the entrance to Batman’s quarters.

“What are you doing?” Flash headed down the hall towards him.

“Nothing.” Hal shrugged.

Barry gave him an annoyed look. “Are you guarding Bruce’s room? This is getting ridiculous.”

“No, it’s not,” Hal argued. “His quarters are right next to Clark’s.”

“So?”

“So, someone should watch his back.”

Barry huffed in frustration. “What do you think is going to happen? That Clark is going to barge into Bruce’s room and attack him? Are you really that stupid?”

“It’s not stupid! You’re the stupid one for siding with Clark!” Hal yelled.

“There are no sides! We’re all on the same team!”
“No, we’re not! Not anymore.” Hal demanded, “You have to choose. Are you with me or Clark?”

Barry clenched his fists as he shouted angrily, “That’s not fair! I’m not choosing between anyone!”

Suddenly, the door to Bruce’s room swung open.

Batman stepped out, glaring at them. “I’m trying to sleep, you idiots.”

“It’s fine, Spooky. Go back to bed.” Hal scowled at Barry. “Flash was just about to leave.”

“I want you both to leave,” Bruce growled.

Hal insisted, “But I have to stay and-”

“Let me make something very clear, Lantern. I don’t need your protection, and I don’t want it. I’m perfectly capable of protecting myself. Now piss off,” Batman snarled at him.

“I’m not going anywhere,” Hal said stubbornly. “Clark’s room is right next to yours.”

“I don’t care. If it becomes a problem, I’ll deal with it.”

“But what if something happens? He’s stronger than you-”

“Oh, that’s what this is about.” Batman furiously grabbed the collar of Hal’s green suit and hissed in his face, “You think I’m weak?”

“W-What?” Hal quickly shook his head. “No! I just want to help you!”

Bruce glanced to the side. Down the hall, Superman was walking towards them. Without any warning, Bruce suddenly pulled Hal into a kiss. Hal froze in shock while Bruce stared directly at Clark. Superman looked upset as he rushed into his room and shut the door.

Then Bruce immediately broke the kiss and shoved Hal to the floor. “Thanks for the help.”

Batman stormed into his quarters and slammed the door.

**What the fuck?** Hal was still sitting on the floor, blinking in confusion. During the kiss, Bruce had been staring at Clark the whole time. *He...He used me!*

Hal angrily jumped to his feet. “What an asshole! Barry, can you believe this shit?”

He glanced around, but he was alone in the hallway. The speedster was gone.

“Barry? Where’d you go?”

SxB

In the morning, the Justice League debriefed on their latest battle with Brainiac. Everyone sat at the round table, except for Flash. Barry was still missing. After he disappeared last night, Hal hadn’t seen him at all. Normally, Flash would never skip a Justice League meeting. Something was wrong. Hal was worried about his best friend.

After the meeting, Green Lantern flew to Central City and searched for Flash. Hal hovered high above the city, looking for any sign of the speedster. This was Barry’s home turf. He had to be around here somewhere.
Eventually, Hal spotted a red blur zigzagging down the street between cars.

*Finally!* Hal grinned as he flew through the air, chasing after Flash. The speedster zoomed across the city towards a large bank that was surrounded by cops. The police were all standing outside, waiting. Obviously, there had been a bank robbery, and there were probably hostages inside.

In a blur of super speed, Flash zoomed into the bank. A couple seconds later, the hero rushed outside, dragging three criminals behind him. Now the robbers were all tied up and ready for the police. A crowd of citizens cheered while Flash smiled and waved.

Green Lantern flew down and landed next to Barry. “Hey, Flash! What’s up?”

Suddenly, Flash disappeared in the blink of an eye. Hal froze, confused for a moment. Barry had run away from him.

“What the-? Flash! Get back here!” Hal shouted.

SxB

For the rest of the day, Hal stayed in Central City, trying to hunt down Barry. He looked everywhere for the speedster. And, Hal actually found him a couple more times. But every time Hal got close, Barry would run away. He’d disappear in a flash… Hence his name.

It was so frustrating! Hal wasn’t fast enough to catch him.

Outside the police station, Green Lantern finally spotted Barry again, leaving work. Barry had a job as a forensic scientist and he worked closely with the police. Hal hid behind a building, watching Barry from afar. Right now, Barry was in his civilian clothes. Hal wanted to confront him, but he needed to wait. He couldn’t blow Flash’s secret identity.

Barry strolled down the street, heading towards his apartment. Flying in the sky, Hal followed him, waiting for the perfect moment. Soon, Barry was on a sidewalk that wasn’t very crowded. Hal might be able to talk to him now.

Green Lantern landed in an alleyway and took off his ring, so his green suit would disappear. Then he waited for Barry to walk past him.

“What the-? Flash! Get back here!” Hal shouted.

SxB

Late at night, Green Lantern soared above Central City. He had a new plan to catch Barry. He would wait for the speedster to fall asleep and trap him. If Flash couldn’t run away, he’d have no choice but to talk. It was the perfect plan. Hal was so smart.

Around midnight, Green Lantern flew to Barry’s apartment and snuck inside through a window. Then Hal quietly walked across the dark apartment, heading towards the bedroom. Barry was laying in bed, fast asleep. He was curled up on his side, clutching a blanket to his chest.
For a while, Hal stood next to the bed. He stared at Barry, watching him sleep. The blonde looked so cute, holding his blanket. No grown man should look that adorable in their sleep. Hal shook those thoughts from his mind. He was here to talk, not to watch his friend sleep like a creeper.

Hal quickly formed green chains that wrapped around Barry’s arms and legs, restraining him to the bed. As the chains tightened around his limbs, Barry jolted awake. He tried to sit up, but the chains kept him flat on his back. Barry gazed up at Hal, looking startled.

“I finally caught you,” Hal bragged.

Barry glared at him. “Let me go, Hal.”

“Not until we have a chance to talk.”

“Fine. We can talk,” Barry relented. “Just get rid of the chains. It’s weird.”

“There’s nothing wrong with a little kink,” he joked.

Barry growled at him, “Hal…”

“Yeah, okay.” The green chains immediately disappeared, then Hal sat on the edge of Barry’s bed. “Why are you avoiding me?”

Barry sat up and scooted away from him. “Hmph. Why do you even care? Shouldn’t you be stalking Bruce or something?”

“What? I don’t stalk Bruce.” If anything, he had been stalking Barry…

“Well, you’re obviously obsessed with him,” Barry grumbled.

“No, I’m not,” Hal argued. “Bruce is just a friend. I’m worried about him.”

“Whatever. I’ve never seen you so protective before.”

“Oh, I see what’s happening.” Hal teased him, “Is my Barry jealous?”

“No!” Barry yelled, blushing brightly.

Hal’s eyes widened in shock. He had never seen Barry’s face turn that red before. Was Barry actually jealous? Hal couldn’t believe it. Barry had always seemed interested in girls, especially Iris. It never crossed his mind that Barry could like him. Hal was amazed. Was Barry upset because Bruce kissed him?

“You know…. Bruce only kissed me to hurt Clark. He was just using me,” Hal explained.

“Whatever you say.” Barry didn’t look convinced.

“That’s the truth! You don’t need to be jealous.”

“I’m not jealous!” Barry shoved him, trying to push him off the bed. “Go! Be with Bruce!”

Hal quickly grabbed onto Barry and kissed him. Barry froze, becoming limp in Hal’s arms. When Hal pulled away from the kiss, Barry was staring at him with wide surprised eyes. His face was red again from blushing. Hal smirked at him. Barry was the cutest thing he has ever seen.

“I don’t want Bruce,” Hal said softly.
Barry gulped, looking nervous. “You…You don’t?”

“No. I want you.” Hal leaned forward and kissed him again.

“H-Hal,” Barry gasped into the kiss and held onto his shoulders.

When Hal deepened the kiss, he could feel Barry tremble against him. He slid his tongue into Barry’s mouth, tasting him thoroughly. Then Barry pulled him closer as he kissed back. They ravaged each other’s mouths, clinging onto each other. Soon, Barry eased back, laying on the bed while Hal straddled him.

Eventually, Hal pulled back from the kiss. He sat on top of Barry, smiling down at him. “God, we should’ve done this sooner.”

Barry laughed, then they kissed again.

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, studying security cam footage from Arkham Asylum. Right now, the Joker was locked in a cell, and Batman wanted to make sure that the villain stayed there. No matter what, he needed to keep the Joker in the asylum. He couldn’t let the maniac escape this time.

Batman watched the security footage for hours. It was nearly 3:30 AM, but Bruce wasn’t tired. He needed to watch the Joker. The villain had healed from his last beating, and he was healthy enough to escape.

Suddenly, Bruce heard footsteps behind him. He quickly shot out of his chair and turned around, ready to fight. When he saw Martian Manhunter, Bruce calmed somewhat. The alien had never visited the Batcave before, but apparently he knew its location.

“Why are you here, J’onn?” Bruce asked.

The Martian walked toward him. “I am concerned about the Justice League. Our team is fractured.”

He crossed his arms. “What do you want me to do about it?”

“When you and Superman are not united, the Justice League is not united. You two are the pillars who support the team. Without your partnership, there is no foundation,” J’onn said solemnly.

Batman sighed. “I understand what you’re saying, but…I can’t change the situation.”

“Yes, you can. But your own stubbornness blinds you.”

Bruce glared at him silently.

J’onn continued, “I have never seen an alliance as strong as what you and Clark had. I know what happened between you two…” The telepath frowned sadly. “There is so much pain in your mind and in Clark’s. You miss him. Even though you push him away, there is nothing you want more than him.”

Bruce looked away uncomfortably. “And Clark? What does he want?”

J’onn smiled. “He misses you. Everyday. You are irreplaceable to him.”
Bruce scowled, refusing to believe the alien. *If I’m so irreplaceable, why is he with Lois?*

J’onn obviously read his mind. “And, why did you sleep with Catwoman?”

“That was a mistake,” Bruce snapped angrily.

“Clark makes mistakes too. He believes it is impossible to have any kind of relationship with you. Romantic or otherwise…” J’onn implored, “For the sake of the Justice League, prove him wrong. Rebuild your friendship with him or the people of Earth will pay the price. The responsibility you and Superman share should not be taken lightly.”

Martian Manhunter turned and walked away. He phased through the cave, disappearing.

Alone again, Bruce sat back down and considered what J’onn had said.

SxB

It was time for the weekly Justice League meeting. Batman arrived at the Watchtower and walked down the hall towards the conference room. For the past few days, he had reflected on J’onn’s advice. Martian Manhunter was right. The team was damaged, and Bruce had a responsibility to fix it. When the Justice League was formed, Batman had promised to help Superman lead. Right now, that leadership was almost non-existent. Bruce needed to change that.

The Justice League had a duty to protect the world. Everyone on Earth was counting on them. Bruce had to set aside his own feelings. He was part of something bigger than himself. He could not let the Justice League fall apart.

As he walked down the hall, he spotted Green Lantern and Flash together. Hal was holding Barry in his arms, hugging him tightly. When Barry noticed Batman approaching, he quickly pushed Hal away.

Flash blushed in embarrassment. “H-Hey, Bruce.”

Batman smirked at them. “I see the kiss worked.”

For a moment, they both looked confused.


Barry slowly realized what Bruce meant. “You mean… You kissed Hal because you knew what would happen?”

Bruce crossed his arms and glanced at Hal. “Now that you have something else to focus on, I expect you to leave me alone.”

“No fucking way, Spooky!” Hal shouted in disbelief. “How did you know Barry and I would-?”

“Because I’m Batman.” He walked away.

Barry looked impressed while Hal complained, “Oh, come on! That’s not a real answer!”

“Yes, it is.” Batman turned around a corner and continued down the hall.

When he entered the conference room, Superman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and Martian Manhunter were already seated at the round table. Clark was sitting in Green Lantern’s chair again.
Bruce strolled past him. “Clark, get up.”

“What?” Superman gave him a confused look.

“Sit in your assigned seat,” Bruce ordered as he sat down at the table.

“Oh, okay.” Clark hesitantly stood and walked over to his assigned seat.

He sat down next to Bruce while the other league members watched approvingly. Diana and J’onn both smiled. Arthur seemed pleased as well.

Then Green Lantern and Flash entered the room. They both sat down next to each other. Hal didn’t even spare Superman a glance. He didn’t seem to care where Clark was sitting. Hal was far too focused on Barry, staring at him with a love-struck expression. His feelings were so obvious.

Bruce announced, “Before we begin the meeting, I want to make something abundantly clear. I know our team has been fractured lately, and that has to change. From now on, you will all respect each other and respect your leader. Is that clear?”

Everyone nodded in agreement, except for Hal. Bruce glared at Green Lantern. Then Flash quickly elbowed his new lover.

Hal sighed, caving in. “Clear.”

Batman crossed his arms as he declared, “Superman and I won’t tolerate any more fighting between league members. Isn’t that right, Clark?”

Superman looked surprised. “Uh, yeah. That’s right. Everyone, try to get along.”

“No matter what, this team must stay united. We have work to do and everyone on Earth is counting on us,” Bruce said seriously.

Clark smiled at him. “Well said, Batman.”

“Thank you, Superman,” he replied civilly. “Now let’s get to business.”
Trouble in Paradise

Chapter Summary

Clark and Lois have relationship problems. Then Supergirl arrives.

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! Thank you so much for all support. I know this update is later than usual and there’s a reason for that…

Long story short, I was treated unfairly at my job. I work as a paramedic and I was told to leave my medic station because I’m female. (There’s an important Hindu guru in town and he demanded to have only male paramedics treat him. Since the guru was in my regularly assigned area, I was ordered to leave. Just in case, if the guru calls 911 for an ambulance… All female paramedics were removed and I had to work in a different part of the county. Basically, my boss catered to unreasonable and sexist demands.) I complained to HR, but HR didn’t help me and went straight to my boss. My boss called me on the phone and yelled at me. Then there was a huge command staff meeting about my compliant. A lot of my coworkers defended me and argued with my boss. The situation was a giant shit-storm. I was so upset that I couldn’t eat or sleep. And unfortunately, I wasn’t able to write either… I felt so beaten down.

So, yeah, anyway… That’s why the update is late. You can blame my boss who’s a total asshole.

It was a Saturday morning. Clark had slept in until 10:30 AM. When he finally woke up, Lois was already in the kitchen, cooking breakfast. They’ve been living together for six months now. They were renting a new apartment together in downtown Metropolis. So far, their relationship has been going really well. Before they started dating, they were already close friends, so everything moved fairly fast. They even had a couple conversations about marriage. Clark hadn’t proposed yet, but it was discussed.

He walked into the kitchen and poured himself a cup of coffee. Then he sat down at the kitchen table. When Lois finished cooking, she brought over two plates of scrambled eggs and toast. She sat across from him and they ate breakfast together. Clark thanked her for cooking as usual.

Lois started talking about work while Clark stared down at his cup of coffee, zoning out. He couldn’t drink coffee anymore without thinking of Bruce…

A whole year has passed since the Joker had exposed Clark to red kryptonite. Now he would only see Bruce at Justice League meetings or during major fights with villains. On the battlefield, Superman and Batman worked very well together and they successfully led the team to victory many times. But, outside of the Justice League, they didn’t hang out like they used to. And, Clark missed that… He wished everything could go back to the way it was before.
“Hey, Smallville. Earth to Clark.” Lois waved a hand in front of his face.

“What?” He glanced up at her.

She gave him an annoyed look. “Did you hear anything I said?”

“Oh. Uh, sorry. I was spacing out.”

Lois sighed. “I said our lunch reservation is at noon. My parents are going to meet us at the restaurant.”

He blinked in surprise. “Wait. I thought your parents were coming next weekend.”

“No. I told you a month ago that they were coming today.”

“Oh…” Clark winced guiltily. “I’m sorry, Lois. I have a Justice League meeting at noon, but I should be free afterwards.”

“Seriously? Just skip the meeting,” she huffed in frustration.

“I can’t skip. It’s too important.”

“And meeting my parents isn’t?”

“I want to meet them, Lois,” he tried to reassure her. “I’ll just do it after the Justice League meeting, okay?”

“But we have a reservation.” Lois glared at him.

“Can’t we have dinner with them instead? Maybe we can move the reservation.”

“Or maybe you could change your schedule for once,” she snapped. “You’re the leader of the Justice League, aren’t you? Tell them to have the meeting later.”

Clark sighed. “Bruce wouldn’t be okay with that.”

“Oh. Of course,” Lois scoffed angrily. “You must always cater to Bruce.”

“That’s not true,” he argued.

“Yes, it is. You never say no to him. Ever.”

Clark defensively crossed his arms. “I’m sorry, but I have to go to the meeting.”

“Because Bruce says so,” she grumbled.

“No. Because I say so,” Clark countered sternly. “The Justice League is more important than some lunch date.”

“More important than me?” Lois scowled at him, looking upset.

He quickly backtracked, “That’s not what I meant. You know that.”

“I’m not so sure.” She shot out of her chair and stomped away. “Have fun with Bruce. I’ll go see my parents without you.”

Clark quickly followed her out of the kitchen. “Lois, wait.”
She grabbed her purse and stormed out of the apartment, slamming the door.

With a sigh, Clark sat down on the couch and gazed up at the ceiling. He felt like such a shitty boyfriend. For the past month, Lois has been so excited about introducing him to her parents. Clark knew how important it was to her... Yet, he had completely forgotten about it. Lately, he has been so busy with the Justice League that he barely has time for anything else.

Maybe he should skip the Justice League meeting… Clark imagined Bruce’s furious reaction and immediately changed his mind. No, that was definitely a bad idea. He really didn’t want to face Batman’s wrath. No one was allowed to skip the Justice League meetings, especially Superman. Also, those meetings were his only chance to hang out with Bruce…

Clark leaned over and held his face in his hands. What the hell is wrong with me? Lois was a great girlfriend, a wonderful girlfriend. So, why did his thoughts always circle back to Bruce? Did Lois have a point? Was he constantly catering to Bruce? Instead of making time for his girlfriend, Clark was running to Bruce’s every beck and call.

It wasn’t fair to Lois. Clark would apologize to her and try to fix things…after the Justice League meeting.

SxB

Around 11:30 AM, Superman flew to the Watchtower. Since he was thirty minutes early, he didn’t expect any of the other heroes to be there. Inside the Watchtower, Superman walked down an empty hallway, heading towards the conference room. Then he heard voices coming from the control room. He instantly recognized Bruce’s voice and hurried towards it.

When Superman entered the control room, he found Batman and Martian Manhunter sitting in front of a computer screen. Obviously, they were working on something.

Bruce looked away from the screen, noticing him. “You’re early.”

“Yeah.” Clark smiled as he strolled towards them. “What are you guys working on?”

“We found a way to hack all of Darkseid’s Mother Boxes. We made it impossible for him to teleport to Earth,” Batman explained.

Clark grinned happily. “Oh, wow. That’s cool. So, we don’t have to worry about Darkseid ever coming back?”

“In theory, yes,” Bruce replied.

“We should always remain vigilant in case the situation changes,” J’onn advised wisely.

“Yeah, of course.” Clark placed a hand on Bruce’s shoulder and leaned over him, studying the computer screen. The screen was full of numbers and alien letters that he couldn’t understand. “This is still really great news. You’re amazing.”

Bruce stared up at him, then Clark froze, realizing how close they were. His hand was still resting on Bruce’s shoulder and he was leaning into the vigilante’s personal space. Yet, Bruce’s heart rate hadn’t changed. There were no signs of fear or discomfort from him. Bruce was just...staring.

Suddenly nervous, Clark quickly removed his hand and stepped back. “B-Both of you are amazing. Good job.”
Martian Manhunter gave them a knowing look. “Do you two need a moment?”

“No!” They both yelled in unison, then Bruce and Clark shared an awkward glance.

“It’s almost time for the meeting. I have to prepare.” Batman stood and stomped away.

After Bruce left, J’onn let out a long sigh and complained, “On Mars, the mating rituals were much simpler.”

“It’s not like that, J’onn!” Superman snapped in embarrassment and stormed out of the room too.

About twenty minutes later, most of the league members were sitting at the round table, inside the conference room. Superman, Batman, Martian Manhunter, Wonder Woman, and Aquaman were all present. The only ones missing were Hal and Barry. Now the couple was running late. Bruce looked absolutely livid.

“Where the hell is Lantern and Flash?” Batman growled.

Superman listened for their heartbeats. He could hear them close by. “They’re in the Watchtower.”

“Which room?” Bruce demanded.

“Hal’s quarters.” Clark continued to listen. Soon, the two heartbeats became elevated, then he heard heavy breathing and the sound of a bed creaking.

“I’ll get them.” Batman stood to leave.

“Wait. Maybe you should leave them alone.” Clark blushed as he warned him, “I think they’re… uh, busy.”

“Hmph. They can fuck after the meeting.” Bruce angrily stormed away.

Diana, Arthur and J’onn all looked amused while Clark sighed. Poor Barry…

SxB

He was so close to cumming. Hal moaned while thrusting into Barry over and over. Barry panted underneath him, clutching his lover’s back. They were both in bed, naked and fucking for the second time today. Hal couldn’t get enough of Barry. He always wanted more.

Hal grabbed onto Barry’s hips and repositioned him. Then he rammed inside Barry’s hole again, hitting his prostate more directly. Barry let out a sharp gasp and his whole body trembled as he climaxed. His cum shot onto his stomach while Hal continued to fuck him. Just the sight of Barry’s pleasure was enough to push Hal over the edge.

He plunged into Barry one last time, cumming hard inside him and riding out the waves of ecstasy. Nothing felt better than this. Hal laid on top of Barry, trying to catch his breath. Meanwhile Barry wrapped his arms around him, holding him close. Hal could feel his cock starting to soften, but he stayed inside Barry, savoring the blissful moment.

Hal leaned his head to the side and kissed Barry deeply. Their tongues slid lazily against each other as they tasted each other’s mouths. Eventually, Hal pulled out of Barry and laid down beside him. Then he pulled Barry into his arms, spooning him from behind. Hal let out a sigh of contentment while resting his eyes. He had everything he could ever need right here. He didn’t even know how empty his life had been before he started dating Barry. Now he felt…whole. This was the happiest
he has been years.

Suddenly, the door swung open and banged against the wall. Then Batman barged into the room.

Hal and Barry both shrieked in surprise and frantically covered themselves with a blanket.

“What the shit, Spooky?! Can’t you knock?!” Hal shouted while Barry hid completely underneath the blanket.

Bruce snarled, “If you’re going to break my rule about dating, you can at least come to the meetings on time. Get your asses in the conference room. Now.”

Batman immediately turned and left, slamming the door on his way out.

“What an asshole,” Hal grumbled, then he glanced down at Barry, who was still hiding under the blanket. “Hey, Barry. You alright?”

Barry flung off the blanket and glared at Hal. His face was bright red with embarrassment.

“I can’t believe this! Why didn’t you lock the door?!?” Barry chucked a pillow at Hal’s head.

“How is this my fault?!” Hal whined.

SxB

After the Justice League meeting, Superman flew back to Metropolis. In the city, he caught a falling plane from the sky and saved several people from a burning factory. It was a typical afternoon. Eventually, he flew back to the apartment and changed into his normal clothes. Then he sat on the couch, waiting for Lois to return. He could hear her walking to the front door.

When she entered their apartment, Lois set down her purse and gave Clark a serious look. “We need to talk.”

“I know.” He sighed.

Lois walked to the couch and sat beside him. “I understand how important the Justice League is. Being Superman comes first. I can accept that. You’re a hero, and I love that about you…” She paused for a moment, looking distraught. “But, on your list of priorities, I don’t even feel like I’m in the top three.”

“What?” Clark reassured her, “Of course, you’re in the top three.”

“No, I’m not. Number one is protecting the world. Number two is the Justice League. And number three…” Lois swallowed nervously. “Number three is Bruce, isn’t it?”

Clark quickly shook his head, denying it. “Bruce is just a friend. More like a coworker, really.”

“Do you still love him?” she asked.

He froze for a second and said, “I love you, Lois.”

“You didn’t answer my question.”

“This isn’t about Bruce.” Clark reached toward Lois and held her hand. He gazed into her eyes as he swore, “I’m sorry that you don’t feel like a priority. I’ll try to make more time for you, I promise.”
“Okay…” She didn’t look completely convinced. “My parents are still in town. I invited them over for dinner. Will you be here tonight?”

“Of course. I really do want to meet them, Lois.”

“Good.” Lois smiled and squeezed his hand. “Help me cook dinner?”

“Sure.” He smiled back.

They walked to the kitchen together and started cooking dinner. Soon, the tension between them faded as they simply enjoyed each other’s company. Clark almost burned the food a few times, but Lois didn’t seem to mind. She laughed, finding it amusing.

Around 6 PM, dinner was ready. Clark helped Lois set up the table. Her parents would be arriving any minute now. Clark felt a little nervous about meeting them, but Lois reassured him multiple times that they would like him.

Suddenly, Clark heard several voices screaming across the city. He rushed toward a window and glanced outside. In the distance, he could see Luthor in the sky, flying in his Warsuit. The villain was out looking for a fight. He must have upgraded his armor again.

Lois stood next to him, staring out the window. “Is that Luthor?”

“Yeah…” Clark sighed, feeling guilty. “Lois, I have to go. I am so, so sorry.”

She gave him a sad, disappointed smile. “It’s okay. Do what you have to do.”

Clark immediately changed into his Superman suit and flew away.

SxB

Late at night, Clark returned to the apartment. He took a shower and changed his clothes. Lois was already asleep with the door to their bedroom closed. Clark felt so guilty for disappointing her again. He didn’t want to wake her, so he fell asleep on the couch.

In the morning, Clark woke up early and rushed to the store. He bought some donuts and kolaches, and a bouquet of flowers for Lois. Then he hurried back to the apartment and set the table.

When Lois stepped out of the bedroom, her breakfast was already on the kitchen table, waiting for her.

“You got kolaches?” She yawned sleepily as she walked into the kitchen.

Clark handed her the bouquet of pink lilies and roses. “I’m really, really sorry about last night.”

Lois took the flowers and smiled warmly. “It’s okay, Smallville. You had to fight Luthor. I get it.”

“It’s not okay,” he insisted. “I keep letting you down. Today, I just want to focus on us.”

“I’d like that.” She leaned toward Clark, about to kiss him.

“Clark! Clark, answer me!” Bruce’s voice suddenly came from the Bat-Comm. “CLARK!”

“Uh, excuse me for a second.” Clark reached into his pocket and pulled out the Bat-Comm. Then he turned away from Lois while hissing at the device, “Bruce, I’m kind of busy.”
“I don’t care. Drop whatever you’re doing and meet me at the Watchtower,” Bruce ordered.

Clark cringed while Lois scowled at him, looking offended. *Dammit, Bruce! Stop making my girlfriend mad at me!*

He angrily gritted his teeth. “Now is really not a good time. Call me tomorrow.”

“A Kryptonian ship is approaching Earth,” Bruce said unexpectedly.

Clark blinked in surprise. “What? You’re sure it’s Kryptonian?”

“Yes. This is an emergency.” Bruce explained, “The ship is flying here from the Phantom Zone. It could be Zod for all we know.”

Clark nervously glanced at Lois, then she nodded in understanding. “Go. This sounds important.”

“Thank you.” He gave her a grateful look, then he spoke into the Bat-Comm. “I’m on the way, Bruce.”

In a blur of super speed, Clark changed into his Superman suit and zoomed out the window.

SxB

Superman and Batman stood together in an empty field, waiting for the Kryptonian ship to arrive. Earlier, all of the Justice League members had assembled at the Watchtower. Using his advanced computers, Batman had plotted the ship’s course and calculated exactly where it was going to land. According to long range scanners, the Kryptonian ship was small like an escape pod.

“Do you really think it’s Zod?” Clark asked anxiously.

“It’s possible.” Bruce crossed his arms while staring up at the sky. “The ship is coming from the Phantom Zone. We need to be prepared for anything.”

Behind them, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Green Lantern, Flash, and Martian Manhunter were also standing in the field. They were all ready for a fight. If Zod really has returned, he would have to face the entire Justice League. Last time, Superman had fought Zod alone, but that was years ago. Now Superman had allies. He had a whole team.

Soon, Superman could see a small space pod in the sky. The pod was hurtling towards the Earth at a great speed, scorched with flames from entering the atmosphere. When the pod crashed into the ground, Superman listened for a heartbeat inside. There was someone in the ship, but it wasn’t Zod.

The space pod opened, revealing a young girl sitting inside. She had long blond hair and she was wearing Kryptonian clothing. The girl stared at them with wide, terrified eyes. She couldn’t have been older than thirteen.

“It’s okay. Don't be afraid.” Clark smiled and offered her a hand. “Hi, I’m Superman. What’s your name?”

She took his hand and stepped out of the pod. “I-I’m Kara Zor-El.”

*Zor-El? That name sounded familiar. Clark studied her face with interest. “Are you from Krypton, Kara?”*

She nodded. “Yes. I just left. I came here to watch my cousin Kal-El. I need to find him.”
Clark’s eyes widened in shock. “Your cousin?”

Batman gave her a discerning look. “You said you just left Krypton? Just now?”

“Yes. My parents sent me away because it was too dangerous. My cousin Kal-El was sent away too. He’s just a baby. I really need to find him,” she insisted.

“You already have,” Bruce informed her.

“I’m Kal-El,” Clark announced.

She gaped at him in confusion. “That…That’s not possible. You’re a grown man.”

“Your escape pod must’ve been knocked off course,” Batman explained. “You were in the Phantom Zone before coming here. That’s why you didn’t age. Time doesn’t pass in the Phantom Zone.”

Kara was silent for a moment like she was trying to process all of this. “So… Krypton is gone?” She stared up at Superman with tears in her eyes.

Clark gave her a sympathetic look. “I’m sorry. It’s been gone for a really long time.”

She sobbed as tears streamed down her face. Clark felt so sorry for her. The poor girl actually remembered Krypton. She could feel the loss of their home planet in a way Clark never could. His heart ached for her.

Clark placed a hand on her shoulder. “It’s okay. I’ll help you through this.”

Kara suddenly latched onto him. She hugged him while crying into his chest. At a loss for words, Clark simply patted her on the head. Then he glanced at Batman, hoping for directions. Bruce gave him a disconcerted look and shrugged. Clearly, he didn’t know what to do either.

All his life, Clark thought that he didn’t have any biological family left. Now he suddenly had a cousin to take care of.
Chapter Summary

Superman goes on a trip with Kara. Batman trains the new Robin.

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! Thanks for all the comments and kudos! Love you guys <3

I got hit by Hurricane Harvey this week, but my house didn't flood so I'm feeling pretty lucky. Hope all my fellow Texans are doing okay!

After a long day at the Daily Planet, Clark and Lois headed home together. They strolled down the crowded sidewalk while holding hands. It was already 7 PM and the sun was setting in the distance. Everything was peaceful in Metropolis at the moment. Clark stared up at the sky, feeling…content. For the past week, he hasn’t argued with Lois at all, which was nice. Their relationship was going well, so he should be happy. He was happy. Definitely happy…

While they walked, Lois talked about the big cocktail party happening this Saturday. It was the Daily Planet’s 80th anniversary. The newspaper company had published its first issue 80 years ago. Now all of the employees were expected to celebrate and attend the anniversary party. Lois was excited about it, but Clark always felt out of place at fancy parties. He didn’t want to go.

“Oh, come on, Smallville. It’ll be fun. You have to go,” Lois implored. “Literally everyone is going. Even Bruce.”

Clark gaped at her in surprise. “Bruce is going?”

“Well, yeah. He has to. He still owns the Daily Planet.”

“Oh. Right…” Clark almost forgot. Usually, Bruce stayed far away from the Daily Planet. Now Clark definitely didn’t want to go.

“Come on. It’ll be great.” Lois teased, “You can stand in a corner and brood with Bruce the whole time.”

Clark laughed and shook his head. “Bruce doesn’t brood at parties.”

“Do you think he’ll act like a playboy?” She grinned excitedly. “Oh, my God. I want to see that. I’ve heard he can get pretty wild.”

Clark cringed. “That’s what I’m afraid of.”

Lois gave him a worried look. “I thought you and Bruce were friends again. Are things still awkward between you two?”
“What? No,” he quickly denied it. “Everything’s fine between us.”

“Are you sure?” She didn’t seem convinced.

“Of course, I’m sure. I’ll go to the party with you.”

“Really?” Her face brightened.

He smiled. “You’ll need a date, won’t you?”

“Thanks, Smallville.” Lois happily hugged his arm as they walked.

Fuck… Clark really didn’t want to go to that party. He could already imagine Bruce getting drunk on champagne and flirting with everyone. It sounded like a living hell. Clark shook those thoughts from his mind. It didn’t matter if Bruce flirted with other people. Clark had Lois. Bruce could do whatever he wanted. Clark was fine with it. He was totally fine with it.

So, why did he feel sick to his stomach?

On the walk home, Clark continued to repress those feelings until they finally faded away. He reminded himself that Lois was a great girlfriend. He was lucky to have her. A monster like Clark was lucky to have anyone at all.

Eventually, they reached their apartment building. Clark and Lois stepped into the elevator and headed up to the tenth floor. Then they walked down the hall towards their apartment. Before Clark even opened the front door, he knew someone was inside. He could hear a familiar heartbeat in their living room. It was Kara. She wasn’t supposed to be here.

Clark angrily barged into the apartment. Then Kara immediately jumped off the couch, looking nervous. She was wearing a long hooded coat that was much too big for her.

“H-Hey,” she stuttered.

“What are you doing here?” Clark demanded. “Did you fly here?!”

“I was careful. No one saw my face, I swear,” Kara insisted.

“That doesn’t matter! Even if your face is hidden, people still saw you flying! What if Luthor saw you?! If he suspects another Kryptonian is here, he’ll-!” Clark let out a sigh of frustration and sat down on the couch, holding his face in his hands.

“I’m sorry. I just wanted to see you.” Kara sounded remorseful.

“Do the Danvers know you’re here?” Lois asked.

“No,” the girl muttered.

“They must be worried sick. I’ll call them.” Lois pulled out her cellphone and walked into the kitchen.

From the living room, Clark could hear Lois on the phone, talking to Kara’s adoptive mother. “Hi, Eliza. Yeah, Kara is here with us. She’s okay.”

Clark finally raised his head and glanced up at Kara. She was standing in front of him, looking guilty.
“I’m sorry.” She sniffled like she was about to cry. “I didn’t mean to make you mad.”

All of his anger dissipated as he sighed. “I’m not mad at you, Kara. I’m just trying to keep you safe. I have a lot of enemies. You have no idea…”

She gave him a determined look. “I have all the same powers you do. I could help you fight your enemies.”

“No,” Clark replied sternly. “You’re just a kid. That’s why I brought you to the Danvers family. You can have a normal childhood with them just like I did with the Kents.”

“But I wasn’t sent to Earth to have a normal childhood. I was sent here to protect you,” she argued.

“I don’t need your protection, Kara. And I don’t want you to use your powers. You can have a completely normal life with a normal family. The Danvers are good people. They’re allies of the Justice League. You can trust them. They’ll love you like their own.”

“The Danvers have been kind to me… But they are not my family. You are.”

“Just give it time,” he assured her. “They’ll become family to you.”

“All of my family is dead, except for you,” she said stubbornly.

“Kara…” Clark sympathized with her. “I know this is a big adjustment-”

“Adjustment? My whole planet is gone. My parents are dead. And, so are yours.” Kara glared at him. “But it must be so easy for you. How can you mourn for a family you’ve never met?”

“I have met my father.” He added, “Well, kind of.”

She blinked in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“Before my father died, he created an A.I. based on himself.”

“So, Jor-El still exists?” she asked hopefully.

“In a way.” He shrugged.

“Can I see him?” Kara sat beside Clark and grabbed onto his arm as she pleaded desperately, “Please, I want to see my uncle. Please!”

“Okay, okay. I’ll take you to him,” Clark quickly agreed. “But afterwards you have to go home to the Danvers, alright?”

She smiled tearfully as she hugged him. “Thank you, Kal-El.”

SxB

After changing into his Superman suit, Clark flew to the Arctic with Kara. It was freezing cold and the wind was blowing fiercely as usual. Soon, they landed on the snowy ground in front of the Fortress of Solitude. Kara gazed up at the large fortress in awe. It was an impressive structure, and the huge pillars of ice crisscrossed over each other with an ethereal beauty. Unfortunately, this place was full of ugly memories…

Clark took a deep breath and forced himself to enter the fortress. Kara followed closely behind him. He walked through the main entryway and froze. Clark gazed down at the floor, feeling
physically ill. This was the spot where he had pinned Bruce to the ground. He could still hear Bruce’s screams in his head, echoing off the walls. He remembered the way Bruce cried, the way he begged.

“Clark, please stop. Please-”

It was sickening. What Clark did to him… It was so wrong. So evil. *I’m a monster.* Clark felt like he was suffocating. He couldn’t breathe. Horrible images swarmed in his mind, tormenting him. Graphic, hideous details of his crime flashed before his eyes. He remembered the sound of Bruce’s bones breaking and the look of terror in his eyes. It was all too vivid. Too clear. *I deserve to die.*

“I-I can’t do this.” Clark quickly turned and rushed toward the exit.

“Wait.” Kara chased after him. “Aren’t you coming with me?”

“I’ll wait outside.” He stepped out of the fortress while Kara stood in the doorway, watching him.

“What’s wrong?” She looked worried.

Clark paced back and forth in the snow. He still felt sick to his stomach and he couldn’t stop trembling. “I just…can’t be in there. Go on without me. My father will be happy to see you.”

“Oh.” Kara still looked concerned. “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine. Just go!” he snapped at her.

Kara hurried back inside and shut the door.

While she was gone, Clark continued to pace anxiously. No matter how fast he breathed, he still felt like he wasn’t getting enough air. He was choking on his own self-hatred. His mind raced with suicidal thoughts. For a moment, he considered flying into the sun and burning himself to death.

No. No! *I promised to live. I promised to try!* Clark kneeled down in the snow and held his face in his hands. He had been doing so well lately. He couldn’t give up now. Things have been getting better. Bruce wanted him to live. And Clark had a duty to the Justice League. He had a responsibility to protect Earth.

Clark stood and gazed up at the sky. Snowflakes gently fell down, melting on his face. He focused on taking deep steady breaths, trying to calm himself. He needed to fight the suicidal urges. Superman had work to do. He had a purpose. He couldn’t die. Not yet. Too many people wanted him to live.

He waited outside in the cold for quite some time. It felt like forever, but eventually Kara stepped out of the fortress. She walked toward him cautiously like she was expecting him to lose his composure again.

“Did you two have a good talk?” he asked.

“Yes, thank you…” Kara seemed concerned. “Your father’s A.I. is worried about you, Kal-El. You haven’t visited him in over a year.”

Clark sighed. “I know. The next time you see him, can you tell him I’m sorry?”

“What’s troubling you?” she pried. “Why can’t you go inside the fortress? Did something happen there?”
“Nothing happened.”

“Don’t lie to me. No matter what happened, you can tell me. We’re family.”

“We’re strangers,” he blurted out.

Her eyes widened in shock. She looked so hurt. Clark felt like an asshole.

“I-I’m sorry,” he tried to apologize.

“No, you’re right.” She clenched her fists as she glared at him. Her large blue eyes were brimming with tears. “You don’t remember me at all. You don’t remember anything about our home world… I’m nothing but a stranger to you, Clark.”

“Kara, I’m sorry.”

She quickly blasted into the sky, flying away. Clark watched her leave, feeling frustrated with himself. Why did he always screw everything up?

SxB

Superman flew back to Metropolis, still feeling miserable. He headed home and entered his apartment through a tenth story window. In the living room, he found Lois sitting on the couch. She was surrounded by stacks of papers and her laptop was on the coffee table. Obviously, she had been working on something.

Lois glanced at him, then continued typing on her laptop. “Hey, Smallville. How’s Kara?”

Clark listened for Kara’s heartbeat and heard her back at the Danvers house. “She’s with her family,” he muttered as he flopped down on the couch.

“You’re her family too, you know,” Lois reminded him.

“Yeah, but the Danvers are better than me,” he said sadly.

“That’s not true. Come here.” Lois wrapped an arm around Clark, pulling him close.

He leaned against her while staring at her laptop. There were strange blueprints on the computer screen.

“What’s that?” he asked.

“I’ve been investigating,” she announced proudly.

“Investigating what?”

“LexCorp.”

Clark immediately sat up straight and focused on the laptop. “What did you find?”

“There’s an unmarked warehouse on the outskirts of town,” Lois explained. “I think Luthor is storing kryptonite there. It’s heavily guarded, and he’s trying to keep the place a secret. These are blueprints of the building.”

“How did you get this?”
“I’m the Daily Planet’s best investigative journalist, remember. No secrets are safe from me,” she bragged.

He smiled. “This is great, Lois.”

She took a flash drive from the laptop and handed it to him. “Here’s everything I found.”

“Thank you. You’re amazing,” he said gratefully.

Lois smirked. “I know.”

Stepping to the side, Batman dodged another attack from the new Robin. Jason lunged at his mentor again, punching and kicking recklessly. Bruce continued to dodge every attack until he lost his patience. When the boy tried to kick him again, Batman caught Jason’s leg and threw him across the Batcave.

Jason crashed onto the ground, then instantly jumped to his feet. He screamed in frustration and charged at Batman again. When the boy tried to hit him, Bruce grabbed his arm and twisted it behind his back. Jason yelped in pain, but continued to struggle against Bruce’s hold. If Batman wasn’t careful, he could accidentally break the kid’s arm.

With a sigh, Bruce released the boy’s arm. “That’s enough for tonight.”

“But we’re just getting started!” Jason yelled angrily.

“You can’t learn anything like this. You aren’t thinking clearly. Tonight all of your attacks have been sloppy and uncoordinated.”

“Fuck you!” Jason swung a fist at him.

Batman easily caught the boy’s fist and flung him to the ground again. “Calm down, Jason. Why are you so pissed off?”

Jason furiously punched the ground as he shouted, “Because I’ve been training for months and I still can’t hit you!”

Bruce sighed. “You are improving, Jason. It just takes time.”

Jason stood and crossed his arms, pouting silently.

About six months ago, Bruce had found the boy trying to steal tires off the Batmobile. Jason Todd was only twelve years old, but he was very street-smart. The kid has had a rough life. His father was a criminal and his mother was drug-addict. To support himself, Jason had started stealing at a young age. He was following the same path as his father. Bruce knew if he didn’t intervene, Jason would probably go to jail one day. The boy had so much pent-up rage.

To help the kid, Bruce decided to take him in and train him to be the next Robin. Bruce had hoped that fighting crime would be a good outlet for all of Jason’s anger. For the most part, it seemed to work. Jason took his responsibility as Robin very seriously, and he had a natural talent for fighting. He wasn’t graceful and acrobatic like Dick, but Jason fought with a brutality his predecessor never had.

At the moment, Dick wasn’t even living in Gotham. After he turned fifteen, he left and formed his
own team. Now Dick was in Jump City, leading the Teen Titans. Bruce still believed that Dick had a lot to learn, but lately he had been busy just dealing with Jason. The new Robin was a handful.

Jason huffed in annoyance. “Since we’re done training, can we go on patrol now?”

“That depends if you can behave,” Batman replied sternly.

“Oh, come on,” Jason complained. “Let’s go. I need to hit somebody.”

“You’re not going anywhere until you calm down.”

“I am calm!” Jason exploded in anger.

Bruce rolled his eyes underneath his cowl. He cared about this kid, but sometimes Jason really tried his patience.

When he felt a strong gust of wind blow through the cave, Batman quickly turned around and placed a hand on his utility belt. Then he spotted Superman and blinked in surprise.

“Hey, Bruce.” Clark smiled nervously as he walked across the cave, towards him.

“Hey…” Bruce took his hand off his utility belt. “W-What? Why are you here?”

“I need a favor.” Superman held up a flash drive. “This contains information on a LexCorp warehouse. Luthor might be storing kryptonite there. Maybe even red kryptonite…” Clark looked away sheepishly. “Obviously, I can’t check it out myself.”

“I’ll look into it.” Batman took the flash drive. “Good job finding this.”

“Uh. Actually, Lois figured it all out.”

“Oh... Good for her,” Bruce said coldly. He crossed his arms, feeling awkward. “How are… things with her?”

“Good.” Clark paused uncomfortably. “Things are… really good.”

“That’s good.”

“Yeah… It is.”

They both avoided looking at each other until Clark broke the silence between them, “Well, I better go.”

“Okay.” Bruce nodded.

Clark turned and started to walk away. Then he stopped and glanced over his shoulder at Bruce. “It was good seeing you.”

“Yeah.” Bruce gave him a small smile. “It was good seeing you too.”

Superman returned the same tenuous smile then he zoomed away in a blur of super speed. As soon as the hero disappeared, Bruce felt a familiar ache in his chest and tried to ignore it.

Jason stared at him in confusion. “That was weird.”

“Shut up, Jason.” Bruce hurried toward the Batcomputer and inserted the flash drive. He sat down
while studying the warehouse blueprints.

Jason stood by the computer, watching him curiously. “So, what’s the deal with you and Superman? I thought you two were supposed to be friends.”

“We are friends.” Batman focused on the computer screen.

“Uh, friends don’t act like that. You guys are so awkward around each other. It’s painful to watch.”

“Shut up. We’re leaving.” Bruce shot out of his chair and stormed across the cave.

“What?” Jason gaped at him.

“We’re going to Metropolis. We have to search that warehouse.” He headed towards the Batplane.

“Right now?”

“Yes, right now. Move it,” Batman growled.

“Awesome!” Jason grinned excitedly as he followed his mentor. “Let’s go beat up some LexCorp thugs!”
In the fancy ballroom, all of the guests were mingling and drinking champagne. Clark was dressed in his most expensive suit, but he still felt out of place. It was the Daily Planet’s 80th anniversary party, and everyone here was associated with the company somehow. Yet Clark only recognized a handful of people in the room. Lois, on the other hand, seemed to know everybody.

Clark walked with Lois while she happily greeted all their colleagues. She actually knew all of their names, which was impressive. She looked beautiful and confident, in her elegant blue cocktail dress. When Perry and two other editors approached them, Lois talked business with the men for at least twenty minutes. Clark simply smiled and nodded during the conversation. He was so bored.

Staring across the ballroom, Clark spotted a large crowd around the entrance. Then he saw Bruce shaking hands with several people. As always, the billionaire was attracting a lot of attention. Bruce smiled charmingly while greeting the guests. His dark hair was slicked back and he looked amazing in his perfectly tailored suit. Time hadn’t changed anything. He was still the most handsome man Clark had ever seen.

When Bruce noticed him staring, he looked directly at Clark and smirked. God, that smirk…

Suddenly, Clark felt weak in the knees as his pulse quickened. He was struck by a strong sense of déjà vu. Clark remembered the first time he met Bruce without the cape and cowl. Tonight Bruce looked exactly the same as he did that night at the Wayne Fundraiser. He was just as gorgeous. Just as breathtaking…

Eventually, Bruce left the crowd and headed across the ballroom towards the balcony. He opened a glass door and stepped outside. Now he was alone.

“Excuse me,” Clark said absentmindedly as he walked away from Lois and the editors.

He hurried to the glass door and stepped outside, onto the balcony. Bruce was leaning against the railing as he stared across the city. They were on the sixtieth floor of a building in downtown Metropolis. The sky was pitch-dark, but the city was illuminated with thousands of lights.

Bruce turned around to face him. “Hey.”
“Hey.” Clark smiled nervously and cleared his throat. “So… Uh, have you checked the warehouse yet?”

Bruce nodded. “Yeah. I found some kryptonite, but it was all green.”

“Oh, okay.” He asked awkwardly, “Have you had any luck at all finding…you know, red-”

“Yes. This year I’ve destroyed two pounds of red kryptonite.”

Clark grinned brightly. “Wow! That’s great. Thank you.”

Bruce smiled and shrugged. “Well, I’m still looking. So, if you get any more leads, let me know.”

“Yeah, of course,” Clark agreed.

The glass door swung open and a businessman stepped outside. “Excuse me, Mr. Wayne. My associates would like a moment of your time.”

Bruce gave the man an annoyed look. “I’ll be right out.”

The businessman hurried away, shutting the glass door. Now Clark and Bruce were alone on the balcony again.

“I hate these fucking cocktail parties,” Bruce grumbled under his breath.

“Yeah, me too.” Clark sighed. “I’m surprised you haven’t started drinking yet.”

“Oh, I’m about to.”

Clark chuckled. “Well, don’t get too drunk.”

“Hmph. I’ll get as drunk as I want,” Bruce said petulantly as he entered the ballroom.

“Hmph. I’ll get as drunk as I want,” Bruce said petulantly as he entered the ballroom.

Smiling to himself, Clark shook his head while he watched Bruce saunter away. Some things would never change. Bruce could be so stubborn and difficult at times. Clark used to find those traits frustrating. But now… it was just endearing. He liked everything about Bruce, even his flaws.

With a sigh, Clark chastised himself. What the hell is wrong with me? Sometimes, he almost forgot what he had done to Bruce. Memories of the brutal assault rushed through his mind as Clark shuddered in disgust. Everything was different now… It didn’t matter how much he was attracted to Bruce. Clark could never act on those feelings again.

Through the glass, Clark could see Lois waving at him. Obviously, she wanted his company. Poor Lois… Clark shouldn’t have been ogling Bruce. He was such a shitty boyfriend. Feeling guilty, Clark left the balcony and headed across the ballroom towards Lois.

SxB

Bruce was on his fourth glass of champagne. He drank while staring across the ballroom. Right now he was surrounded by a group of editors and business executives. The employees were all talking about something business-related, but Bruce was ignoring them. He didn’t give a shit what they had to say. Even though he owned the company, Bruce rarely got involved in the Daily Planet’s business.

Across the room, Clark and Lois were standing together, mingling with other employees. Lois was hanging off Clark’s arm like a fucking leech. How annoying… Clark was the only person here
Bruce actually wanted to talk to. But Lois was keeping him on a tight leash.

Bruce chugged the rest of his champagne and handed the empty glass to a waiter. Thankfully, the waiter gave him a new glass. Bruce drank more champagne while watching Clark and Lois across the ballroom. Now Lois was leaning against Clark and laughing. *Show-off...* Clearly, Lois wanted everyone to know that she was dating Clark. It was so irritating. Why couldn’t she be more discrete?

Unexpectedly, Bruce felt someone smack his ass from behind. *What the-?*

Surprised, he turned around to face a giggling blond woman. She was obviously *very* drunk. The woman swayed on her feet, then latched on Bruce’s arm.

“Hey, Miister Wayne. You’re so hot. C’mere, hang out with me.” The woman tugged on Bruce’s arm, pulling him away from the boring crowd.

Bruce smirked at the group of businessmen, immediately switching to his playboy persona. “Excuse me, gentlemen. I have a lady to entertain.”

The crowd laughed while one man complained, “Lucky bastard.”

Bruce gave his champagne glass to a waiter as the woman led him away. She leaned on his shoulder for support. She was so drunk that she could hardly walk.

“Ma name’s Cat. Cat Grant,” she slurred while hanging off of him.

Bruce faked a smile. “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Cat.”

“We’ve met before.”

“Oh. Have we?”

Cat roughly yanked him closer, clawing at his suit. “Fuck me in the elevator.”

Bruce laughed and tried to ease her away from him. “Maybe later. When you’re sober.”

“Oh, c’mon!” she whined. “I wanna screw the great Bruce Wayne.”

Cat grabbed his ass again, then Bruce swatted her hand away. “Hey! Settle down.”

She licked her lips and grinned lopsidedly. “Let me blow you.”

Bruce sighed in frustration. “Maybe I should get you a cab.”

“That’s a great idea. Let’s fuck in the cab.” She cawed at his suit again.

“No, let’s not.” He gently pushed her away.

Suddenly, the orchestra started playing, then several guests began to dance in the middle of the ballroom. Bruce glanced to the side and spotted Lois dragging Clark to the dance floor. *That bitch!*

Bruce felt a surge of irrational anger. His rage didn’t make any sense, and that only pissed him off even more. He probably had one too many drinks. He didn’t care if Lois had her hands all over Clark. He didn’t…

Bruce furiously gritted his teeth as he watched the couple. Lois’s arms were draped around Clark’s shoulders, holding him close while they danced.
“Cat, do you want to dance?” Bruce growled.

“Oh, mah gawd! Yes,” she agreed enthusiastically.

Bruce grabbed Cat’s arm and led her to the dance floor. He purposely headed toward Clark and Lois. Then he took Cat’s hand while resting his other hand on her back. Bruce started waltzing with the drunk woman, right next to Clark and Lois.

While he danced, Clark kept glancing at Bruce over and over. Apparently, he was stealing all the attention away from Lois. Bruce smirked to himself, feeling smug. Then Lois leaned her head against Clark’s chest, hugging her boyfriend tightly. Oh, she was crafty. It was such an intimate embrace. Now Clark and Lois looked like a picture perfect couple. Bruce wanted to ruin it.

“I’m going to twirl you,” he told Cat.

“Like a ballerina?” She grinned.

“Yes, like a ballerina,” he agreed darkly.

Without further warning, Bruce began to spin the intoxicated woman. She twirled repeatedly, picking up more and more speed. Soon, she lost control of her footing. Then Bruce released Cat and let her crash into Lois and Clark.

Clark and Lois were bumped apart while Clark grabbed onto Cat, catching her before she hit the floor.

“Oops. Clumsy me.” Bruce smirked wickedly.

Cat leaned over, looking ill. “Ugh. I’m gonna throw up.”

“Come on, let’s go to the bathroom.” Lois quickly took Cat’s hand and led her away.

After the ladies left, Clark scowled at Bruce. “Did you do that on purpose?”

“Do what?” Bruce feigned innocence.

“You know what. You made Cat sick,” Clark said accusingly.

“How?” Bruce huffed as he crossed his arms. “She kept annoying me and grabbing my ass. So I may have had some fun at her expense.”

Clark blinked in surprise, then he cracked up, laughing. Obviously, he was amused by Bruce’s antics. “Oh, my God. You’re so petty.”

“Apparently, I haven’t changed much.” Bruce shrugged.

Clark smiled fondly. “No. No, you haven’t. You’re the same old Bruce.”

“Who are you calling old?”

Clark laughed again. “Are you drunk?”

“Just a little,” Bruce admitted, smiling as he stumbled slightly.

“Be careful.” Clark grabbed Bruce’s arm to steady him.
Bruce regained his balance, then he stared down at Clark’s hand as the seconds slowly ticked by. Clark was still touching him… Bruce could feel the heat from Clark’s hand through his clothes. The grip was so firm like the Kryptonian didn’t want to let go.

Eventually, Clark released him, looking guilty. “I-I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be.” Bruce gazed into his eyes.

Clark stared back at him, mesmerized. “Bruce, I-”

Suddenly, there was a loud blast. The floor shook and people screamed as all the windows shattered, sending shards of broken glass flying across the ballroom. Clark instantly yanked on Bruce’s arm and held him close. Glass zoomed all around them while Clark shielded Bruce from the blast.

For a moment, Bruce stood still, safely wrapped in Clark’s embrace. His breath caught in his throat, stunned by the sudden closeness. How long has it been since Clark held him like this? Bruce shook that frivolous thought from his mind. Someone had attacked the party. Bruce needed to assess the situation and plan his next move.

He stepped away from Clark, scanning the ballroom. Several injured people were on the floor and there was a large hole in the wall by the balcony. Standing on the rumble, Lex Luthor slowly walked towards them. The villain was wearing his Warsuit made of powered armor.

Fuck! Bruce felt a jolt of panic as he tightly clenched his fists. The buzz from the champagne had completed disappeared. Now he felt stone cold sober.

While Luthor approached them, many of the guests tried to run away. But then a group of masked men appeared and blocked all the exits. The masked men were obviously employed by Luthor. The thugs pointed guns at the terrified guests and ordered them to drop to the floor. When some of the guests didn’t obey quickly enough, the thugs fired their weapons at the ceiling. Screams filled the air as all the guests immediately complied.

Bruce and Clark had no choice in the matter. They both kneeled on the floor like good hostages. If they fought now, they would risk revealing their secret identities. Bruce didn’t have a Batsuit with him, but he knew Clark could change into his Superman suit quickly if he had a chance to escape unseen. Bruce needed to give him that chance…

The helmet portion of Luthor’s armor retracted, then he stepped out of the Warsuit. Now Luthor was more vulnerable, dressed only in a black business suit. The villain straightened his tie and pulled out a necklace from underneath his collar. On the necklace, there was a large piece of green kryptonite.

With a smirk, Luthor calmly strolled toward Bruce and Clark. All around them, thugs were pointing guns at civilians. Bruce seethed silently, waiting for the right moment. There was nothing he could do right now.

“Bruce,” Luthor drawled smugly. “Long time no see.”

“Lex,” Bruce copied the villain’s tone mockingly. “If you wanted to come this badly, you should’ve told me. I would’ve sent an invitation.”

Luthor chuckled. “Oh, Bruce. Always playing the fool.”

Bruce shut his mouth as he tensed anxiously. That comment alarmed him. Since when did Luthor
suspect his playboy persona was an act?

Luthor glanced at Clark with a knowing smirk.

“Mr. Kent, I don’t think we’ve been properly introduced.” Luthor bent down, leaning over Clark who was still kneeling on the floor.

When the villain leaned forward, his necklace swayed in front of Clark’s face. The green kryptonite on the chain was dangling dangerously close to the hero. Clark trembled slightly as he eyed the necklace. He looked physically ill like he would pass out if the kryptonite came any closer.

“What’s wrong, Kent? You look a little pale,” Luthor taunted him.

Clark turned his face away, wincing in pain.

“Look at me when I’m talking to you,” Luthor snarled as he grabbed a handful of Clark’s hair, forcing him to face the kryptonite again.

Clark glared at the villain with hatred burning in his eyes. He was only inches away from the green kryptonite. Clark was obviously in pain. His face had a sheen of cold sweat, but he clenched his jaw, refusing to make a sound. Luthor released his hair, then he ripped the glasses off Clark’s face. Even in the civilian clothes, Clark Kent looked like Superman now. There was so much anger in his smoldering blue eyes.

Luthor dropped the glasses on the floor and stomped on them. Then he leaned close to Clark, hissing in his face. “You know, Kent, you remind me of someone.”

The villain grabbed the piece of green kryptonite and held it towards Clark’s face. Clark didn’t move, suffering silently. He still glared at Luthor with the same stony expression. The evil bastard was torturing him. At this rate, Clark would pass out in the next few seconds. Bruce watched, shaking with righteous anger. The urge to protect his friend was overwhelming. He couldn’t stop himself.

Springing into action, Bruce lunged at Luthor and tackled him to the ground. Several of Luthor’s thugs rushed over, shouting and firing their weapons. Bruce quickly punched Luthor in the face and pulled the villain in front of him like a human shield. As expected, the thugs stopped shooting. Then Bruce hit Luthor again and reached toward his belt, stealing a hidden gun.

Bruce stood behind Luthor, pointing the gun at his head. All around them, Luthor’s men had their weapons aimed at him. Bruce was surrounded, but he knew the henchmen wouldn’t shoot as long as he held their boss hostage.

He glanced to the side, searching for Clark. With a surge of relief, he realized that Clark was gone. During all the commotion, the Kryptonian had enough time to escape without anyone noticing.

Luthor huffed in annoyance. “Let me go, Bruce. I know you won’t kill me.”

“You wanna bet?” Bruce growled as he jabbed the barrel of the gun into Luthor’s skull.

The villain turned his head to the side so Bruce could see his ugly smirk. “You wouldn’t break your rule.”

What the fuck?! Bruce froze in shock. His heart dropped to his stomach as his thoughts raced anxiously. Luthor knew... That explained his comment about Bruce playing the fool, and the way
he shoved kryptonite in Clark’s face. The bastard knew *everything*. This was bad. This was very fucking bad.

“Put down the gun or I’ll order my men to shoot everyone in this room,” Luthor threatened.

Hesitating, his hand shook as he held the gun to Luthor’s head. For a brief moment, Bruce considered breaking his rule and killing Luthor. Was that the only way to protect himself and Clark? The villain knew their identities. Now they weren’t safe. Their friends and families weren’t safe. But Bruce could fix that problem right here and right now if he’d just pull the trigger.

Bruce let out a shaky breath. He could hear his heart pounding in his head as his finger twitched slightly on the trigger of the gun. Logically, killing Luthor was the smartest option. The safest option… But Bruce wasn’t a murderer.

He dropped the gun on the floor, then Luthor immediately whirled around and punched him in the face. Bruce stumbled back, then one of Luthor’s thugs pistol-whipped him. Falling to his knees, Bruce clasped the side of his head, wincing in pain. A trail of blood was dripping down his forehead from being hit with a gun.

Luthor gazed across the ballroom and said nonchalantly, “Oh, Kent escaped. How convenient.”

The villain bent down next to Bruce. “Don’t worry. I’m sure he’ll come back for you. I’m counting on it.”

When Bruce turned his face away, Luthor grabbed his chin and forcefully tilted his head back. Bruce glared up at the bastard while Luthor cupped his cheek, caressing his face. “It was all so obvious. Why didn’t I see it sooner?”

Bruce furiously smacked his hand away. “Don’t touch me.”

More of the henchmen pointed guns at him while Luthor smirked in amusement. “I thought you’d be used to that kind of treatment. Didn’t Superman have his way with you?”

“I have no idea what the fuck you’re talking about,” Bruce growled.

“After the red kryptonite, I thought you learned your lesson, but no.” Luthor snatched a handful of Bruce’s hair and painfully wrenched his head to the side. “You still come to my city and steal from me. I have no more patience for you, Batman.”

“Batman?” Bruce let out a fake laugh. “Lex, come on. You know me. I’m not Bat-”

“How fucking stupid do you think I am?!” He exploded in anger. “The Joker is obsessed with you, Bruce! Every time there’s a Wayne Fundraiser, he shows up, looking for you. Why is that? Why is the Joker so interested in you?”

Bruce stared at him with wide eyes. “I…I don’t know.”

“Don’t play dumb with me!” Luthor yanked on his hair again, tilting his head back. “I figured it all out. I read those old articles about you and Clark Kent. You’ve been fucking Superman for a long time, haven’t you?”

“Lex, you’re delusional.”

“Shut up!” He hit Bruce in the face.
Bruce toppled to the side then Luthor grabbed the collar of his suit, pulling him back onto his knees. “You know what’s really pathetic.” Luthor leaned close to him and hissed in his ear, “Superman raped you and you still went back to him. You must’ve liked it.”

With a surge of anger, Bruce head-butted the villain. Luthor grunted in pain as blood flowed down from his nose.

“You fucking faggot!” Luthor suddenly kicked Bruce in the stomach. Then he wiped the blood from his nose and marched back to his Warsuit, yelling at his henchmen, “Carry him to the roof!”

Five thugs grabbed Bruce at the same time.

SxB

On the roof of the tall building, Bruce was shoved down to his knees again. He kneeled on the concrete, surrounded by Luthor’s men. One thug pressed a gun to the back of Bruce’s head. If Luthor gave the order, Bruce would be dead within a second.

Across from him, Luthor stood on the roof, wearing his Warsuit again. He was holding the piece of kryptonite in his gloved hand. The villain knew that glowing green rock was the only thing keeping Superman away from the roof.

What was Luthor’s plan? To use Bruce as bait? He hoped Superman wasn’t stupid enough to fall for that trick… God dammit. Who am I kidding? Of course, Clark would fall for that.

Bruce hatefully glared at the villain. At least they were on the roof, away from all the guests. Right now it was only Bruce’s life in danger.

Suddenly he heard a familiar female voice screaming, “Let go of me!”

“Lois?!” Bruce turned his head, then the henchman whacked him with the gun.

Stars flashed before his eyes as Bruce groaned in pain. He had a splitting headache and for a moment, the whole world was spinning.

The henchmen carried Lois across the roof and pushed her down, onto her knees. She gave him a worried look. “Bruce, are you okay?! Where’s Clark?! What hap-?!”

She immediately shut her mouth when one of Luthor’s men shoved a gun to her head.

“Clark should be joining us shortly.” Luthor strolled toward them, the heavy boots of his powered armor clunking with every step. He held up the piece of green kryptonite, admiring it.

“Tonight, we’re going to have a little experiment,” Luthor announced. “Now, we all know that Superman is faster than a speeding bullet. But is he faster than two bullets? That’s the real question.”

Bruce had a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. The two bullets were the ones pointed at him and Lois…

“I know you’re watching, Superman.” Luthor gazed up at the sky. “I have a lead container with me. I’m going to put away the kryptonite as soon as I order my men to shoot. You’ll have a split second to decide who you’re going to save. Lois Lane or Bruce Wayne? The anticipation is killing me.” The villain chuckled to himself. “And don’t bother calling the rest of the Justice League. Trust me, they’re all busy right now. Brainiac and I had an arrangement.”
“Enough of this bullshit!” Bruce shouted in outrage. “If you want to kill me, just do it.”

“Oh, I will kill you. But, first, Superman has to choose,” Luthor insisted.

“Why?”

“Because I want him to suffer,” Luthor snarled with a deranged look in his eyes. His hatred for the Kryptonian seemed to drive him mad. “Just like you had to choose between Rachel Dawes and Harvey Dent. It’s Superman’s turn. Tonight he has to decide who will die.”

“This is pointless! I already know what will happen,” Bruce argued frantically. “He’s going to save Lois! Just like all the other times. No matter what, Superman has always saved Lois Lane. That’s fucking public knowledge!”

“Public knowledge means nothing. I’m more interested in Superman’s dirty little secrets.” He ruffled Bruce’s hair and smirked at Lois. “What do you think, Lois? Will your hero let you die?”

Lois stared at him silently. She was pale with fear.

Bruce tried to reassure her, “Lois, you’ll be fine. Superman is going to save you.”

“Is he? She doesn’t look so sure,” Luthor quipped.

“You sick bastard!” Bruce shouted, then he felt the barrel of a gun pushing against his skull again.

“Enough chit-chat. It’s decision time.” Luthor walked to the center of the roof, between Bruce and Lois. The villain took out a small lead container, then held up the kryptonite. “Fire on my command,” he ordered.

“Three!” Luthor shouted.

Bruce stared across the roof at Lois. She was gazing back at him with wide, terrified eyes. The man behind her had a gun pressed directly against her head. Superman was fast, but even he couldn’t be in two places at once. He’d only have a fraction of a second. Could he stop both bullets? Luthor seemed sure that he couldn’t.

“Two!”

Tears streamed down Lois’s face like she was grieving for him. Bruce was struck by a sudden thought. Is she the last thing I’ll see before I die?

“One!”

Bruce tensed, steeling himself for the gunshot. This was okay. He’d take a bullet for Lois. He hoped she could make Clark happy.

“Shoot!” Luthor shut the kryptonite inside the lead box right as both guns fired.

Everything happened so fast. Suddenly, Bruce felt a gust of wind behind him and he was pushed to the ground as two red lasers shot across the roof. The lasers hit the gun pointed at Lois, but it was too late. The weapon had already fired. Lois fell to the ground, bleeding from her head.

Shocked, Bruce let out a shaky breath as he glanced to the side. Superman was standing next to him with a crushed gun in his hand. Clark had saved him instead of Lois… Why?

In the blink of an eye, Superman zoomed across the roof and hit all of the Luthor’s henchmen,
incapacitating them. They all fell to the floor, unconscious. Then Clark charged at Luthor and punched the villain with all his strength. The force of the blow sent Luthor hurtling across the sky. Without his Warsuit, Luthor wouldn’t have survived that attack. The Kryptonian chased after him, disappearing into the distance.

While Superman fought with Luthor, Bruce stumbled to his feet and staggered toward Lois’s limp body. He kneeled down beside her, feeling strangely numb. Why? Bruce didn’t understand. He had been prepared to die. He had expected it. It should have been me.

He reached toward Lois and rolled her onto her side. The back of her head was drenched with blood yet her skull seemed intact. Bruce’s eyes widened when he saw her take a shallow breath. She was still alive!

Bruce quickly gathered Lois in his arms and lifted her off the ground. Then he ran off the roof, carrying her down a stairwell. When they reached the elevator, Bruce pushed the button for the first floor and leaned his back against the wall. The elevator descended while he held Lois in his arms. He felt the back of her head with his hand, assessing the damage. The bullet must’ve grazed her scalp. When Clark shot his heat vision at the gun, he had knocked the bullet off course.

Lois barely opened her eyes, gazing up at him. “B-Bruce?”

“It’s okay. You’ll be okay,” he assured her.

“What happened?”

“You were shot… I’m sorry,” Bruce muttered, feeling guilty. He didn’t understand Clark’s decision. By saving Bruce first, he had risked Lois’s life.

She smiled weakly. “We both survived. That’s all that matters.”

“Of course.” Bruce nodded.

Lois shut her eyes, hanging limply in his arms. She had lost consciousness again.

Worried, Bruce frantically called out to her, “Lois?! Lois, wake up!”

Soon, the elevator doors opened, and Bruce rushed out of the building. Outside, there were police cars everywhere and a line of ambulances. Bruce ran toward a pair of paramedics and set Lois down on their stretcher. The paramedics quickly wheeled Lois away and loaded her into an ambulance. Bruce followed them, jumping into the back of the ambulance.

He watched while the paramedics hooked Lois up to a monitor and started an IV in her arm. They asked him a barrage of questions about Lois. How was she hurt? What’s her medical history? Is she allergic to anything? Bruce gave all the answers that he knew.

While they checked Lois’s vital signs, one of the paramedics handed Bruce a towel. He took the towel and pressed it against his forehead. He had dried blood all over his face from being pistol-whipped earlier.

“Sir, you’re hurt. You need to be checked out,” a paramedic told him.

“I’m fine. Just focus on her!” Bruce snapped.

After the paramedics stabilized Lois, one of them hurried to the driver’s seat. Then they drove to the closest hospital with lights and sirens.
At Metropolis General Hospital, Bruce sat on a chair, inside Lois’s hospital room. Right now the room was empty. The nurses had wheeled Lois’s stretcher away. She was in the CT room now, getting a scan of her head. The doctors needed to check for any brain hemorrhaging.

Bruce stared down at his hands, which were covered in blood. He looked like he came from a war zone. Lois’s blood was all over him, soaked into his suit. Scalp injuries always bled a lot. Hopefully, the gunshot wound was that superficial. If there was any intracranial bleeding, the CT scan would find it.

Taking a deep breath, Bruce closed his eyes for a moment. His thoughts kept circling back to that tiny fraction of a second when both guns had fired at the same time. Luthor has become much more sadistic. He had a chance to kill Bruce and Lois, but instead he turned the situation into a sick game. The villain wanted Superman to choose. Because he knew that it would destroy the hero… If Bruce or Lois had died tonight, Clark would’ve blamed himself. *Just like I blame myself for Rachel’s death…*

When Batman had been forced to choose, he wanted to save Rachel, not Harvey Dent. Even though Harvey was important to Gotham, Bruce chose Rachel because he loved her.

That’s why Clark’s decision didn’t make any sense to him. Clark was dating Lois. Didn’t he love her? Why did he risk her life and save Bruce first? From a purely logical standpoint, it could be argued that Batman’s life was more important since he’s a member of the Justice League. But Clark wasn’t that cold and calculating. He wouldn’t base his decision on something like that.

*Why did he save me first?* Bruce didn’t understand at all.

He glanced up at the TV screen hanging on the wall. The volume was muted, but Superman was on the screen. The hero was dragging Luthor across the ground. The villain had been torn out of his Warsuit and he had several cuts and scrapes. Despite everything Luthor had done, Superman still went easy on him and didn’t hit him more than necessary. On the TV screen, Superman flung Luthor at a group of cops, then he flew into the sky.

At least Luthor was in custody for now. The bald bastard has become infinitely more dangerous. He knew Superman and Batman’s identities… Hopefully, he didn’t know the identities of the other members of the Justice League.

Bruce instantly remembered Luthor’s comment about Brainiac and took his phone out of his pocket. He had 17 missed calls from Hal.

Bruce immediately called him back.

“About fucking time!” Hal angrily answered the phone. “You and Clark just missed a huge fight! Where the hell were you?!”

Bruce winced in pain. He already had a splitting headache and Hal’s shrieking only made it worse. “We were busy with Luthor. He made a deal with Brainiac. They both attacked at the same time, so the league would be separated.”

“Oh, shit. So, Luthor and Brainiac are working together now?”

“It appears so.” Bruce sighed. “How was the fight with Brainiac? Is anyone injured?”

“Nah. We handled it. What about you?” Hal asked.
“I’m fine…” He wished he could say the same thing about Lois. “Tell everyone to meet at the Watchtower. I’ll be there as soon as possible.”

Bruce hung up before Hal could say anything else. He shoved his phone back in his pocket and stood. Part of him wanted to stay until he knew the results of Lois’s CT scan, but he had work to do. There was nothing he could do to help Lois anyway. It was up to the doctors now.

He headed toward the exit, then the door suddenly swung open. Clark rushed into the room, wearing his business suit from the cocktail party. He was breathing heavily and he looked exhausted. The fight with Luthor must’ve worn him out.

“How’s Lois?” Clark asked, looking worried.

“She’s still at CT. They’re scanning her head.” Bruce glared at him, clenching his fists. “What the hell were you thinking? Lois could’ve died.”

Clark looked away, muttering, “You could’ve died too…”

Bruce felt his anger dissipate as he sighed. “If you were going to risk someone’s life, it should’ve been mine. Why did you save me first?”

“I don’t know.” Clark shrugged. “I just reacted.”

Bruce frowned, unsatisfied with that answer. “Do you love Lois?”

“Of course, I do!” Clark snapped defensively. “I did my best to save both of you! It’s not my fault that Luthor is a psycho!”

“You…You’re right. Sorry,” Bruce said guiltily, averting his gaze. “I’m going to the Watchtower.”

“I’m staying here with Lois.”

“Fine.” Bruce fled the room, feeling more confused than ever.
After two days in jail, Lex Luthor was finally released. He paid bail and bribed a judge again. It was so easy to manipulate the justice system. With enough money, anything was possible.

Around 7 PM, Luthor strolled out of the police station. His limo was already waiting outside for him. Luthor sat in the backseat of the limo, next to Mercy Graves. His assistant read from a list of reports, informing him about LexCorp’s stock values and recent business transactions.

Luthor stifled a yawn while gazing out the window. Soon, he would be back at his penthouse. He couldn’t wait to sleep in his own bed. He hated spending the night in jail. It was so undignified, completely below him.

Suddenly, a large 18-wheeler plowed through an intersection and rammed into the limo. The windows shattered as Luthor quickly ducked his head. The limo spun uncontrollably, crashing into a pole. The force of the impact gave Luthor whiplash.

His neck ached as he scanned his surroundings. Mercy was laying next him, unconscious with blood on her face. Luthor reached for the car door and shoved it open. Outside, there was a group of men wearing clown masks.

The masked men forcefully grabbed Luthor and yanked him out of the limo. Panicking, Luthor screamed and kicked at the strange men. Then he felt something hit him in the back of the head.

Everything faded to black.

When Luthor opened his eyes, he was tied to a chair, inside a dark room that he didn’t recognize. He struggled against the restraints, trying to pull his arms free. Then he heard a familiar laugh that made his skin crawl. The fucking Joker…

The insane green-haired clown appeared from the shadows, stalking towards him.

“Oh, Lexy. Lexy. You’ve been a bad boy,” the Joker hissed. “You know that Bats is mine. You’ve been playing with my favorite toy behind my back.”

Luthor glared at the lunatic. “Hmph. So, Bruce Wayne is Batman.”
The Joker let out a shrill laugh. “Of course, he’s Bruce Wayne! Duh! Who else would he be?”

“Why do you keep his secret? We could finish him off together.”

“You just don’t get it. Do you?” The Joker sighed with a disappointed look on his face. Then he pulled out a long knife, waving it in the air. “I don’t want to finish him. I wanna play with my Brucie forever and ever! So, I can’t have snitches like you running their mouths. It’ll ruin the game, you see. I LIVE for the game!” He suddenly slammed the knife into Luthor’s leg, stabbing him.

Luthor screamed in agony while the Joker twisted the blade in his thigh, mangling his flesh.

“Do ya think you’re the first one to figure it out?” The Joker snarled crazily, “Trust me, I’ve killed many, many before you. I’ve protected Bruce’s secret for years! Then, you waltz in and call him Batman in public! Are you trying to take my Batsy from me?!” he shouted, his face contorted with rage.

Luthor frantically denied it, “No! No, I-!”

The Joker ripped the blade from Luthor’s leg, then held the bloody knife to his face. “Bruce is mine. Understand?” He ranted, screaming at the top of his lungs, “Mine, mine, mine, mine, MINE!”

“I-I got it! I got it. He’s yours.” Luthor fearfully turned his face away, trying to distance himself from the knife.

“If you ever threaten my game with Batman again, I’ll kill you. Nice and slow. You’ll die choking on your own blood,” The Joker said seriously with a dangerous look in his eyes. Then he chuckled to himself, smiling again.

“Oh, come on, Lexy! Turn that frown upside down! You’re still my BFF. Otherwise, I would’ve slit your throat.” He giggled while cutting Luthor free from the chair. “Bye bye, Bestie!”

The Joker turned and walked away, twirling the bloody knife.

With his hands free, Luthor immediately put pressure on his stab wound. He grimaced in pain while cursing underneath his breath, “Fucking psychopath.”

At times like this, Luthor truly regretted associating with the Joker. With friends like him, who needed enemies?

SxB

At Metropolis General Hospital, Lois was laying in her bed, fast asleep. The doctors expected a full recovery, but they still wanted to monitor her. Hopefully, she could be discharged tomorrow morning. Clark sat in a chair beside her, watching over her. For the past couple days, he hasn’t left her side.

Clark reached out and held Lois’s hand. He felt horrible about what happened. His thoughts kept returning to that same night. The events replayed over and over in his mind, tormenting him. When both guns fired, Clark had flown to Bruce immediately. He had crushed the weapon pointed at Bruce with his bare hands while shooting heat vision at the gun pointed at Lois… Clark had saved her. But just barely.

His first priority had been saving Bruce…
With a sigh, Clark let go of Lois’s hand, feeling unworthy of her. Even though he has stayed by her side, she hardly spoke to him these past two days. Neither of them wanted to address the elephant in the room… The fact he saved Bruce first.

_Damn you, Luthor._ Could Clark ever have a relationship that wasn’t ruined by his enemies?

He stood and glanced out the door. Then he spotted a nurse in the hallway.

Clark stepped out of the room. “Hey, I haven’t talked anyone about the bill yet. Do you know how much we owe?”

The nurse smiled at him. “Oh, don’t worry about the bill. It’s already been paid.”

“What?” He gave her a confused look.

“There was a gift from an anonymous donor. Everything’s paid for,” she explained.

“Oh… Okay.” Clark frowned. _Anonymous, my ass._ It was obviously Bruce. The billionaire must’ve paid all of the medical bills. Clark wanted to take care of Lois. He felt responsible for her injuries, and he was capable of paying. He didn’t need any help from Bruce.

“It’s late, Mr. Kent. Try to get some rest.” The nurse strolled down the hall.

Clark headed back to Lois’s room, where he angrily paced back and forth. He didn’t want Bruce’s money. _It’s my fault that Lois is hurt. I should be paying._ Clark shut the door and quickly changed into his Superman suit. Then he zoomed out of the window, flying towards Gotham.

He’d tell Bruce in person to take back the money.

_SxB_

Soaring across the night sky, Superman flew over Gotham and entered the Batcave. Then he landed on the ground and walked through the dark cavern. Bruce was sitting in front of the Batcomputer, dressed in his Batsuit. As Clark approached the vigilante, Bruce turned around in his chair, facing him.

“Hey, Clark.”

“Hey…” Clark paused before saying, “I know you paid the hospital bills.”

“So?”

Clark gave him an annoyed look. “You didn’t need to do that. I can pay.”

Bruce shrugged and gazed back at his computer screen. “It’s not a big deal.”

“Well, it is to me. Take back the money.”

Bruce glanced at him. Then he stood, crossing his arms. “Don’t be ridiculous. It was an anonymous gift. I can’t take it back. It’s not like I have a receipt.”

“Fine. Then I’ll pay you back,” Clark said stubbornly. “How much did it cost?”

“Clark, it doesn’t matter. I don’t want your money.”

“Just let me pay you back,” he snapped.
Bruce hesitated for a moment before asking, “Could you maybe… do me a favor instead?”

“Huh?” Clark blinked in surprise.

Bruce looked away as he admitted, “I need a favor.”

“What’s wrong?” Clark’s anger vanished, immediately replaced with worry. It was so rare for Batman to ask for help.

With a sigh, Bruce explained, “Thanks to Luthor, rumors are spreading about me. People are starting to wonder if Bruce Wayne is Batman.”


“No, it’s not… I need to create proof that Bruce Wayne and Batman are two separate people.”

“How are you going to do that?”

Bruce took off his cowl and set it down on the desk. “I need you to wear the Batsuit for me. Our height and build are similar enough—”

Clark cut him off. “Seriously?! You want me to be Batman?”

“Just for a night.” Bruce smirked. “Don’t think you can handle it?”

“Of course, I can handle it,” Clark replied quickly. “I see you fight all the time. I can pretend to be you.”

“Good. Training starts tomorrow.”

“Wait, what?” Clark gaped at him.

“Training,” he reiterated. “You have no idea how my utility belt works. If you’re going to be Batman for a night, you’re going to do it right. You have to be convincing.”

“Okay…” Clark agreed reluctantly. “How much training do you think I need?”

“At least a week.”

“What?” He complained, “Come on, I don’t need a week. I know how to fight, Bruce.”

“You know how to fight with powers. But you’ll have to fight as Batman. That means no super-strength, no super-speed, no super-hearing, and definitely no flying.”

Clark gazed down and realized that he was hovering slightly. He quickly landed on the ground and huffed, “I can fight without all of that.”

“We’ll see.” Bruce didn’t look convinced.

The vigilante sat down in front of the Batcomputer again and started typing. Obviously, Batman was busy working on something. He probably expected Superman to leave now, but Clark still had questions. He waited awhile, feeling anxious.

“Bruce?”

“What?” Bruce continued typing.
“Luthor knows my identity too,” Clark said nervously. “Do you think he’ll tell everyone who I am?”

“He could… But that would be very stupid of him.”

“What do you mean?”

Bruce stopped typing and turned his chair around to face Clark. “If Luthor tells everyone your secret identity, you wouldn’t be able to live as Clark Kent anymore. You would become Superman full-time. Trust me, Luthor doesn’t want that. You’d be harder to kill.”

“Oh…” Clark scratched the back of his head. “I never thought of it like that.”

“Of course, you haven’t.” Bruce sighed while crossing his arms. “Your life as Clark Kent is a weakness. Luthor will try to exploit it as much as possible.”

“Do you think my parents are in danger?”

“Yes, but it’s under control.” Bruce explained, “Martian Manhunter is staying in Smallville for now. He’s watching them.”

Clark smiled, feeling relieved. “I’ll have to thank him.”

“You do that. Come back tomorrow for training.” Bruce faced his computer screen again.

Always so bossy… Still smiling, Clark turned and walked away. “Yes, sir.”

SxB

The following night, Clark returned to the Batcave. For training purposes, Bruce gave him a Batsuit to change into. In a blur of super-speed, Clark quickly pulled on the suit of black Kevlar. Then he yanked the cowl over his head and smiled.

“Well?” Clark swung the black cape over his shoulder. “How do I look?”

Bruce stepped closer to him and adjusted the cowl on his face. “Acceptable.”

Clark’s grin widened.

Right now, Bruce was wearing a black tank top and exercise pants. He had dressed in normal clothes for the training. A lot of his skin was showing. His face and his arms were completely uncovered, and some of his chest was visible too like his collar bones. Clark’s eyes wandered over the exposed skin appreciatively.

When he heard footsteps, Clark glanced to the side and spotted Jason entering the Batcave. The kid was dressed in his Robin outfit, ready for patrol.

“Hi, Jason!” Clark greeted him happily.

Robin gaped at the Batsuit, obviously confused. “What the hell?”

“It’s me. Superman.” He chuckled. “Do I look like Batman?”

Jason grimaced, wrinkling up his nose. “Yeah, but stop smiling. A happy Batman is just creepy-looking.”
“Oh. Right.” Clark scowled while lowering his voice, “How about now?”

The kid nodded. “Yeah. That’s better.”

Clark swooshed the cape to the side and growled, “I am the night.”

Jason burst out laughing while Bruce whacked the Kryptonian on the head. “Quit fooling around. We have training to do.”

“What training?” Jason asked curiously.

“I’m going to be Batman for a night to help Bruce protect his identity,” Clark explained.

Bruce handed him a utility belt. “You may look the part, but you have to act like Batman too. No one can know that you’re an imposter.”

“Yeah, I know.” Clark snapped the utility belt around his waist.

“You’ll have to learn how to fight like me and use my weapons.” Bruce reached into the utility belt and pulled out a batarang. “We’ll start with this. Practice throwing a batarang.”

“Sure. I can do that.” Clark snatched the batarang and hurled it across the cave.

Whizzing through the air, the batarang smashed into a wall and exploded. Weren’t those supposed to come back like boomerangs?

Clark let out a nervous laugh. “Oops.”

“You used too much strength. Try again.” Bruce handed him another batarang. “Throw it like I would.”

“Alright.” For a while, Clark hesitated, holding the batarang in his hand. He was worried that he might throw it too hard again.

This time Clark gently tossed the batarang and it fell on the floor a few feet away.

Bruce took offense, yelling, “How weak do you think I am?!?”

Jason laughed while Clark stammered, “B-But you said I used too much strength last time so-”

“When have I ever thrown a batarang like that?! Do it right this time!” Bruce snapped.

SxB

After several attempts, Clark finally learned how to throw a batarang properly. He knew exactly how much strength to use. The gadget was trickier than he expected. It had to be thrown a certain way or else it wouldn’t come back, and the aim had to be perfect.

Bruce held a batarang in his hand as he announced, “Now we’re going to work on your reaction time. I want you to dodge without using any super-speed, got it?”

“Yep.” Clark nodded.

Bruce threw the batarang, then Clark zoomed out of the way. The batarang flew back to Bruce’s hand.
“That was too fast,” Bruce critiqued him and hurled the batarang again.

Stalling for a second, Clark waited too long and the batarang smacked him in the head.

“Ow.” Clark winced and picked the weapon off the ground. Standing off to the side, Jason snickered while watching.

Bruce sighed in frustration. “At least try to dodge it.”

“I am! I’m just moving slower.” Clark tossed the batarang back to Bruce.

He caught the gadget and snapped, “I’m not that slow! Try again.”

“So bossy,” Clark grumbled under breath.

Bruce flung the batarang again when Clark wasn’t looking.

“Ah!” Clark barely ducked his head in time, dodging the attack.

The batarang flew back to Bruce’s hand as he smirked. “That’s better.”

What kind of training was this? Clark was starting to think that Bruce just enjoyed throwing things at him.

SxB

Next, Bruce showed Clark how to use the grappling gun. It was a piece of equipment that Batman used all the time to get around Gotham. Instead of flying, Clark needed to rely on the high-tech gadget while on patrol.

For a few minutes, Clark fiddled with the grappling gun, studying it.

Standing nearby, Bruce and Jason both watched him.

“Don’t you have anything better to do?” Bruce growled at the boy.

Jason smirked. “Nope. I’m not gonna miss this.”

Clark finally aimed the grappling gun at the ceiling of the cave and fired. A grappling hook attached to a rocky ledge, then Clark suddenly swung through the air. He crashed into a wall with a loud thud and fell to the ground.

“Damn.” Jason laughed. “You really suck at being Batman.”

“Shut up, Jason!” Clark and Bruce both shouted at the same time.

“Wow… It’s like Batman in stereo,” the kid joked.

“It’s late. Jason, go to bed,” Bruce ordered.

“But-”

“Go to bed!” Bruce yelled, cutting him off.

Jason huffed angrily and stomped away. Once he left in the elevator, Bruce and Clark were alone in the cave.
With a sigh, Clark admitted, “He’s right. I suck at this.”

“Your training has just begun. You have the rest of the week to learn,” Bruce reassured him. “We’ll save the grappling gun for later. Let’s practice something else.”

Clark smiled. “Yeah, okay.”

“You need to learn the controls on the utility belt.” Bruce walked toward him and opened a compartment of the belt, revealing dozens of small buttons.

Clark gazed down at the belt in awe. “Cool. What does this button do?”

He pressed a shiny red button, then the utility belt started beeping loudly.

Bruce screamed at him, “That’s the self-destruct, you idiot!”

“Ah! I’m sorry! I’m sorry!” Clark panicked.

“Give me the damn belt!” Bruce quickly unfastened the belt and chucked it across the cave. The utility belt exploded in the air, raining down debris.

Bruce glared at him while Clark looked away sheepishly. “My bad.”

“Let’s continue training tomorrow.”

“Okay…”

SxB

The next day, Lois was released from the hospital. Clark spent most of the day with her, making sure that she was comfortable. He ran several errands for her and cooked her dinner. They ate together, then she went to bed early. After Lois fell asleep, Clark nervously paced around the apartment.

Bruce was expecting him back in Gotham tonight. Clark was supposed to train more, but he felt so embarrassed. He thought pretending to be Batman would be easy… It was really hard! The vigilante had so many weird little gadgets and tools. It actually required a lot of skill. Maybe it was easy for Bruce because he’s a genius. But Clark wasn’t a genius at all… He felt like an idiot after screwing up so much.

Clark let out a frustrated sigh and changed into his Superman suit. He was already late. If he waited any longer, he’d risk pissing off Bruce.

Flying out a window, Superman zoomed across the sky towards Gotham. Within seconds, he arrived at the Batcave and found Bruce, sitting at his desk. Tonight Bruce was dressed completely in his Batsuit, except for the cowl. In front of him, there was a utility belt resting on the desk. Bruce was busy, tinkering on the belt with a screwdriver.

“Hey, Bruce.” Clark walked toward him.

“Hmph. You’re late.” Bruce grabbed a cup off the desk and handed it to him. “Your coffee’s getting cold.”

Surprised, Clark took the cup and stared at the coffee with wide eyes. It has been so long since he drank coffee with Bruce. Too long… Clark took a sip of the lukewarm coffee, savoring the flavor. He remembered how they used to do this all the time. He couldn’t believe it. He was actually
drinking coffee in the Batcave. Just like old times…

Tears sprang to his eyes, then Clark wiped them away.

“Is something wrong?” Bruce gave him a worried look.

“No.” Clark smiled. “I’m just happy.”

Bruce stared at him wordlessly then looked away.

Clark cleared his throat. “W-What are you working on?”

“I modified a utility belt for you. There’s no self-destruct button so you can’t blow it up.”

“Thanks.” Clark chuckled, feeling embarrassed. “Sorry about that.”

“I simplified the belt as much as possible. It should be easier to use.”

“You mean you dumbed it down for me?” Clark joked.

Bruce smirked at him. “Your words, not mine.”

Clark laughed.

“Try it on.” Bruce handed him the belt.

“Sure.” Clark set down his cup of coffee and snapped the utility belt around his waist.

For the rest of the night, they continued training. Clark learned all about the belt and thankfully, there were less mishaps.
Dressed in a Batsuit again, Clark swung all over the Batcave, firing a grappling gun. Now he understood why Batman liked the tool so much.

“This is fun!” He swung over Bruce’s head, laughing happily.

“Clark, focus!” Bruce snapped at him.

“Heh, sorry.” Clark retracted the grappling hook and landed gracefully on the ground. “I think I’m getting the hang of this.”

After training for five nights in a row, Clark had learned how to use most of Batman’s gadgets. At first, it was really difficult, but now he felt pretty confident. He could act like the Dark Knight. He just needed to swing around and throw batarangs at criminals. No one would know the difference.

“You’ve definitely improved,” Bruce conceded.

Clark smiled proudly.

“But it still isn’t enough.”

“What?” His smile faded. “What do you mean? I have the suit. I have the tools.”

“Batman is more than a suit.” Bruce crossed his arms. “The utility belt is useful, but I don’t rely solely on it. Most of the time, I beat criminals with simple hand-to-hand combat.”

“Oh, okay.” Clark shrugged. “I can punch a few people.”

Bruce sighed. “I’ve seen the way you fight. Usually, you use your super-strength to knock your
enemies unconscious.”

“What’s wrong with that?”

Bruce raised an eyebrow.

“Oh, right…” Clark took off the cowl and ran a hand through his hair. “No super-strength.”

Bruce nodded. Tonight, he was wearing his exercise clothes again. The black tank top left a lot of skin exposed. Clark appreciated the view. He became distracted as his eyes wandered.

“Can you fight without using your powers?” Bruce asked.

Clark immediately glanced up, focusing Bruce’s face again. “Sure, I can. I’ll just hold back a lot.”

“You can’t hold back too much. I don’t have powers, but I am stronger than most people.”

“Right.” Clark furrowed his brow, considering what Bruce had said. This could be tricky. He needed to use the right amount of force. Super-strength was out of the question. But Batman wasn’t weak by any means. If Clark held back too much, the Dark Knight’s enemies could notice.

“Let’s spar.”

“What?” Clark blinked in surprise.

“We’re going to fight, and you’re going to mimic me,” Bruce explained. “That way you’ll know how much strength to use.”

“Uh… I don’t know if that’s a good idea,” Clark said hesitantly. “What if I hurt you?”

Bruce rolled his eyes. “I’m not made of glass, Clark. I’ll be fine.”

“But…”

“I said I’ll be fine,” Bruce cut him off. “We’re sparring.”

Clark frowned, still feeling unsure. He wanted to argue more, but he knew how stubborn Bruce could be. It was nearly impossible to change his mind. If Bruce really believed sparring would help with the training, then Clark would give it a try… But he still thought it was a bad idea.

SxB

With a loud thud, Clark crashed onto the floor for the fiftieth time. Then he sat up and let out a sigh of frustration. Fighting without his superpowers was way more difficult than he expected. Clark had been sparring with Bruce for the past thirty minutes, and so far Bruce has wiped the floor with him. Literally.

“You’re still holding back too much,” Bruce criticized him. “Are you even trying?”

“Of course, I’m trying!” Clark angrily jumped to his feet. “Do you think this is easy for me? I always fight with my powers!”

“I know. It’s one of your weaknesses.”

Clark scoffed, “My super-strength is a weakness?”
“Your reliance on it is,” Bruce said harshly.

Clark scowled at him, feeling irritated.

“Come on. Let’s continue.” Bruce resumed his fighting stance, ready to attack.

Clark quickly raised his fists, preparing himself for another onslaught. He was glad that Bruce’s attacks couldn’t cause him any real damage. His Kryptonian body could take the abuse, but any normal person would have broken bones by now.

Bruce suddenly lunged at him, throwing several punches and kicks. Clark managed to dodge most of the attacks, mimicking Bruce’s speed. For a couple minutes, Bruce continued to attack while Clark evaded the hits. With practice, it was becoming easier to dodge without using any super-speed.

Bruce stopped abruptly and glared at him. “What the hell are you doing?”

Clark gave him a blank look. “Uh, sparring?”

“No, you’re not. You haven’t even tried to hit me.”

“But I don’t want to hit you.”

Bruce let out an annoyed sigh and crossed his arms. “When you go on patrol as Batman, you’ll have to do more than dodge.”

“If I hit you, it’ll hurt,” Clark warned.

“When Batman hits people, it’s supposed to hurt.”

“And, if I hit too hard?”

“That’s why we’re practicing.” Bruce cocked his head to the side, exposing his jawline. “Come on. I’ll give you a free shot. Hit me.”

Clark frowned. This whole situation made him feel extremely uncomfortable. “I don’t want to.”

“It’s okay to hit me,” Bruce insisted. “We’re training. Just do it.”

Clark clenched his fists as he stared at Bruce, hesitating.

“Come on. Just do it already,” Bruce snapped at him.

His heart raced anxiously as he stepped toward Bruce. Clark felt sick to his stomach. He didn’t want to hit Bruce, but he didn’t want Bruce to be mad at him either. With a shaky breath, Clark raised his fist and barely smacked Bruce in the jaw.

Bruce did not look impressed. “Seriously? That was pathetic.”

“But…”

“Hit me harder.” Bruce shoved him and yelled angrily, “Come on! Hit me!”

Without thinking, Clark punched him in the face. Bruce stumbled back while Clark watched in horror.
“Oh, my God.” Clark panicked. “Are you okay? I’m sorry. I’m so, so sor-”

Bruce suddenly kicked his leg and Clark crashed onto the floor. He landed on his back while Bruce loomed over him. The vigilante had a bruise on his jawline, but he was still standing tall, as tough as ever.

Bruce turned his head to the side and spat some blood on the floor. Then he wiped at his mouth. “That was better. Hit like that when you’re on patrol.”

Clark stared up at him in awe.

“Get up,” Bruce ordered. “We aren’t done.”

Giddy with relief, Clark smiled and bounced back up to his feet. “Whatever you say. You’re the boss.”

“Hmph. You’ve got that right,” Bruce said cockily.

Clark laughed.

When they started sparring again, Clark did more than just dodge. He actually hit back like Bruce wanted him to. Slowly, he was becoming more and more accustomed to Batman’s style of fighting. For every attack, Clark had to focus on using the right amount of strength. It was like a balancing act. If he hit too hard, he could seriously injure Bruce. But if he didn’t hit hard enough, he’d piss Bruce off.

While they sparred, Bruce kicked Clark again, knocking him off balance. Clark stumbled for a moment, trying to regain his footing. Then Bruce quickly snatched his right arm and painfully wrenched it behind Clark’s back. Falling to his knees, Clark groaned while Bruce pinned his arm in a horrible angle. His arm wasn’t meant to bend that way. It actually hurt!

Using his superior strength, Clark forced his arm in a more comfortable position.

“No super-strength!” Bruce twisted his arm even more.

“Then how am I supposed to break free?!” Clark yelled in frustration.

“Use your other hand to reach for your utility belt. Throw a batarang.”

“Oh…”

Bruce released him and stepped back. “Don’t rely on brute force. Actually think when you fight.”

Clark stood and glared at him. “I do think when I fight.”

“Prove it,” Bruce challenged.

Without any warning, Bruce charged at Clark again, throwing a punch. Clark barely dodged and the sparring continued. Clark evaded several attacks in a row. He only dodged and didn’t try to hit back at all. He knew Bruce wanted him to hit back, so he didn’t. Every time he dodged, he could see Bruce becoming more frustrated and angry.

“Dammit, Clark!” Bruce yelled, “I told you to-!”

Catching him off guard, Clark copied one of Bruce’s attacks and quickly kicked him in the leg. Bruce tripped, losing his balance. Then Clark lunged at him and tackled him to the ground. Clark
straddled Bruce while grabbing both of his wrists, pinning them above Bruce’s head. Soon Bruce was trapped underneath him and Clark hadn’t used any super-strength at all.

“Gotcha.” Clark smiled proudly.

Beneath him, Bruce completely froze in shock. His eyes widened, and he paled as all color drained from his face. Without trying, Clark could hear the sound of Bruce’s heart pounding against his ribcage. For some reason, Bruce was terrified.

“Bruce?” Clark blinked in confusion, then he realized what was wrong.

When Clark had been exposed to red kryptonite, he had pinned Bruce to the ground. And now, he was pinning Bruce in the exact same way. Straddling him while holding both of his wrists above his head…

“Oh, shit.” In a blur of super-speed, Clark immediately let go of Bruce and jumped away from him.

“I’m sorry, Bruce. I’m sorry. Oh, God. I’m so sorry,” Clark rambled as he paced back and forth. Stupid idiot! How could he pin Bruce like that? What the hell was he thinking?! He wasn’t thinking at all! That’s the problem! Bruce was right about him. Clark was so, so stupid!

“I’m fine.” Bruce still looked a little shaken as he stood. “I just…wasn’t expecting you to pin me down.”

Ashamed of himself, Clark hid his face in his hands. He trembled as he apologized over and over, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m sorry.”

“Clark, it’s okay.” Bruce stepped toward him and reached out to touch his shoulder.

“It’s not okay!” Clark shouted as he slapped Bruce’s hand away. “Don’t pretend like it is! Nothing about this is okay! It’s all fucked up again, and it’s my fault!”

“Clark?” Bruce stared at him with concern.

“I’m sorry.” Clark had tears in his eyes when he suddenly disappeared, flying out of the cave as fast as possible.

At Wayne Tower, Bruce sat in a conference room while the board of directors bickered amongst themselves. Bruce didn’t understand why he had to attend this meeting. He was only here because Lucius Fox had asked him to come. Lucius had said something about Bruce needing to ‘maintain his presence’. Personally, Bruce saw this as a waste of time.

While the old businessmen prattled on, Bruce leaned back in his chair and gazed out the window. Events from last night replayed in his mind over and over, tormenting him.

“It’s not okay! Don’t pretend like it is!”

He remembered the panic in Clark’s voice and how upset he looked. Clark had been so horrified by what happened. Bruce felt sorry for him.

God damn it. Why did Bruce have to freeze up like that? Bruce was irritated with himself for the way he reacted. Last night, they had been sparring. Clark didn’t have any bad intentions when he pinned Bruce to the floor. They were just training. But for a second, Bruce could’ve sworn that he
was back in the Fortress of Solitude. Trapped under Clark again, unable to protect himself…

Bruce knew he had a flashback last night. He was familiar with those. It was a common side effect of trauma. He has had flashbacks before. But never in front of Clark… Clark shouldn’t have seen him like that. Now the poor guy was consumed with guilt.

“It’s all fucked up again, and it’s my fault!” Clark’s voice screamed in his head.

Bruce sighed and ran a hand through his hair.

“Mr. Wayne, are you feeling all right?” One of the businessmen looked worried.

“Oh, I’m fine.” Bruce faked a smile, slipping into his playboy persona. “I’m just tired. Last night, I was up late entertaining a female companion of mine, and then a male companion after her.”

He received several disapproving looks, then the meeting continued.

SxB

After the business meeting, Bruce left the conference room and headed down the hall to his office. He hardly ever came to his office, yet he still had one. The room was well-decorated and the furniture was all high-end. Not that it mattered. The place was mostly empty since it had never been used.

For a while, Bruce paced around the office, worrying. What was Clark doing right now? Did he go to work or was he alone wallowing in misery? Was Clark depressed again? Would he hurt himself? Bruce couldn’t let something like that happen. He didn’t want Clark to suffer anymore. It’s been a year since the incident with red kryptonite, but they were both still damaged from it. Bruce was sick and tired of it all. He just wanted everything to return to normal.

Even though he didn’t know what to say, Bruce pulled out his Bat-Comm.

“Clark?” Bruce called the hero, but there was no response. “Clark, I know you can hear me. Can we talk?”

After a long stretch of silence, Bruce sighed. “Fine. Don’t talk. Just listen… About last night, I…” Bruce hesitated, feeling desperate. Somehow he had to get through to Clark.

“I know it’s not okay,” Bruce finally admitted. “I know it’s all fucked up, but…” He paused and took a deep breath. “But I don’t blame you. I don’t blame you for any of it. You hear me?”

There was still no response. The damn Kryptonian was giving him the silent treatment again. Bruce let out a sigh of frustration. This was all his fault. Last night Clark didn’t want to spar, but Bruce had pressured him into it. He could tell how uncomfortable Clark was. If they hadn’t spared, this whole situation wouldn’t have happened.

“Clark, I…I won’t pretend anymore or act like everything’s fine.” Bruce struggled with his words. “If you want to talk… If you need to talk about what happened, we can. Whatever you need, I…”

He tightly clenched the Bat-Comm in his hand as he whispered, “I just want us to be okay. You’re my friend. You’ll always be my friend.”

Bruce stood in silence for a few minutes, then he finally put away the Bat-Comm.

Suddenly, his cell phone rang. He felt a spike of hope as he yanked the phone of his pocket. But
then he glanced at the caller ID and frowned in disappointment.

“What is it, Lucius?” Bruce answered the call.

SxB

Tonight, Bruce was meeting with an important client from Japan. Lucius Fox had insisted on it. Lately, Wayne Enterprises has been doing a lot of business with Japan. And now, one of their biggest clients, Mr. Takahashi has demanded to meet with Bruce in person. Bruce couldn’t care less, but Lucius said it would be ‘rude’ to blow off the meeting. So, Bruce had decided to go along with this for Lucius’s sake. Hopefully, the meeting wouldn’t take long.

At 7 PM, Bruce arrived at Tatsuya Sushi, the most expensive Japanese restaurant in Gotham. Mr. Takahashi and his entourage were already standing by the entrance, waiting. Bruce greeted the Japanese businessmen, then they headed inside.

They had a reservation, so their table was ready. Bruce sat down across from Mr. Takahashi and his men. Usually, Bruce acted like a ditzy playboy in public, but tonight he was on his best behavior. This wasn’t some stupid cocktail party. This was legitimate business. Lucius Fox really wanted to keep this client.

So far, the meeting was going well. They were drinking sake and making small talk.

Mr. Takahashi spoke with a heavy accent, “You must be a very busy man, Mr. Wayne. I had business with your company for five years, and this is the first time we meet.”

“Sorry about that.” Bruce smiled politely. “Your business is important to us, so...” He froze when the waiter came over to their table. Just now, Bruce finally noticed that the Asian waiter was missing the tip of his pinky finger.

“Is something wrong, Mr. Wayne?” Mr. Takahashi gave him an ugly smirk.

Fuck. The Yakuza were known for cutting off their pinky fingers. This was a trap! Mr. Takahashi had chosen this restaurant for a reason. He must be involved in the Japanese mafia as well.

“Excuse me. I have to use the restroom.” Bruce tried to stand, but two waiters grabbed him and shoved back down to his chair.

“Sit down, Mr. Wayne.” Mr. Takahashi waved a hand, gesturing to the other customers in the crowded restaurant. “If you cause trouble, innocent people will get hurt.”

Bruce glared at the gangster as he growled, “What do you want?”

“We are here to collect the bounty on your head,” Mr. Takahashi explained. “There are many men who want you dead, Batman.”

“I’m not Batman,” Bruce immediately denied it.

“In Metropolis, Lex Luthor called you Batman.”

“He’s delusional. I’m not-”

Bruce was interrupted by the sound of a gunshot. One of Takahashi’s men had fired a gun at the ceiling. Now the other guests in the restaurant were screaming and running toward the exit. More of the Yakuza appeared and aimed their weapons at the people.
“Everyone on the floor! Now!” One of the gangsters yelled.

The customers fearfully obeyed and sat down on the floor. Meanwhile Bruce remained in his chair, glaring at Mr. Takahashi. There were at least forty hostages in the building. Possibly more. Somehow, Bruce had to protect them. But he was severely outnumbered and he wasn’t in his Bat suit. Right now, he was just Bruce Wayne—a spoiled socialite. If he took down the Yakuza by himself, everyone would know his true identity. There were too many witnesses here.

One of Takahashi’s men took out a cellphone and held it towards Bruce’s face. Were they recording him?

“Let me explain the situation, Mr. Wayne.” Mr. Takahashi threatened, “You will admit to being Batman or we will shoot everyone in this building. Do you understand?”

His mind raced as Bruce hesitated. He didn’t want to confess, but what other option did he have? Call the Justice League for help? That would only make him seem even more like Batman. What would an ordinary person do in this situation? Maybe Bruce should confess. Later, he could always refute the confession and say he lied to protect innocent people. Any decent man would give a false confession if it was the only way to save lives.

“Shoot someone,” Mr. Takahashi ordered.

“Stop!” Bruce caved in. “I’ll say whatever you want!”

“Say that you’re Batman.”

“I…” Bruce glanced at the phone recording him, and swallowed anxiously. “I’m-”

Suddenly, all the lights shut off. In the pitch darkness, a shadowy figure leapt down onto the table. Bruce ducked down on the floor as several guns fired. For the next few seconds, he could only hear the sound of gunfire and angry yelling in Japanese.

Soon, the lights flickered and turned back on. Bruce gazed up, then his eyes widened in surprise. In front of him, there was an all too familiar sight of black Kevlar and a black cape. Standing in the room, it was none other than Batman. It must be Clark wearing the Bat suit. Next to him, Jason was dressed as Robin.

“Batman!” Mr. Takahashi screamed, “Shoot! Shoot him!”

Clark quickly threw a batarang into the barrel of a gun. The weapon exploded, then Robin charged at one of the gangsters and kicked him in the face. The room erupted into chaos as all the yakuza turned their attention to Clark, shooting at him. Clark grabbed Robin and flipped over a table. They hid behind the table, using it as cover from the bullets. Even though the bullets couldn’t hurt the Kryptonian, Clark was evading the gunfire. He was fighting like Batman.

While the yakuza continued to open fire, Clark tossed a flash grenade over the table. Bruce quickly shut his eyes and turned away as the gadget unleashed a blinding, bright light. The gangsters groaned in pain and rubbed at their eyes while Clark and Jason leapt out and attacked.

They continued to fight the yakuza while several customers fled from the restaurant. A few people stayed with their phones out, recording the battle.

Bruce yelled at the idiots, “Get out of here! Run!” He ripped the phone from a guy’s hand and shoved him out the door.
While Bruce corralled all the innocent bystanders toward the exit, one of the gangsters started shooting at him. Before the bullets could hit him, Bruce was suddenly lifted off the ground. Clark held him with one arm while swinging through the air, using the grappling gun. They broke through a window and glass shattered all around them as they landed outside on the sidewalk.

Clark released Bruce and set him down on the ground. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine.” Bruce stared into Clark’s eyes. Most of the hero’s face was covered by the cowl. He was actually a very convincing Batman. Apparently, the training had paid off.

“Thanks.” Bruce smiled gratefully.

Clark smiled back. Behind him, Robin was punching the last of the yakuza who were still standing. The fight was over for now.

In the distance, the sound of police sirens approached the scene.

Jason ran out of the restaurant and yelled, “Come on, Batman. We have to go!”

Before the police could arrive, Clark and Jason fired their grappling guns at a nearby building and swung away. From the sidewalk, Bruce could see them running and leaping on the rooftops.
Away Mission

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark finally talk. Aliens ask Superman for help.

Chapter Notes

The Fluff LIVES~

After talking to law enforcement and giving a formal statement at the police station, Bruce was finally allowed to leave. It was almost midnight by the time he returned to the manor. Bruce entered the Batcave and found a Bat suit folded neatly on the desk by the Batcomputer. He picked up the garment, studying a few bullet holes. Apparently, Clark hadn’t dodged all of the gunfire.

Across the cave, Jason was still dressed as Robin. The boy leaped through the air, practicing a spinning kick. When he landed on the ground, he hurried towards Bruce.

“Finally! You took forever getting home,” Jason complained.

“Where’s Clark?” Bruce asked.

“I don’t know, but he sure left in a hurry.” Jason crossed his arms, looking worried. “Clark seemed kinda off tonight… Is something wrong? I thought he was a pretty believable Batman.”

“Yes, he was. Nothing’s wrong.” Bruce sat down in front of the Batcomputer and faced the screen. Jason gave him a skeptical look. “Well, okay. If you say so. Are we still going on patrol tonight?”

“No, it’s late. Go to bed.”

“Hmph. Lame.” Jason huffed as he walked away.

Soon, Bruce heard the sound of the elevator door closing. Jason left the Batcave, leaving Bruce alone. On the Batcomputer, he checked the internet and found several articles about what happened tonight. One article was titled ‘Breaking News: Batman Fights Yakuza, Saves Bruce Wayne’. Underneath the title, there was a photo of Clark dressed as Batman, standing next to Bruce in front of the Japanese restaurant.

A huge sense of relief washed over him. That photo was exactly the proof he needed. Now there was evidence that Batman and Bruce Wayne were two separate people. His secret identity should be safe…at least for now. Luthor may still believe that Bruce is Batman. But hopefully that photo would be enough proof for most people.

For a while, Bruce read through more articles online, skimming over the information. All the articles told the same story. It seemed like no one doubted Batman’s authenticity tonight. The public truly couldn’t tell the difference. Clark had fooled them. Bruce really owed the hero for
helping him.

He pulled out his Bat-Comm. “Clark, can we talk? Clark?”

After a moment of silence, Bruce sighed. Apparently, Clark had returned to ignoring him. It was disappointing, but not surprising.

“Thanks for your help tonight,” Bruce spoke through the Bat-Comm again, then put the device away.

SxB

“Clark, can we talk? Clark?”

“Thanks for your help tonight.”

Inside his apartment, Clark sat alone in the dark, listening to the sound of Bruce’s voice. His Bat-Comm was turned off, but he could hear Bruce all the way from Gotham. Clark was focused on the man with his super-hearing. He could hear Bruce’s heartbeat, his even breathing, and the slight creaking of his chair. Bruce was in the Batcave right now, sitting in front of the Batcomputer. Clark knew his exact location. He had been monitoring Bruce closely ever since the sparring incident.

Lately, Clark couldn’t help himself. He always wanted to check on Bruce to make sure he was okay. So, Clark listened…constantly. Luckily, he had been listening when Bruce met with the Yakuza. Clark had flown to Gotham so fast. He was glad that he was able to help Bruce. Although that didn’t change their situation…

Clark had knots in his stomach as he remembered the terrified look on Bruce’s face when he had been pinned to the ground. That fear…wouldn’t just go away. Bruce would never forget what Clark had done to him.

With a defeated sigh, Clark leaned down, resting his face in the palms of his hands. His relationship with Bruce could never go back to the way it was before. Why had Clark deluded himself into thinking otherwise? It was stupid. Not to mention, selfish. If Bruce was still afraid of him, Clark shouldn’t be around the other man so much. Clark should do what’s best for Bruce and stay away.

“Smallville?” The bedroom door creaked open and Lois stepped into the living room. She turned on the lights and found Clark sitting on the couch.

“What’s wrong? Are you coming to bed?” she asked.

Clark lifted his head and gave her a fake smile. “Yeah, I’m coming. I’m just having trouble falling asleep. That’s all.”

Lois huffed while crossing her arms. “I know when you’re lying, Smallville. Something is really bothering you.”

Clark shrugged and looked away.

“Do you wanna talk about it?” she offered.

“Not really.”
Lois walked to the couch and sat next to him. “I saw the news tonight. Apparently, Batman saved Bruce Wayne, which is a bit odd. You know, considering that they’re both the same person.”

“I dressed up like Batman for him,” Clark admitted.

“Yeah, I’m not surprised.” Lois leaned her head back, gazing up at the ceiling. “So, you and Bruce are buddy-buddy again?”

“No. Not at all.”

She raised an eyebrow, looking doubtful. “Really?”

“Really.” He nodded.

Lois stared at him silently for a while. “Are you sure you want to date me, Clark?”

Clark blinked in surprise. “Of course, I do. What kind of question is that?”

“An honest one.” She stood and walked away. “Come to bed, or sleep out here. Do whatever you want.”

She entered the bedroom and shut the door. Clark stayed on the couch, feeling confused. Why did Lois ask him that? She had been acting strange lately. Sometimes, Clark wondered if Lois wanted to break up. If she did, he wouldn’t blame her.

SxB

It was time for the weekly Justice League meeting. Clark was reluctant to go. He hadn’t seen Bruce since the fight with the Yakuza three days ago. Clark didn’t feel like he was ready to face Bruce again so soon… But Superman had a duty to lead the Justice League. Clark didn’t have a choice. He had to attend the meeting.

Flying from Metropolis, Superman soared up through the clouds, across the atmosphere. He approached the Watchtower and entered the space station orbiting Earth. The meeting was supposed to start at 2 PM. Clark only had a couple minutes. He walked down the hall, heading towards the conference room.

Outside the conference room, Batman was standing in the hallway with his arms crossed. Obviously, the Dark Knight had been waiting for him. Clark wouldn’t be able to avoid Bruce any longer. With a resigned sigh, Clark continued to the door. Bruce stepped in the way, glaring at him.

“We need to talk,” he growled.

“After the meeting.” Superman tried to walk around him.

Batman suddenly grabbed his wrist. “No. We’re doing this now.”

“But the meeting-”

“Fuck the meeting.” Bruce yanked on Clark’s wrist, dragging him away.

Clark followed him down the hall as he complained, “Bruce, come on. Let go.”

“No.” Batman stubbornly tightened his grip on Clark’s wrist.

“You know I can force you to let go,” Superman reminded him.
“And I know you won’t,” Batman countered.

Clark let out a frustrated sigh while they headed across the Watchtower. He trailed behind Bruce, allowing the weaker man to pull him along. Even though Superman could break free, he didn’t. Bruce had such a tight grip on his wrist. Clark couldn’t risk hurting Bruce by forcing him to let go.

When they reached Batman’s quarters, Bruce yanked Clark inside and finally released him. The door shut behind them, enclosing them in the room. This was the first time Clark had been inside Batman’s sleeping quarters at the Watchtower.

The room was dark and sparse. Obviously, Bruce didn’t keep many personal items here. There were only weapons and an extra Bat suit hanging in the corner. The bed looked comfy though, and the black sheets were in a messy pile. Bruce must’ve slept here recently. The whole room smelled like him.

Clark inhaled deeply, enjoying the scent. Then he realized what he was doing and immediately headed to the door.

Bruce quickly stepped in the way, blocking the exit. “You aren’t leaving until we talk.”

“Fine. So, talk,” Clark snapped in irritation.

“Why are you avoiding me?”

Clark looked away uncomfortably. “You know why.”

“Because of my reaction when you pinned me?”

“It’s more than that, Bruce. Everything I did to you…” Clark clenched his fists as he forced the words out. “I can’t make it all go away. Those memories will never disappear. What happened is irreversible, and… I don’t think we should be friends.”

“What?”

Bruce’s eyes narrowed dangerously.

“I don’t want to scare you again, or traumatize you even more,” Clark explained. “So, we shouldn’t hang around each other more than necessary. I like being near you, but I can’t be selfish about this. I just want what’s best for you.”

“What’s best for me?” Bruce scoffed, “What bullshit.”

“It’s not bullshit,” Clark argued. “You’re still scared of me, and I think a part of you always will be.”

Bruce leaned close to his face and snarled, “I am NOT scared of you, Clark.”

“I know you’ll never admit it, but I know what I saw when I pinned you.” Clark lowered his head in shame. “You were terrified…of me.”

Bruce swallowed and took a step back, pausing for a moment. “I’ll admit…I had a flashback. It was an involuntary reaction, but I got over it. I am getting over it, Clark. I’m not as pathetic as you think.”

“What? I never said you were-”

“You want the truth?” Bruce intensely met his gaze. “What happened with the red kryptonite… Yeah, it-it fucked me up pretty bad,” he conceded. “I was not okay at all, but I’m getting better. I’m
Bruce shook with anger as he glared into Clark’s eyes. “I’m not the one who’s scared, Clark. You are. You’re scared. So, if you want to avoid me, fine. Avoid me. As long as you fulfill your duties to the Justice League, I don’t care. We don’t have to be friends. But don’t you dare say that you’re doing this for my sake. Because it’s not for me. You’re only protecting yourself.”

Clark gaped at him, shocked into silence. He hadn’t expected Bruce to say anything like that. It completely caught him off guard. For the past year, Bruce had refused to talk about what happened, but now it was all laid bare. The most hideous, unspeakable stain on their relationship… It was finally something they could talk about.

Batman quickly barged out of the room and stormed away.

“Bruce, wait!” Clark chased after him.

“We’re late to the meeting,” Bruce growled as he headed down the hall.

“Just wait a second!” Clark snatched his arm, stopping him. “You said what you wanted to say. Now it’s my turn.”

Bruce whirled around and snapped furiously, “Fine! Spit it out then.”

“You’re right.”

Bruce blinked, looking confused. “What?”

“I am scared,” Clark said honestly, his heart pounding in his chest. “I’m scared of hurting you again. I’m scared of screwing up. I’m scared of losing you. I…I’m scared that you hate me.” Tears sprang to his eyes as he confessed, “Because I hate myself every time I think of what I did to you. And it’s a constant living hell for me.”

Bruce frowned, shaking his head. “Clark, I don’t blame you. I know it wasn’t your fault. The Joker and Luthor teamed up and-”

“But I’m still the one who hurt you,” Clark muttered sadly.

“I don’t fucking care!” Bruce exploded in anger.

Clark froze as his eyes widened, at a complete loss for words.

“Stop torturing yourself already! I’m sick of it!” Bruce shouted.

“B-But-”

“No!” Bruce cut him off, screaming. “You shut up and listen to me! I don’t hate you! And I never will! It doesn’t matter how much you hurt me or how many of my bones you break. My loyalty isn’t that weak, you stupid asshole!”

Bruce yanked his arm free and stomped away again.

In a flash, Clark recaptured his arm. “Bruce.”

“What now?!” Bruce yelled as he turned around.
Clark suddenly pulled Bruce toward him. Stumbling forward, Bruce fell against his chest. Then Clark wrapped his arms around him, hugging him.

Bruce bristled in the embrace, obviously caught by surprise. “C-Clark?”

“You said I should stop torturing myself, and I wanted a hug from my friend.” Clark held him closer, nuzzling his face against Bruce’s cowl. With his super-hearing, he could hear the sound of Bruce’s heart fluttering.

“Is this okay?” Clark whispered.

Bruce leaned against him, hiding his face in the crook of Clark’s neck. He didn’t say anything, but he gave a small nod. Was he embarrassed? Clark wondered if Bruce was blushing underneath that cowl. Clark hoped he was. Bruce always looked so cute when he blushed.

Clark smiled. “I’m sorry for being stupid.”

“Incredibly stupid,” Bruce grumbled, keeping his face hidden.

“Yeah,” Clark agreed with a chuckle. He was struck with a strong sense of déjà vu like they’ve had this conversation before. Unfortunately, this wasn’t the first time Clark had apologized for being stupid. And it probably wouldn’t be last. But none of that mattered right now.

Clark squeezed Bruce closer, pressing their bodies together, hugging him tightly. After all this time, Bruce was finally in his arms again. And it was the best feeling in the world. Clark grinned, deliriously happy.

“Whoa. About time,” a familiar voice said behind him.

Batman immediately shoved Superman away while Flash watched them both, smiling like a Cheshire cat.

“I’m glad you two are finally making up. But can you keep your hands off each other till after the meeting?” Barry teased them.

Bruce stalked toward him, growling. “Don’t you dare say a word about this to anyone.”

Barry laughed in amusement. “Come on, it was just a hug. You’ve caught me doing way worse.”

“Not a word to anyone.” Bruce snatched the front of Flash’s red suit and hissed, “Especially Hal.”

“Okay, okay.” Barry held up both hands in a placating gesture. “I won’t say anything I promise.”

Batman released the speedster and stormed down the hall, obviously embarrassed. Clark didn’t need to see his face to know that Bruce was definitely blushing now.

After Batman turned around a corner, Flash proudly patted Superman on the back. “I’m happy for you, big guy.”

“Thanks.” Clark beamed.

SxB

In the conference room, Aquaman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, and Martian Manhunter were already seated at the round table. When Batman entered the room, he quickly headed towards his chair, avoiding all their stares.
“What the hell, Spooky? You’re late,” Hal complained.

“Shut up, Lantern.” Bruce snapped as he sat down.

“Hey, you always give me shit for being late. Why do you get a free pass?” Green Lantern huffed, crossing his arms.

“It’s my fault,” Superman said as he entered the room with Flash trailing behind him. “We’re late because of me. Sorry.”

Clark sat down next to Bruce while Barry took his seat by Hal. Now the whole Justice League was present. Batman glanced to the side, staring at Superman. The Kryptonian had a huge smile on his face. He looked so damn pleased with himself. He was practically beaming with joy. Bruce hadn’t seen Clark this happy in a long time. All it took was one hug?

When Clark noticed him staring, he scooted closer to Bruce, bumping their legs together underneath the table. Bruce felt his pulse quicken as Clark encroached on his personal space. Yet he didn’t move away from the hero. How could he? Clark looked so happy right now. Flashing a pearly white grin with cute dimples in his cheeks.

Fuck. Get a hold of yourself. Bruce cleared his throat as he looked away.

“We’re all here, so let’s get started,” Batman began the meeting. “Martian Manhunter, you told me earlier about a message you received.”

J’onn nodded. “Yes, that is correct. This morning I received an urgent message from an alien race called the Ka’tarri. They are requesting our assistance. Their planet is being invaded and their entire race is in danger of extinction.”

“And how is that our problem?” Aquaman said harshly, “The Justice League was formed to protect Earth, not some random aliens.”

“The Ka’tarri once had a treaty with the Kryptonians,” Martian Manhunter explained. “Before Krypton was destroyed, the Ka’tarri had relied on the Kryptonians for protection. They contacted me because they heard of Superman.” He glanced at Clark. “The Ka’tarri are hoping that you’ll honor that treaty and protect them like your ancestors had done in the past.”

Superman crossed his arms, looking unsure. “Batman, what do you think?”

“How much do we know about the Ka’tarri? And who is invading them?” Bruce asked.

“I have met with the Ka’tarri before. They are a peaceful, benevolent race, but physically they are weak.” J’onn answered, “Their long time enemy, the Gozimack are invading them.”

“Oh, those Gozimack guys are assholes!” Hal claimed suddenly. “I’ve heard about them from an alien buddy of mine.”

“So, the Green Lantern Corps have fought them before,” Batman surmised.

Hal nodded. “Yeah. At least once.”

“I still fail to see why this is league business,” Aquaman grumbled.

Martian Manhunter glared at the King of Atlantis. “The Ka’tarri have asked for assistance, and I intend to help them regardless of the league’s decision. If necessary, I will go alone.”
Superman let out a long sigh. “I’ll go with you, J’onn. I don’t know the Ka’tarri, but helping them seems like the right thing to do.”

“I offer my assistance as well,” Wonder Woman announced.

“Yeah, I’ll help too,” Flash said kindly.

“Well, if Barry’s going, then I’m going.” Green Lantern flung an arm around his lover.

Clark smiled at them. “Thanks, guys. But Earth will be defenseless if we all leave.”

“Superman is right,” Bruce agreed. “We shouldn’t send too many league members.”

“I believe Superman and I will be adequate reinforcements for the Ka’tarri,” J’onn informed him.

“So, it’s settled then…” Batman said reluctantly, “Martian Manhunter and Superman will go.”

“We will need to leave as soon as possible,” J’onn insisted.

“Alright. Meeting adjourned.”

As soon as Batman ended the meeting, Aquaman stood and left the room in a huff. Meanwhile the other league members crowded around Superman and Martian Manhunter. Diana and Barry were both wishing Clark good luck while Hal and J’onn shared information on the Gozimack aliens.

During all the commotion, Bruce merely stood and walked away with his fists clenched tightly at his sides. He should probably stay and talk to Clark and J’onn some more about their mission, but he couldn’t. He was too fucking angry. After all this time, he was finally on good terms with Clark again and the Big Blue Boy Scout was already leaving, going across the universe to help a bunch of random ass aliens that he didn’t even know. Because it just “seems like the right thing to do.” Superman was too nice for his good. Protecting Earth was hard enough. But now he was going to protect the whole universe?

Irritated, Bruce scowled as he left the conference room and headed down the hall to the other side of the Watchtower. For a couple minutes, he walked in silence until he heard Clark’s voice behind him.

“Hey, Bruce.”

“What?” He turned to face Superman.

“I wanted to talk to you some more.” Clark scratched the back of his head as he admitted, “I wish I wasn’t leaving.”

“You agreed to it,” Bruce said bitterly.

“J’onn says we shouldn’t be gone for more than a week.”

That long? “Okay…”

“Do you wanna come with us?” Clark asked hopefully.

“No. Aquaman has a point. This is alien business, not league business.”

Clark looked a little disappointed. “But those aliens need help. You think I shouldn’t go?”
“I didn’t say that.” Batman sighed as he admitted, “If I were you, I would go.”

“Because I’m alien?”

“No. Because you’re Superman.” Bruce smiled at him fondly. “Go save a planet, idiot. I’ll be here when you get back.”

Clark nodded silently, but he looked like he wanted to say something.

“What is it, Clark?”

He stretched out his arms. “Can I have another hug before I leave?”

Bruce bristled, blushing underneath his cowl. “Unbelievable.” He turned and stomped away.

“Come on, Bruce. Pleeeeeease,” Clark whined, following him.
The Killing Joke

Chapter Summary

The Bat Family takes a hit

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! Thanks for all the comments and kudos!

WARNING: Canon events up ahead...

Jason wandered around the manor, feeling bored. It was almost noon, and Bruce was still asleep. Last night, Batman had stayed up really late. Apparently, the Joker was on the loose in Gotham again. It was all over the news. Whenever the Joker was free, Bruce couldn’t sleep at night.

Walking aimlessly, Jason peered into the kitchen and spotted Alfred. The old butler was busy, baking a cake. Today was Jason’s thirteenth birthday. He was finally a teenager now. He wasn’t a little kid anymore, so he didn’t want a big party. Barbara was supposed to come over soon. But other than Batgirl, Jason didn’t expect any guests. Lately, Dick has been spending all of his time with the Teen Titans. The first Robin hardly ever left Jump City anymore. Jason had also considered inviting Superman. But according to Bruce, the Kryptonian was on a different planet somewhere, saving aliens or something.

Still bored, Jason headed down the hall towards the study. He pressed a hidden button on a statue, then a secret passageway opened. Sliding down a pole, Jason entered the Batcave and strolled over to the Batcomputer. Most of the computer’s files were password protected, but sometimes Jason could hack into something. He had been practicing his hacking skills lately. Batman had taught him everything he knew.

For a while, Jason puttered around on the Batcomputer. Then he suddenly heard a noise from behind him. Springing to action, Jason leapt to his feet, ready for a fight. His eyes widened in surprise when he recognized the intruder.

“Dick?”

Stepping out of the shadows, Dick smirked at him. The older teen was dressed in his full Robin attire. “Hey, Little Wing.”

“You actually came!” Jason excitedly rushed toward him.

“Of course. I wouldn’t miss your birthday. Oof!” Dick stumbled back when Jason tackled him with a hug.

“Jeez. You almost knocked me down.” He laughed and hugged Jason back.

Across the Batcave, the elevator door slid open, then Barbara strolled out. “Hey, Jason. Alfred said
the cake’s-” She froze when she spotted Dick.

Jason quickly released Dick and stepped out of the way as she ran towards them.

“Dick!” Barbara happily wrapped her arms around Dick, holding him tight. “Oh, my God! I haven’t seen you in months!”

Dick smiled and returned the embrace. “I missed you too, Babs.”

They held each other for a long time like neither of them wanted to let go.

Jason stood off to the side, watching them. He huffed while rolling his eyes. “Hmph. Get a room.”

Dick and Barbara finally pulled away from each other, looking embarrassed. They obviously had a thing for each other. Jason didn’t understand why they weren’t dating already.

Clearing his throat, Dick asked, “So, where’s Bruce?”

Behind them, the elevator door opened again, then Bruce entered the Batcave. It was obvious that the Dark Knight hadn’t been awake for long. He was wearing a black robe, his dark hair was disheveled, and he had dark circles under his eyes. Bruce looked exhausted, but he still smiled when he saw Dick.

“You’re back. How long can you stay?”

“I’ll have to leave tonight,” Dick replied.

“What?” Jason gave him a disappointed look.

“Come on, Dick. You have to stay longer than that,” Barbara complained.

“Sorry. I can’t.” Dick smiled apologetically. “The Teen Titans need me. Things have been kinda crazy in Jump City.”

“What happened?” Bruce asked seriously.

“There’s a new villain in town,” Dick explained. “He calls himself Slade.”

Jason raised an eyebrow. “Slade?”

“You mean Deathstroke?” Bruce frowned.

“Uh, I don’t know.” Dick shrugged. “I only know him as Slade.”

“Does he have one eye and a mask that’s half orange?”

“Yeah.”

Bruce sighed and crossed his arms. “That’s Deathstroke. He’s dangerous. I can take care of him for you.”

“No!” Dick yelled unexpectedly.

Bruce blinked in surprise while Dick said sheepishly, “Sorry, but no. Slade is my problem. I want to deal with him myself.”

“Okay…” Bruce looked a little concerned. “If you ever need help, let me know.”
“Sure.” Dick nodded.

“Well, that’s enough business for now. The cake’s ready, guys. Come on, let’s celebrate.” Barbara hooked her arms around Dick and Jason, pulling them away.

Bruce, Barbara, Dick, and Jason all squeezed into the elevator and headed up to the manor. In the kitchen, Alfred had just finished putting chocolate icing on the cake. The butler placed thirteen candles on the cake and lit them with a match.

They all stood around the cake that was resting on the kitchen counter. Jason stared at the cake for a moment. Then Barbara started singing ‘Happy Birthday’ and Dick joined in. Bruce and Alfred simply watched while two teens sang.

At the end of the song, Jason blew out the candles. Dick and Barbara both cheered loudly while Alfred clapped in a more subdued manner. Even Bruce was smiling even though he remained silent. As the tendrils of smoke from the candles cleared, Jason gazed at his makeshift family and grinned.

When Jason was younger, he used to make birthday wishes. But this year, he didn’t. Because he didn’t need to. Everything he could ever want was right here in this room.

His family.

SxB

After Jason’s birthday party, Barbara said goodbye to the guys and left Wayne Manor. She headed to the library for a few hours, where she worked part-time. Working at a library was a lot different from crime-fighting, but Barbara enjoyed her job. Around 7 PM, she left the library and went home.

In the living room, her father was sitting on the couch, fiddling with his scrapbooks as usual. He had scrapbooks of all the major villains in Gotham, full of newspaper clippings. Tonight he was working on the Joker scrapbook. Even at home, her father was still obsessed with his job as commissioner. Barbara headed into the kitchen and prepared some hot chocolate, hoping to distract him. He really needed a break.

She strolled into the living room, carrying two cups of hot chocolate. “Dad, just once could you leave your work at the office and relax? I made cocoa.” She set his cup on the coffee table in front of him.

“Thank you, Sweetheart. I’ll drink it when I’ve pasted this latest clipping in.” Her father used a pair of scissors to cut out part of a newspaper.

Barbara watched him while drinking her hot chocolate. “Y’know, I found that Catwoman scrapbook you said was missing. It was behind the wardrobe. Some day you ought to let me work out a proper filing system, like the one we use at the library.”

He pasted the newspaper clipping into the scrapbook while Barbara nagged, “Urrgh. Look, you used too much paste! It’s all squidgeing under the edges of the clipping. You’re going to get it on your pants.”

“Barbara, you’re fussier than your mother was.” He glanced up when the doorbell rang. “Was that the door?”

“Yeah, it’ll be Colleen from across the street. Tonight’s our yoga class.” Barbara walked to the
front door while fussing at her father, “C’mon, Dad. *Company!* Put your scrapbooks away.”

He flipped to the first page of the scrapbook, staring at the very first newspaper clipping of the Joker fighting Batman. “Heh, look at this one. First time they met. Now what year was that?”

“Well, I remember you describing the white face and the green hair to me when I was still in elementary school. Scared the hell out of me.”

“I thought you’d be interested.”

She laughed. “Yeah, well, I had some interesting nightmares.”

Barbara opened the door, then her eyes widened in shock. In the doorway, the Joker was standing outside, wearing a Hawaiian shirt and a hat. He held a gun in his hand and had a camera strapped around his neck. Before Barbara could react, the Joker suddenly pulled the trigger and shot her.

The bullet pierced her lower abdomen and she fell back, dropping the cup of hot chocolate. Glass shattered as Barbara broke through the coffee table, crashing onto the floor. She clutched her bleeding gunshot wound while writhing in agony. White-hot pain coursed through her as tears sprang to her eyes. The scariest part was the numbness. She couldn’t feel her legs at all.

“Barb-?” Her father paled in horror.

The Joker entered their home, followed by two thugs. “Please don’t worry. It’s a psychological complaint common amongst ex-librarians. You see, she thinks she’s a coffee table edition.” The green-haired monster snickered at his own joke.

“You, you scum! My daughter, I’ll—” Commissioner Gordon lunged at the Joker with a pair of scissors. But then one of thugs punched him in the stomach.

“Mind you, I can’t say much for the volume’s condition. I mean, there’s a hole in the jacket and the spine appears to be damaged,” the Joker prattled on while the thugs punched and kicked Barbara’s father.

The Joker strolled to a liquor cabinet and poured himself a glass of whiskey. “Frankly, she won’t be walking off the shelves in that state of repair. In fact, the idea of her walking anywhere seems increasingly remote. But then, that’s the problem with soft backs.”

He held up the glass, examining it. “God, these literary discussions are so dry. When you’ve finished with the old boy, you know where to take him. And, please, do be careful. After all, he is topping the bill.”

When Barbara’s father finally collapsed, the two thugs picked him up and carried him away.

The Joker leaned over Barbara with a menacing smile. “You know, it’s such a shame you’ll miss your father’s debut, Miss Gordon. Sadly, our venue wasn’t built for the disabled in mind. But don’t worry, I’ll take some snapshots to remind him of you.”

Barbara grimaced as the Joker started unbuttoning her shirt.

“W-Why are you…d-doing this?” She stuttered, overwhelmed by the pain.

“To prove a point.” He grinned and held up his glass. “Here’s to crime!”

*SxB*
At Gotham General Hospital, Batman met with a detective, who was close friends with Commissioner Gordon. The scruffy, over-weight detective led Batman down an empty hallway to Barbara’s hospital room. In the room, Barbara was laying in bed, unconscious. A doctor stood at the foot of her bed, watching over her solemnly.

Around 10 PM, Batman had received a call about the Joker’s attack. He had come alone, leaving Jason back at the manor. Luckily, the kid had fallen asleep early tonight. Bruce didn’t want bring Jason along for this.

“The bullet went through her spine,” the doctor said gravely. “I’m afraid her legs are completely useless. Putting it bluntly, she may be in a chair for the remainder of her life.”

Batman gazed down at Barbara, struggling to contain his emotions. Sorrow, rage, and guilt swelled inside him like a storm. His hands trembled until he clenched them tightly into fists. The Joker would pay for this. Barbara was only seventeen. She was just a kid. And now, she would be disabled for the rest of her life. All because of the Joker... Because Bruce failed to stop this.

The detective handed him a Joker card. “This was left at the crime scene. Some girl, name of Colleen Reece found Miss Gordon and called 911. She, uh, found the victim in a state of undress, but otherwise the place was empty. The Commissioner was-”

“Undress?” Batman scowled.

“Uh, yeah. The Joker removed her clothing after shooting her.” The detective looked uncomfortable. “We, uh, found a lens cap on the floor that didn’t fit any camera in the place. We believe that, uh... Well, that he took some pictures of her.”

Surging with anger, Batman crumbled the Joker card in his hand. *That bastard...*

The detective sighed. “I know, man. It’s pretty sick, ain’t it?”


The detective and the doctor both left room, shutting the door on their way out. Now Bruce was finally alone Barbara. He stepped closer to her bed and lightly touched her cheek.

“Barbara?” he whispered. “Barbara, can you hear me? It’s me. It’s Bruce.”

She barely opened her eyes. “B-Bruce?” Barbara shot up and wrapped her arms around him. Her whole body trembled as she cried hysterically. “Bruce, it was him. The Joker! He took my dad! Oh, God! He-”

“Barbara, take it easy. It’s okay.” Bruce tried to calm her down.

“No! No, it’s not okay!” She pulled back with a terrified expression on her face. “He’s...He’s taking it to the limit this time. You didn’t see. You didn’t see his eyes.” Barbara winced, obviously in pain. “H-He said he wanted to prove a point...said my dad was top of the bill. What’s he doing to him, Bruce?”

Tears streamed down her face as she yelled desperately, “What’s he doing to my father?!”

SxB

Commissioner Gordon awoke in a dark tent, surrounded by midgets with pink bows in their hair. Two of the midgets wore leather straps while third wore a pink tutu. He blinked in confusion,
staring at the bizarre little people.

“W-Where am I?”

“Up. Up. Up!” The midgets chanted while they yanked off his clothes.

Gordon tried to scoot away from them. “W-What are you doing? Stop!”

One of the midgets shocked him with an electric baton. He cried out in pain, then they placed a collar around his neck that was attached to a leash. After pulling off the rest of his clothes, the midgets yanked on the leash, dragging him out of the tent.

“What is this? Where are you taking me?!” Gordon hunched over, following his strange captors. Outside the tent, Gordon scanned his surroundings in horror. He was at an old rundown carnival. A group of circus freaks watched him, smiling. There was a fat lady, a giant, a hairy man, a pair of Siamese twins, and a woman holding a baby with two heads.

“Oh, God.” Gordon trembled with fear. “Am I dreaming? Am I dreaming this? What happened? I was sitting in my…”

“Down. Down!” The midgets pulled on his leash, causing him to fall on the ground.

“Ugh.” He was sprawled out on the damp grass, naked and completely undignified. “Somebody… Please tell me what I’m doing here?”


Gordon gazed up and saw the Joker, sitting on a throne surrounded by naked baby dolls.

“You’re going mad.” The Joker grinned.


“Remember? Oh, I wouldn’t do that! Remembering’s dangerous. I find the past such a worrying, anxious place. ‘The past tense’ I suppose you’d call it. Ha, ha, ha!” The Joker cackled and stood from his throne. “Memory’s so treacherous. One moment you’re lost in a carnival of delights with poignant childhood aromas, the flashing neon of puberty, all the sentimental candy-floss… The next, it leads you somewhere you don’t want to go…”

The midgets yanked on the leash again, dragging Gordon away. The insane clown followed them as he continued his speech, “Somewhere dark and cold, filled with the damp, ambiguous shapes of things you’d hoped were forgotten. Memories can be vile, repulsive little brutes. Like children, I suppose. Ha, ha!”

“Oh, God. Barbara,” Gordon muttered to himself, remembering his daughter’s broken body laying on the floor of their home.

The midgets forced him into the seat of a carnival ride and strapped him in. Meanwhile the Joker was still rambling on.

“But can we live without them? Memories are what our reason is based upon. If we can’t face them, we deny reason itself! Although why not? We aren’t contractually tied down to rationality. There is no sanity clause!” He exclaimed with glee.
“So when you find yourself locked onto an unpleasant train of thought, heading for the places in your past where the screaming is unbearable. Remember there’s always madness.” The Joker grinned at him. “Madness is the emergency exit. You can just step outside and close the door on all those dreadful things that happened. You can lock them away…forever.”

The carnival ride began and the seat moved forward along a set of tracks. Gordon watched anxiously as the tracks led to a door with a painted face. Soon the door opened and the ride entered a dark tunnel. Gordon ducked his head and shut his eyes. He had no idea what the Joker was planning, but he knew it would be something horrible.

“A-A-Ah! Heads up, Commissioner!” The Joker’s voice blared through speakers on the walls of the tunnel. “No fair hiding your eyes on the ghost train, you old Fraidy-cat!”

“Up. Up!” The midgets yanked on the leash again, forcing Gordon to raise his head. The nightmarish little creatures were standing behind him on the seat.

In front of him, the Joker was grinning widely on a large screen on the wall. “Oh, I know… You’re confused. You’re frightened. Who wouldn’t be? You’re in a hell of a situation! But, y’know, though life’s a bowl of cherries and this is the pits, always remember this… Music, Sam.”

The sound of a piano playing came through the speakers while the Joker continued in a sing-song voice, “When the world is full of care and every headline screams despair, when all is rape, starvation, war and life is vile… Then there’s a certain thing I do, which I will pass along to you, that’s always guaranteed to make me smile…”

The cheerful music picked up its tempo while the Joker sang happily on the screen, “I go loo-oo-ony as a light-bulb battered bug, simply loo-oo-ony, sometimes foam and chew the rug…”

“Mister, life is swell in a padded cell, it’ll chase those blues away. You can trade your gloom for a rubber room and injections twice a day!” On the screen, the Joker danced with a top hat and a cane. “Just go loo-oo-ony, like an acid casualty, or a moo-oo-nie, or a preacher on T.V. When the human race wears an anxious face, when the bomb hangs overhead, when your kid turns blue, it won’t bother you. You can smile and nod instead!”

The ride bumped along the tracks while the Joker sang happily on the screen, “I go loo-oo-ony as a light-bulb battered bug, simply loo-oo-ony, sometimes foam and chew the rug…”

Suddenly, pictures of a naked girl appeared on all the screens. Gordon’s heart wrenched in his chest as he stared at the images. “Wait! Wait a minute, that’s…”

“Down. Down!” The midgets pulled on the leash again, keeping him in his seat.

The Joker sang over the speakers, “Man’s so pu-uu-uni, and the universe so big!”

“B-Barbara?” Gordon felt sick to his stomach. On all the screens, there were pictures of his daughter’s naked body, taken from every angle. One screen showed a close-up view of her crying face.

“If you hurt inside, get certified, and if life should treat you bad…”

“BARBARA!” Gordon screamed at the top of his lungs.

“Don’t get ee-ee-even, get mad!” The Joker ended his song with a haunting laugh.

SxB
All across Gotham, Batman searched for the Joker. As soon as he left the hospital, he had contacted Dick through his communicator. Robin had been on his way back to Jump City, but Bruce ordered him to return to Gotham immediately.

Batman would handle the Joker on his own. He didn’t need any help with that, but he didn’t like leaving Barbara alone. Someone had to stay by her side at the hospital. And Dick could comfort her better than anyone else could. After Bruce explained the situation to Dick, he could hear the sound of tires screeching. Without a doubt, Dick was rushing back to Gotham at this very moment.

It was almost midnight when the Bat signal shined in the sky. Using his grappling gun, Batman swung onto the roof of the police headquarters. The scruffy, fat detective was waiting for him with another Joker card in his hand. Attached to the Joker card, there was a ticket to a carnival. Batman took the ticket and studied it. Now he knew where to find the Joker.

Batman fired his grappling gun and swung away. He landed in an alleyway and jumped into the Batmobile. Speeding down the street, he headed to the outskirts of the city, where the old dilapidated carnival was located.

He drove past the Ferris wheel and merry-go-round until he spotted the Joker and group of circus people up ahead. Then Batman stomped on the brakes and the Batmobile came to a screeching halt. He leapt out of the vehicle while the circus people ran away. Only the Joker remained, smiling viciously. Behind him, Commissioner Gordon was cowering, naked in a cage. What the hell had the Joker done to him?

Enraged, Batman lunged at the Joker, knocking him to the ground. Then the clown pulled out a fake flower that sprayed acid on Bruce’s arm. Batman grimaced in pain while the Joker broke free and fled. The villain dashed into a rundown building with the ‘The House of Fun’ painted above the entrance.

Reaching into his utility belt, Batman took a basic solution and poured it on his injured arm, neutralizing the acid. Then he hurried to the commissioner and opened the cage.

“Jim, are you okay?” Bruce asked.

“Oh, God. Oh, G-God.” Commissioner Gordon leaned against Batman, crying. “He-He shot Barbara. Showed me ph-photos. He tried to drive me mad.”

Bruce helped the traumatized man out of the cage and pulled an old sheet off a crate. Then he draped the sheet over Commissioner Gordon. “Listen, the police are following right behind me. I’ll stay with you until they arrive.”

“No! No, I’m okay! You have to go after him!” Gordon insisted, “I want him brought in, and I want it done by the book.”

“I’ll do my best.” Batman stormed toward the House of Fun.

“By the book, you hear?” The Commissioner called out, “We have to show him! We have to show him that our way works!”

Batman entered the funhouse, running down a long hallway, surrounded by trick mirrors. All the mirrors showed the same image of Joker’s sadistic grin.

“Sooo, I see you received the free ticket I sent you,” the Joker’s voice echoed throughout the funhouse. It was impossible to tell where the sound was coming from. “I’m glad. I’ve missed you so much, Batsy dear. I had fun breaking the Commissioner and proving my point. All it takes is
one bad day to drive a perfectly sane man to madness. But, you already know that, don’t you, Batsy? You know me so well. You complete me. Everything I do, I do for us."

While Batman ran, a section of the floor opened, revealing a pit of spikes. Before he could fall into the pit, he quickly grabbed onto the ledge and pulled himself up.

Batman stood, staring at all the mirrors. The Joker had the illusion of being everywhere. Bruce felt cornered, surrounded by dozens of malicious smiles.

“For us?” Batman demanded, “What the hell are you talking about?”

“I’m resetting our game, Bats!” The Joker exclaimed happily. “We’re going back to the good old days. Back when it was just you and me. Ah, I love the sound of that! You see, there are too many distractions these days. The Justice League, your lover boy Superman, your cop buddies, and your annoying little sidekicks, Batgirl and the Robins…” The villain snickered cruelly. “Well, you’re short a Batgirl now, aren’t you? That’s one less distraction.”

Batman froze, horrified by the implications of what the Joker just said. “You know…?”

“Oh, Brucie, baby,” the Joker cooed with a twisted kind of affection. “I know everything. I’ve known for years. But don’t worry. Your secret is safe with me. My whole world revolves around you! But I’m afraid our relationship has become a little one-sided lately. I don’t feel like you’re giving me the attention I deserve. You naughty bat! You know how much I hate sharing.”

“You mean…” Bruce shook with anger as he clenched his fists. “You shot Barbara because you wanted my attention?”

“Ha, ha, ha! It’s working, isn’t it? You want to kill me, don’t you?” The Joker hissed behind him, “Maybe next time, I’ll nab a Robin.”

Batman immediately turned around and punched through the mirror. The glass shattered, revealing the Joker on the other side. Bruce leapt at the clown, punching him in the face. The Joker stumbled back while pulling out a knife. He slashed at Bruce’s chest, slicing open his skin. Batman ignored the pain as he twisted the Joker’s arm, forcing him to drop the weapon. Then Bruce flung the villain at the wall, busting a hole in the funhouse.

The Joker landed on the grass outside while Batman stepped through the hole in the wall, heading towards him. For a moment, the clown laid still on the ground. Then he suddenly sat up and whipped out a gun. Bruce tensed anxiously as the villain pulled the trigger. But instead of a bullet, a flag popped out with the words ‘Click! Click! Click!’ on it.

“Oh, Brucie, baby,” the Joker cackled.

Within a second, Batman was on top of the Joker, beating his face in. The insane clown delighted in the abuse, egging Bruce on.

“Hit me harder! Oh, you hurt me so good.”

Batman instantly released the Joker, cringing in disgust.

“Oopsie! Wrong gun.” The Joker cackled.

Within a second, Batman was on top of the Joker, beating his face in. The insane clown delighted in the abuse, egging Bruce on.

“That’s it, Batsy! Come on, hit me!” The Joker writhed underneath him. “Hit me harder! Oh, you hurt me so good.”

Batman instantly released the Joker, cringing in disgust.

“Aww. Why’d you stop?” The Joker looked disappointed. “Hit me some more.”

“No!” Batman backed away from the villain, feeling strangely dirty. “I’m doing this one by the book. The police will be here soon. You’re going back to Arkham where you belong.”
“Hmph. How boring.” The clown laid on his back, gazing up at the sky. “You know I’ll break out again.”

Seconds slowly ticked by while the clouds darkened overhead. It began to rain while Bruce stared down at his enemy. He knew what the maniac had said was true. It was only a matter of time before the Joker broke out of the asylum again, and then this whole cycle would repeat itself. Over and over again, the Joker would terrorize innocent people and Batman would chase him. Until the very end, always chasing… And, for what? So they could repeat the same sick game? Too many lives have been lost already. This couldn’t go on forever.

“Joker…” Batman pleaded desperately, “We can’t keep doing this. Something has to change. This needs to stop.”

“There’s only one way to make me stop, Bats. You know what it is.”

“I won’t kill you. I don’t know what happened to make you this way… But maybe, if you just tried, you could come back from it.” Bruce said hesitantly, “Maybe… I could help. I could rehabilitate you.”

“Heh, always the hero.” The Joker chuckled as he stood. “No, Bruce. It’s too late for that. Far too late. Ha, ha. You know, it’s funny. This situation reminds me of a joke.”

He started, “See, there were these two guys in a lunatic asylum. And one night, one night they decide they don’t like living in an asylum anymore. They decide to escape!” The Joker turned around and stretched out his arms, overlooking the city of Gotham in the distance. “So, like, they get up onto the roof and there, just across this narrow gap, they see the rooftops of the town, stretching away into the moonlight. Stretching away into freedom.”

The Joker gestured excitedly with his hands as he spoke, “Now, the first guy, he jumps right across with no problem. But his friend, his friend couldn’t make the leap. You see, he was afraid of falling. So then, the first guy has an idea. He says ‘Hey! I have my flashlight with me! I’ll shine it across the gap between the buildings. You can walk along the beam and join me!’”

“But the second guy just shakes his head. He says ‘Wh-What do you think I am? Crazy?!’” The Joker turned to face Batman, grinning madly. “‘You’d turn it off when I was halfway across!’”

“Ha, ha!” He doubled over, laughing hysterically. “Oh, do excuse me… Ha, ha, ha!”

“Heh.” Batman smirked slightly.

The Joker continued to laugh. Then Bruce suddenly reached out and grabbed him by the throat. The villain choked while Batman tightened his grip. It would be so easy to kill the Joker right now, to finally put a stop to this sick game once and for all. Bruce just wanted it to end. He wanted to kill the Joker. Wanted to kill the bastard who could laugh at stupid jokes while spreading so much pain and misery. There was no remorse, no redemption for the Joker. Death was the only way out of this madness.

“No! No, he can’t win!” Bruce snapped out of his murderous rage as he released the Joker. The villain collapsed on the ground, coughing.

“I will never kill you, Joker.” Batman swore, “No matter what you do. You will never win.”

The Joker smiled up at him with blood-stained teeth. “Never say never, Batsy.”

Behind him, Bruce could hear the sirens approaching. The police would arrive soon. He swiftly
kicked the Joker in the head, knocking him out. Then Batman hurried back to the Batmobile.

SxB

It was pouring rain when Batman returned to the hospital. With his grappling hook, Batman swung to the roof and headed down the stairwell, into the building. He headed to the fifth floor and walked quietly down the hall. It was two o’clock in the morning and most patients were asleep. Even a couple of nurses were dozing off at a reception desk.

When he reached Barbara’s room, he found the door barely cracked open. A sliver of light was shining through the doorway. Was Barbara still awake? Bruce headed to the door and peered inside.

Barbara was laying in bed, fast asleep. And sitting next to her, Dick was sobbing while holding her hand. He was still wearing his Robin outfit so his eyes were covered, but the tears were streaming freely down his face, from underneath his mask.

Bruce stepped away from the door and leaned his back against the wall. For a long time, he stood in the hallway, listening to Dick cry.

Listening to the consequence of his failures…
It was late at night, and Gotham was unusually quiet. The Joker was locked away, inside Arkham Asylum once again. Only one day had passed since Barbara was shot. Her father, Commissioner Gordon was in her hospital room, sitting by her bed.

Across from the hospital, Batman and both Robins stood on the roof of nearby building. They had been watching over Barbara’s hospital room for almost an hour. They could see her and her father through an open window.

Impatient, Jason paced back and forth as he complained, “Ugh. He’s never going to leave! I’m sick of waiting. Let’s go see her.”

“No,” Batman replied sternly. “As long as Commissioner Gordon is in the room, we’ll keep our distance. He doesn’t know that his daughter is Batgirl. She wanted to keep that part of her life a secret.”

“So, let’s take off the capes,” Jason suggested. “We can visit her in regular clothes.”

Batman shook his head. “Why would Bruce Wayne and his two wards visit her in the middle of the night? That would seem suspicious.”

“This is stupid! I just wanna talk to her!” Jason yelled in frustration.

“Bruce is right.” Dick crossed his arms as he stared wistfully at Barbara’s window. “We can visit when her dad leaves. We have to respect Barbara’s wishes and protect her identity as Batgirl.”

“Why?” Jason snorted. “It’s not like she can be Batgirl anymore.”

“Don’t say that!” Dick angrily snatched the collar of the younger Robin’s costume.

“But it’s true! She’s paralyzed!” Jason argued.

“Shut up, you brat!” Dick shouted in his face.

“Both of you, quit it.” Bruce snarled.
Dick glared at Jason as he released him, shoving the other boy away. “I’m out of here. The titans need me.” Dick stormed to the edge of the roof and fired his grappling gun.

The older Robin swung away while Jason called out, “Wait! You can’t just leave!”

Jason reached for his own grappling gun, ready to follow Dick.

“Let him go.” Batman grabbed Jason’s arm, stopping him.

“But we should stick together!” Jason protested.

“Jump City is safer than Gotham. He’ll be all right. Just give him some space.”

Jason frowned and yanked his arm away from Bruce. For a while, he gazed into the distance, but he couldn’t see Dick anymore. The other Robin was long gone. Jason sighed in defeat. He shouldn’t have said that about Batgirl. Now Dick was pissed off at him. Sometimes Jason was too blunt for his own good. He’d say whatever popped into his head without thinking it through…

_Idiot_. Jason clenched his fists, angry at himself. He glanced at Barbara’s window again and spotted the commissioner dozing off in the chair by her bed.

“Dammit,” Jason grumbled. “Her dad is going to sleep. He’ll be there all night.”

“Let’s go home.” Batman turned and walked to the other side of the roof. He pulled out his grappling gun and swung down to the street below.

Jason gazed at Barbara’s window one last time, then he followed Bruce to the street.

_SxB_

For the next few days, Bruce didn’t leave the Batcave. He sat in front of the Batcomputer for hours on end, watching the security footage from Arkham Asylum. The Joker was still in his cage. For now, Batman couldn’t let the psychopath escape no matter what.

“Maybe next time, I’ll nab a Robin.”

The Joker’s threat was still fresh in his mind. Batman couldn’t think of anything else. His eyes burned as he stared at the computer screen. He hadn’t slept in days. He couldn’t relax… If he let his guard down for even one second, Bruce knew what would happen. The Joker wanted to _reset_ their game. That sick bastard planned to go after everyone Bruce cared about, everyone who was deemed a _distraction_.

That was why Bruce allowed Dick to leave Gotham. The teen would be safer in Jump City. It would be harder for the Joker to reach him.

The further away everyone was, the safer they would be… Anyone close to Batman could be the Joker’s next target. What happened to Barbara and her father was all Bruce’s fault. He let them get involved, then he failed to protect them.

Bruce couldn’t handle another failure like that. He wouldn’t be able to live with himself.

While he watched the Batcomputer, he heard footsteps coming from behind him. He glanced over his shoulder and spotted Jason dressed in his Robin gear.

“Come on, Bruce. Let’s go on patrol.”
“No, I’m busy.” Bruce gazed back at the computer screen. The security camera footage showed the Joker still sitting in his cell.

“You’ve been watching the Joker for days. He hasn’t tried anything.” Jason tugged on Bruce’s arm. “Come on. He’s not the only bad guy in Gotham, you know. We have to go on patrol.”

Batman ripped his arm away. “No. If I don’t keep an eye on the Joker, he’ll escape again.”

Jason snorted. “Well, if you’re that sure he’s going to escape, then you should’ve killed him.”

“What?” Bruce stared at the boy in surprise.

“You should’ve killed him,” Jason repeated while crossing his arms. “Seriously. No one would care if you killed the Joker. The son of a bitch deserves to die.”

Batman scowled. “Don’t say things like that, Jason.”

“Or what?” Jason scoffed. “I’m so sick of your holier-than-thou attitude. Because you refuse to kill that makes you some kind of saint? Every time you let the Joker live, you know more innocent people are going to die!”

Bruce furiously shot out of his chair and loomed over the teen as he growled, “If I kill the Joker then I am no better than he is.”

“So you just lock him up and wait for him to escape?! Your way doesn’t work, Bruce!” Jason yelled, “If you won’t kill him, I will!”

“Go to your room. Now,” Batman snarled. “And take off that suit! You don’t deserve to be Robin if you can’t follow my rules.”

“Fuck you. You know I’m right.” Jason angrily stomped away.

He took the elevator up to the manor, leaving Bruce alone in the Batcave.

SxB

Two more days passed and Bruce still hadn’t left the cave. Poor Alfred was really worried. The butler paced anxiously around the whole manor, cleaning everything in sight. Three times a day, he’d bring food down to Bruce, then take the dirty dishes up to the kitchen. When Jason wasn’t at school, he’d keep Alfred company. Honestly, Jason was worried about Bruce too, but he hadn’t forgotten their fight…

Jason knew that he was right. The Joker had to die. It was the only way to protect everyone. He didn’t understand why Bruce couldn’t see that. Batman was just being stubborn, clinging onto the moral high ground. He refused to do what was necessary and finally kill the psychopath. It was so frustrating, and Jason was still mad at him. But eventually his concern outweighed his anger.

Around midnight, Jason slid down the pole to the Batcave. He found Bruce, still sitting in front of the Batcomputer. Jason walked toward him, then he realized that Batman had fallen asleep in his chair. Apparently, the days of sleep deprivation had finally caught up to him. At least he was getting some rest now.

Jason glanced at the computer screen which was still playing security footage from Arkham Asylum. On the screen, the Joker was strolling down an empty hallway. He was out of his cell! The Joker was escaping! Jason reached a hand toward Bruce, about to wake him up. But then
Jason stopped himself.

This was it… This was his one chance to kill the Joker without Batman getting in the way.

Jason turned off the Batcomputer. Then he hurried away, leaving Bruce asleep in his chair. Jason changed into his Robin suit, grabbed the Batblade and quietly walked the motorcycle toward the exit. Once he was outside, Jason jumped onto the Batblade and sped away.

He would kill the Joker himself. Then that sick freak could never hurt his family again.

SXB

When Bruce awoke, he yawned and rubbed at his eyes. He was so exhausted that he had passed out while watching the security footage. He’d have to ask Alfred for more coffee. Bruce glanced at the blank computer screen and realized that someone had shut it off. Frowning, Bruce immediately turned the Batcomputer back on.

He hacked into the asylum’s security system again, so he could see their camera footage. On the computer screen, all the guards were running around frantically, and the Joker’s cell was empty.

Oh, shit! Batman leapt out of his chair and ran toward the Batmobile. Maybe the Joker was still close to Arkham Asylum. Maybe Bruce could catch him before he could seriously hurt someone.

Before he reached the Batmobile, he suddenly heard the Joker laughing. Bruce’s blood ran cold as he pulled out his Bat-Comm. The Joker’s voice was coming from the device. He was calling from Jason’s communicator.

“Ha, ha, ha! I believe I have something that belongs to you, Bats. You better hurry! I’m having so much fun with him!”

“Joker,” Bruce growled as he clenched the Bat-Comm in his hand. “I swear if you hurt him-”

“Hehehe, it’s a bit too late for that. You should hurry while he’s still in one piece. Tick tock, Batsy!” The Joker snickered as he ended the call.

For a second, Bruce froze in terror while horrible thoughts rushed through his mind. The Joker has Jason. He has Jason. He’s going to kill Jason!

Batman quickly snapped out of his state of panic and jumped into the Batmobile. He traced the signal from Jason’s communicator and stomped on the accelerator, speeding out of the Batcave.

His heart raced anxiously as he tore down the street at 120 miles per hour. He had to reach Jason in time. He just had to. Bruce tightly gripped the steering wheel while pressing down on the accelerator even more.

SXB

Jason lay on the floor with his arms tied behind his back. His plan to kill the Joker had failed miserably. Now he was the insane man’s hostage. They were inside an empty warehouse on the outskirts of town. At least Batman could trace the signal from Jason’s communicator. Bruce was his only hope of survival now.

The Joker stood over him, holding a crowbar in his hand. Suddenly, the manic swung the crowbar down, hitting Jason in the head. The whole room spun while Jason groaned in pain. He could feel the blood pooling on the floor, underneath his head. His skull was probably fractured.
“Wow! That looked like it really hurt,” The Joker exclaimed and swung the crowbar again, striking the teen’s chest.

Jason felt a few of his ribs break as he coughed and gasped for air. He was in so much pain that he could barely move.

“Now hang on. That looked like it hurt a lot more. So, let’s try to clear this up. Okay, pumpkin?” The Joker asked mockingly. “What hurts more? A or B?” He swung the crowbar over and over, hitting Jason several times. “Forehand or backhand?”

With every strike, Jason could hear the sound of his bones cracking underneath the cold metal. He writhed in agony, overwhelmed by the sheer amount of pain. His whole body hurt, and Jason couldn’t think straight. He knew one of his legs was broken and one of his arms too. It would take months to recover from this if he survived. He had been too cocky… Going after the Joker alone. That one mistake might cost him his life.

The Joker finally stepped back, cackling madly. Jason glared up at the villain, his eyes burning with hatred. He hated the Joker. He focused on that hatred more than anything else, even the pain. Jason tried speak, but the words wouldn’t come out. It hurt every time he breathed.

The Joker kneeled beside him, patting him on the head. “A little louder, Lambchop. I think you may have a collapsed lung. That always impedes the oratory.”

Jason turned toward the Joker and spat blood on his face.

The Joker angrily smashed Jason’s head against the floor and stood. He frowned while wiping the blood off his face “Now that was rude. The first Boy Blunder had some manners.”

Jason grinned stubbornly with blood stained teeth.

“I suppose I’m going to have to teach you a lesson, so you can better follow in his footsteps.” The Joker paused for a moment, then smiled. “Nah. I’m just gonna keep beating you with this crowbar.”

He swung the crowbar again, hitting Jason in the shoulder. The brutal beating continued for at least another five minutes. By the end, Jason was about to pass out. The pain was unbearable, his sight was blurry, and every breath took too much effort. The Joker was probably right about the collapsed lung.

Eventually, the Joker dropped the crowbar on the floor and walked away. He opened the door and gazed back at Jason. “Okay, kiddo. I got to go. It’s been fun, right?”

Jason glared at him, wheezing painfully as he struggled for air.

The Joker shrugged. “Well, maybe a smidge more fun for me than you. I’m just guessing since you’re being awful quiet. Anyway, be a good boy, finish your homework, and be in bed by 9:00. And, hey, tell the big guy I said hello.” The Joker grinned viciously as he shut door.

With the psychopath gone, Jason felt a huge sense of relief. Maybe he could escape now. Jason rolled backwards while pulling his arms over his feet. His hands were still tied, but they weren’t behind his back anymore. That was a small improvement. Jason grunted as he crawled across the floor, towards the door. His whole body screamed in protest every time he moved. But Jason forced himself to continue forward.
When he reached the door, Jason tried to turn the handle, but the door was locked. He couldn’t get out. Groaning in pain, Jason sat up and leaned against the locked door. Hopefully, Batman would be here soon.

Then he heard a beeping noise. Jason gasped in horror, knowing what that sound meant. He stared across the warehouse and spotted a bomb on top of a crate. According to the timer, there were less than ten seconds left. Maybe Jason could defuse the bomb, but he would need more than ten seconds. Also the bomb was too far away, and he had barely made it to the door.

Six seconds now. Jason knew he was going to die. There was nothing he could do to stop it. The timer kept ticking. Five seconds. Four seconds…

Jason shut his eyes and waited for the inevitable.

SxB

The tires screeched as Batman drove around a sharp corner. He could see the warehouse now. He was almost there. *Hang on, Jason!* Bruce zoomed up a hill to the warehouse and leapt out of the Batmobile. He ran as fast as he could toward the warehouse, then the building suddenly exploded. Debris flew through the air and Batman fell to the ground,ducking his head down.

After the explosion, Batman stood and ran through the smoky wreckage. The warehouse was just a pile of rubble now. Bruce searched the area until he spotted a foot underneath some debris. He quickly flung off the rubble and found Jason’s limp body on the ground. The teen had several injuries and some of his skin was burnt from the explosion.

Bruce fell to his knees and cradled the boy in his arms. Jason wasn’t breathing at all and his body looked so broken. When Bruce touched the back of his head, he could feel a gaping hole in Jason’s skull. No one could survive an injury like that. Jason was dead. Even if he was rushed to a hospital, there was nothing the doctors could do. Nothing could save him. It was too late. Bruce was too late.

“No…” Tears sprang to his eyes and spilled down his face from underneath his cowl. “Jason. No, no.”

Bruce sobbed while holding the limp, lifeless child. Jason had been so young. He had just turned thirteen. He shouldn’t have died like this. Bruce should’ve saved him.

A scream ripped out of his throat as he hugged Jason against his chest. The grief was overwhelming, *punishing.* It tore through Bruce like a thousand knives. He couldn’t stand it. Desperately, he wished that he could trade places with Jason. Bruce wished that he was the one who died. Anything was better than this… This *failure.*

“I’m sorry, Jason.” He cried, breaking down completely. “I’m so sorry.”

SxB

The funeral was on Sunday. In Gotham Cemetery, a crowd of people had gathered around Jason Todd’s grave. It was a dark, cloudy afternoon and everyone was dressed in black. Dick stood next to Alfred and Bruce while they watched Jason’s coffin being lowered into the Earth.

A priest said a few words, but Dick wasn’t listening. His attention was focused solely on the small coffin. He had asked to see Jason’s body, but Bruce wouldn’t allow it. Apparently, the damage was too gruesome. Dick had heard what happened. The Joker had captured Jason, beaten him, then left him to die in an explosion. Bruce didn’t want anyone looking at the body.
When the priest had finished his sermon, Dick grabbed a handful of dirt and dropped it on the coffin. *From ashes to ashes, from dust to dust…*

More people came and tossed dirt on the coffin. There were several fake friends of Bruce Wayne here and a few genuine ones. Lucius Fox was standing nearby, looking very somber. The death of Jason Todd was all over the news, and many people had asked to attend the funeral. Most of them didn’t even know Jason. They were only interested because the famous Bruce Wayne was involved.

Tears formed in Dick’s eyes, then he quickly wiped them away. He didn’t want to cry in front of all these strangers.

Alfred placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. “It’s all right, Master Dick. Let it out.”

Dick choked back a sob as he turned toward the butler, hugging him. He hid his face in Alfred’s chest while the old man patted him on the back.

“I called Jason a brat before I left,” Dick confessed. “It was the last thing I said to him. I-I didn’t mean it. I was just mad. I didn’t m-mean…”

“He knew that, Master Dick,” Alfred said reassuringly. “You were like a brother to him. And, sometimes brothers fight, but I’m sure Master Jason knew how much you cared. He always thought the world of you.”

Tears streamed down his face as Dick whimpered. “I should’ve been here. I could’ve helped.”

“Yes, I can. Dick took a step back and rubbed the tears off his face. Then he glanced over at Bruce who was still staring at the coffin. Bruce had a vacant, dead look in his eyes like he was empty inside, completely hollowed-out. It was scary to see him this way. Bruce seemed broken. As if the pain of losing Jason was too much and he simply shut down.

Across the cemetery, Dick spotted Commissioner Gordon and Barbara heading towards the crowd. Barbara sat in a wheelchair while her father strolled behind her, pushing her forward.

Dick walked towards them. “Hi, Commissioner. Hi, Barbara.” He stared down at her sadly. It was upsetting to see her in a wheelchair. She had always been so active and full of life.

“We’re so sorry for your loss,” Commissioner Gordon said gravely. “I’m here to pay my respects to Mr. Wayne.”

“He’s right over there.” Dick pointed to the crowd behind him.

“Dad, can I have a minute alone with Dick?” Barbara asked.

“Of course, Sweetheart.” Her father kissed the top of her head, then he walked away, heading toward Bruce.

Once her father left, Barbara spoke in a hushed voice, “The news said it was an accident. What really happened?”

“It was the Joker,” Dick said solemnly.

“Oh, God.” Her eyes widened in horror as she trembled. “Oh, God. No. Poor Jason.” Barbara
leaned her head down, crying.

While she cried, Dick kneeled in front of her wheelchair and hugged her.

SxB

After the funeral, Dick returned to the manor with Bruce and Alfred. In the study, Bruce sat in a chair by the fireplace, holding a glass of scotch in his hand. He was guzzling down the alcohol. Once he finished the glass, he immediately refilled it. Ever since they came home, Bruce had been drinking nonstop. Alfred tried to tell him to slow down, but Bruce wouldn’t listen. He just growled at the butler and kept drinking.

It was very concerning. Dick knew from first-hand experience just how self-destructive Bruce could be. The man was obviously depressed. Dick stood in the doorway, watching Bruce drink, unsure of what to do.

When his T-phone rang, Dick hurried down the hall and took his Robin mask out of his pocket. He tied the mask over his eyes, then answered the call.

On the T-phone, there was a small screen that showed Starfire’s smiling face. “Hello, Robin! I am so glad to see you are well! We miss you very much. When are you coming home?”

Dick sighed. “I don’t know, Starfire.”

The T-phone switched hands then Cyborg’s face appeared on the screen. “Man, we kinda need you here.”

“Well, whatever you’re doing can wait,” Cyborg said seriously. “Slade’s back.”

Dick blinked in surprise. “Slade? What has he done now?”

Raven took the T-phone as she explained, “He stole a computer chip from a lab. We don’t know what he’s planning to do with it.”

Starfire grabbed the phone again, pleading with a large green eyes. “Please come back, Robin. The situation is most dire.”

“Alright.” He caved in. “I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

Starfire beamed happily. “Thank you, Robin. That is glorious news! I-”

Dick shut the T-phone and took off his mask. Dammit. This was such bad timing. He wanted to stay in Gotham for a few more days, but he couldn’t let down his team. Slade was their most dangerous enemy. Robin needed to be there when Teen Titans fought him again.

Heading down the hall, Dick entered the study and found Bruce. He was still sitting by the fireplace, drinking.

With a sigh, Dick told him, “The Teen Titans just called me. Slade is up to something in Jump City.”
Bruce stared down at his scotch glass with a blank expression. “Then go.”

Dick gave him a worried look. “Are you sure? If you want me to stay—”

“Just go.”

Dick frowned as he admitted guiltily, “I don’t think you should be alone.”

Bruce glared at him. “I can take care of myself. Now get out.”

“You know you can always call me if you need me.”

“I don’t need anything from you,” Bruce growled harshly. “Go back to your city. Protect your team.”

“Okay, Bruce…” Dick let out a defeated sigh. Then he turned and walked away.

SxB

It was Sunday night when Superman returned to Earth with Martian Manhunter. Their mission had been a success. The peaceful, alien race known as the Ka’tarri wasn’t in danger anymore. And the Justice League had won a whole planet as an ally. The Ka’tarri really appreciated the help, and it felt good to save so many lives.

Flying down to Metropolis, Superman headed back to his apartment and entered through a window. It was almost 11 PM, but Lois was still awake, sitting in the kitchen. She looked upset and there were newspapers spread all over the kitchen table.

“Hey, Lois.” Clark walked toward her. “What’s wrong?”

“We need to talk. A lot has happened while you were gone,” she said gravely.

“Like what?” He sat down across from her.

Lois sighed and took a newspaper out of the pile. Then she handed it to him. “This was in the news right after you left.”

Clark stared at the Gotham Gazette and gasped. In bold letters, the title read ‘Police Commissioner’s Daughter Shot by The Joker’. He quickly skimmed through the rest of the article, learning more details. Apparently, Barbara Gordon had been shot in her own home, and now she was paralyzed. Did that mean she was finished as Batgirl? Bruce was probably blaming himself for this. The Joker was such a monster. That poor girl…

“Oh, my God. This is horrible.” Clark set down the newspaper, unable to look at it anymore.

“It gets worse,” Lois said sadly.

Clark gave her a scared look. “How could it get worse?”

She handed him another newspaper with today’s date. On the front page, there was an article titled ‘Billionaire Bruce Wayne Mourns for His Young Ward. Jason Todd Dies at Age 13.’

Clark gaped at the newspaper in shock. He couldn’t believe it. This seemed too awful to be true.

“No… Not Jason.” Tears sprang to his eyes as he read over the article. The journalist claimed that Jason had died in some kind of freak accident involving a motorcycle, but that couldn’t be right.
Bruce must be hiding the truth. Was the Joker responsible for this too? Oh, God. Poor Bruce... I was only gone for a week. How could this happen?

“The funeral was today,” Lois explained solemnly. “I’m really worried about Bruce. I tried calling him, but he wouldn’t answer.”

“I have to go.” Clark stood and disappeared in a flash, blowing newspapers off the table.

Zooming across the sky, Superman flew to Gotham as fast as possible. In less than a second, he was hovering above Wayne Manor. With his super-hearing, he could pinpoint Bruce’s exact location. He was on the first floor, in the study.

Clark flew through a window and landed inside the manor. Then he hurried down a dark hallway, following the sound of Bruce’s heartbeat. Clark entered the study and found Bruce sitting alone by the fireplace. He had a whiskey bottle in his hand, and he was gazing down at his lap like he was in a stupor. How much has he been drinking? Bruce reeked of alcohol and his dress-shirt looked disheveled. His tie hung loosely around his neck, about to fall off.

When Clark took a few steps toward him, Bruce finally glanced up. His eyes were bloodshot and he looked absolutely miserable.

Clark felt a rush of sympathy for his friend. He hated seeing Bruce like this.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered, overwhelmed with a sense of guilt. “I’m so sorry that I wasn’t here to help you. If I was here, I could’ve saved Jason.”

Bruce shook his head and spoke with a hoarse, sullen voice, “No. Jason was my responsibility, not yours. The Joker killed him and paralyzed Barbara because I failed.”

Clark stared at him with concern. “It’s not your fault, Bruce.”

“Yes, it is!” Bruce suddenly shot up from his chair and hurled the whiskey bottle across the room. The glass bottle shattered against the wall, spraying liquor all over the floor.

Clark took a step back, surprised by the outburst.

“Don’t you get it?!” Bruce screamed with tears in his eyes. “Everything the Joker does is MY fault! Jason tried to tell me, but I wouldn’t listen. I’m such a failure!” His whole body shook as he ranted, “I failed Rachel! I failed Barbara! I failed Jason! I failed you!”

Clark gaped at him in confusion. “Bruce, you never failed me.”

“Yes, I did! The red kryptonite…” Bruce choked back a sob. “I should’ve known. I should’ve seen it coming.”

“No.” Clark marched toward him. “No, no, no. You cannot blame yourself for that.”

“I should’ve seen all of this coming. I should’ve stopped the Joker, but I didn’t. I keep failing everyone I care about.” Tears streamed down his face. “J-Jason was… Fuck! He was just a kid! How can I protect Gotham if I can’t even…” His voice trailed off as he sobbed uncontrollably.

Clark could only watch while Bruce fell to pieces right in front of him. It was the most heartbreaking thing he had ever seen.

“Bruce… Bruce, please calm down,” Clark pleaded.
“The Joker. H-He won’t stop.” Bruce cried, breathing in shallow gasps. “He’s gonna take everyone from me. I can’t…”

“Bruce, look at me.” Clark grabbed onto his shoulders, then Bruce gazed up into his eyes.

“The Joker can’t take me from you. I won’t let it happen, okay?” Clark tried desperately to comfort him. “You’re stuck with me, Bruce. I have you, and nothing will ever tear us apart again.”

He stumbled back when Bruce suddenly flung his arms around him. For a moment, Clark stood still, shocked by the contact. He hadn’t expected the embrace. Bruce was clinging onto him like his life depended on it. Clark returned the hug, enveloping Bruce in his arms.

Even now, Bruce was still crying. His face was pressed against Clark’s shoulder, and Clark could feel dampness there. He rubbed circles in Bruce’s back, trying to soothe him.

“It’s okay. I got you.” Clark whispered into Bruce’s hair. “God, I’m so sorry you had to go through this.”

Soon, Clark was crying too. His heart ached for Bruce so much. Clark couldn’t stand to see him suffer like this. For a long time, they clung onto each other, weeping in each other’s arms.

Eventually, Bruce’s legs gave out underneath him and he fell forward, leaning heavily on Clark. He must be exhausted. Clark eased them both to the floor and sat down, still cradling Bruce in his arms.

At least an hour passed while they sat together on the floor. Bruce leaned against him, breathing evenly. He wasn’t crying anymore. Clark brushed his hair to the side and gazed down at Bruce’s face. His eyes were closed and he was sleeping peacefully.

Clark smiled in relief. He was glad that Bruce could have a moment of peace, away from his grief.

Holding Bruce close to his chest, Clark stood and walked out of the study. He carried Bruce bridal style, up the stairs toward his bedroom.

Inside the dark room, Clark carefully set Bruce down on the bed and pulled a blanket over him. Goodnight, Bruce. Clark ran a hand through Bruce’s hair. Then he turned to leave.

Clark paused when he felt something tug on his cape. He gazed down at Bruce, who barely had his eyes open.

“Stay,” Bruce muttered, clutching the cape. “Please…”

Clark’s eyes widened, then he smiled softly. He sat on the edge of the bed and held Bruce’s hand.

“Of course, I’ll stay,” Clark promised. “I’m all yours.”
The Broken Bat

Chapter Summary

Bruce breaks down. Clark tries to pick up the pieces.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the comments and kudos!! <3

When Clark awoke, he was laying in bed next to a warm body. He opened his eyes and saw Bruce’s sleeping face only a few inches away from his own. For a brief moment, Clark felt confused, then he remembered the events from last night.

“Stay. Please…”

Bruce had asked him to stay. And Clark couldn’t deny Bruce anything, so naturally he had stayed all night. He remembered holding Bruce’s hand and sitting on the bed for a long time. Eventually, Clark must’ve laid down and fallen asleep.

Across the room, rays of sunlight were peeking through the drawn curtains. It was Monday morning now. Clark was supposed to go to work. Before he left Earth for a week, Lois had agreed to lie to Perry and cover for his absence. But she couldn’t lie to Perry forever. If Clark wanted to keep his job, he really needed to go to work today.

Clark glanced to the side, at the clock on the nightstand. It was almost 7:30. He had to be at work by 8 o’clock.

He started to sit up, but then Bruce flung an arm over his chest. Clark fell back onto the bed, staring at Bruce in surprise. Still asleep, Bruce snuggled closer while gripping the fabric of Clark’s Superman suit like he didn’t want the other man to go.

Clark couldn’t stop himself from smiling. Sometimes, Bruce did the cutest things in his sleep. *Maybe I can stay a little longer.* He could literally fly back to Metropolis in the blink of an eye.

Rolling onto his side, Clark wrapped both arms around Bruce and held him. Bruce simply nuzzled closer, melting into the embrace.

For at least ten minutes, neither of them moved. Clark smiled to himself while listening to the sound of Bruce’s even breathing and steady heartbeat. At this moment, Bruce was completely at ease. It was nice to see him so relaxed. The sudden realization dawned on Clark that he had Bruce’s complete, unbridled trust again. Or maybe he had never lost it? What happened with red kryptonite had been so damaging to their relationship. Yet Bruce had never blamed Clark for it.

“The red kryptonite… I should’ve known. I should’ve seen it coming.”

Clark frowned as he remembered those words. Unfortunately, Bruce always seemed to blame
himself. No matter the situation. It was disturbing to Clark that Bruce felt responsible for everything the Joker has done. That wasn’t fair at all. The Joker was pure evil, and Bruce could never be held accountable for the actions of that homicidal maniac.

Leaning forward, Clark kissed the top of Bruce’s head and held him close. Clark promised himself that he would help Bruce through all of this. Right now, Bruce was depending on him. And, no matter what, Clark could not let him down. Nothing in this world mattered more than Bruce’s wellbeing. Absolutely nothing.

The sound of footsteps approached the door. “Master Wayne, I prepared your breakfast.”

 Damn it. Clark sat up and reluctantly pried himself away from Bruce. It may be difficult to explain this situation to Alfred. Clark honestly had no idea what the butler thought of him right now.

“Master Wayne?” Alfred knocked on the door.

Clark glanced at the clock again. It was 7:55. He only had five minutes before work.

After all the knocking, Bruce began to stir and barely opened his eyes. He gazed up at Clark sleepily.

“Clark?” he mumbled with a hoarse voice.

Clark leaned close to him and whispered, “I’ll be back soon, I promise.”

In a blur of super speed, Clark flew out of the room before Alfred could open the door.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Clark was relieved when he actually arrived to work on time. But then Perry yelled at him anyway. Apparently, Clark’s work had really piled up while he was away. His boss was extremely pissed off. Perry threatened to fire him a few times, then he finally left Clark alone at his desk.

With a sigh, Clark turned on his computer and started typing. For most of the day, he would be catching up on his work. But he still planned to make time for Bruce. He would fly over to Gotham during his lunch break. Clark may be starving later, but checking on Bruce was more important.

For a couple hours, Clark worked without any distractions. Then Lois stepped out of her office.

“Hey, Smallville. Can I see you for a second?”

“Yeah, sure.” Clark stood and followed Lois into her office, then she shut the door.

“How’s Bruce? You saw him last night, didn’t you?” She asked with a worried expression on her face.

“Yeah, I saw him.”

“How is he doing?”

Clark shrugged. “About as well as you’d expect. This…This is really hard for him.”

“Of course, it is. I can’t even imagine.” She bit her bottom lip, hesitating for a moment. “So, how did Jason really die?”
“The Joker.”

“Jesus Christ!” Lois paced angrily to the other side of the room. “I know Batman doesn’t kill, but every man has his limit. Hell, give me a gun and I’ll do it.”

Clark sighed and shook his head. “Lois, you don’t mean that.”

“Actually, I do.” She huffed while crossing her arms. “You and Bruce are both saints, I swear.”

He gave her a small smile. “If you say so.”

Lois leaned against her desk and gazed down at the floor. She was silent for a while like she had something on her mind. “Clark, while you were gone, I had a lot of time to think.”

“Okay.”

“There’s something we really need to talk about, but… Now’s not a good time.”

“Uh… All right.” Clark gave her a concerned look. “Can we talk after work?”

“Are you spending the night in Gotham again?” she asked abruptly.

“Well, yeah. Probably,” he admitted. “Bruce needs me right now.”

Lois nodded. “Okay. Let’s wait a bit. We can talk later. Maybe tomorrow.”

“Are you sure? It seems like something’s really bothering you.”

She smiled with a sad look in her eyes. “I’m fine. Just take care of Bruce. You’re right. He needs you.”

“Thanks, Lois,” he said gratefully. “You’ve been so understanding.”

“Yeah… I think I understand the situation all right,” she grumbled under her breath.

“What?”

Lois stepped behind her desk and sat down. “Get back to work, Smallville. Before you piss off Perry even more.”

“Right.” Clark left her office and rushed back to his desk. Thankfully, Perry was nowhere in sight.

SxB

At Wayne Manor, Bruce sat at the kitchen table, holding a cup of coffee. His head was pounding from a bad hangover. Last night, he drank all the whiskey inside the manor. Now there was no hard liquor left.

Bruce took a sip of coffee and glanced at the chair across from him. During most meals, Jason would always sit in the same spot. But now that chair was empty… It was just another reminder of what happened. Jason was gone, and he was never coming back.

With a sigh, Bruce set down the coffee and held his face in his hands, grinding the heels of his palms against his eyes. Memories of that gruesome night replayed in his head, tormenting him. Even now he could still see the mangled, scorched remains of Jason’s body.
At the sound of footsteps, Bruce raised his head and spotted Alfred walk into the kitchen.

“Are you going to the store today?” Bruce asked.

“Yes, Master Wayne.”

“Good. I’m out of scotch. Buy me some more.”

“No.”

Bruce blinked in confusion. “What?”

Alfred frowned and crossed his arms. “I said no, Master Wayne. Your drinking is out of control, and I will not enable you.”

“You work for me, Alfred,” Bruce growled angrily. “If I tell you to buy more whiskey, then you buy more goddamn whiskey.”

“I refuse.”

“You can’t refuse!”

“Will you fire me, Master Wayne?” Alfred asked huffily.

Bruce rolled his eyes at the stupid question. “No. Of course not.”

“Then it appears I can refuse. If you want alcohol so badly, you’ll have to procure it yourself because I will not do it for you.”

“Fine!” Bruce stood and stomped away while muttering under his breath, “This is fucking ridiculous.”

He hated it when Alfred treated him like a misbehaving child. Bruce was a grown man and he could do whatever the hell he wanted. Admittedly, he probably was drinking a bit much, but that’s how he handled things. Bruce had enough to deal with. The last thing he needed right now was Alfred giving him attitude.

After grabbing his keys and wallet, Bruce stormed outside and drove away.

SxB

With an open bottle of scotch in his lap, Bruce drove through the outskirts of Gotham, back towards the manor. The trip to the liquor store hadn’t taken long. Now he had bags full of whiskey to bring home. While he drove, he passed by the cemetery and stopped the car.

Bruce took a swig of whiskey, then he turned the steering wheel and drove to the entrance of the cemetery. He parked his car and stepped out, carrying the liquor bottle with him. The cemetery was empty at this time of day. Since it was a Monday, most people were busy at work.

Dark clouds hung in the sky, threatening to storm. Bruce walked alone across the cemetery until he reached Jason’s grave. There were still large bouquets of flowers surrounding the tombstone. Jason never liked flowers, yet his grave was decorated with them. Bruce wondered if the kid would find that annoying.

“Hey, Jason…” Bruce sat down in front of the grave and drank from his whiskey bottle again.
For a while he sat in silence, staring down at his lap. Then he spoke quietly, “I know what you did. When I fell asleep in the Batcave, you turned off the computer, didn’t you? You saw the Joker escape and you decided to go after him alone.”

With a sigh, Bruce gazed up at the tombstone. “That’s how it happened, right? You impulsive dumb little shit… I’ll miss you.”

Tears welled in his eyes as Bruce took another drink of whiskey. The alcohol burned down his throat like acid, settling in his stomach. Soon he could feel his senses dulling. The pain in his head disappeared, yet his chest still ached.

“When I took you in, I wanted to give you a better life,” Bruce whispered, his voice crumbling. “I-I didn’t want any of this. You deserved so much more. I know I was hard on you. And maybe I expected too much. Maybe I put too much pressure on you. Instead of letting you be a kid, I introduced you to a fucked-up world full of criminals and madmen.”

Bruce stared at Jason’s grave for a long time, overwhelmed with guilt and shame. “I did this to you… How can I make this right, Jason? What should I do?”

Overhead, lightning streaked across the dark sky, followed by the roar of thunder.

“Should…Should I end the game?” Bruce asked desperately. “You would approve, wouldn’t you? You told me that I should’ve killed the Joker. You said more innocent people were going to die and you were right. You died. If I had killed the Joker beforehand, you would still be alive and Barbara would still be walking…”

Icy cold rain began to fall, pouring down sideways with the wind. Within seconds, Bruce was completely saturated, but he did not move or seek shelter from the storm.

“Should I end it, Jason? Is that the only way to honor your memory? I know you wanted me to kill the Joker. Should I do it for you? Even if it destroys me, you’re worth it.” Tears streamed down his face, mixing with the harsh rain.

“I know you’re worth it…”

SxB

During his lunch break, Clark immediately left his desk and headed to the restroom. He quickly changed into his Superman suit and flew out the window, leaving the Daily Planet. Soaring across the sky, Clark headed to Gotham.

The weather in Metropolis had been nice and sunny. But in Gotham, it was pouring rain. Superman flew through the storm, listening to the sound of Bruce’s heartbeat. Clark became concerned when he realized that Bruce wasn’t inside the manor. He was somewhere out in the storm.

Clark followed the heartbeat to a cemetery, then he found Bruce, sitting in the rain by a grave. His heart sank when he saw Jason’s name on the tombstone. He understood why Bruce was here, but it was cold and pouring outside. Bruce should be indoors.

Worried, Clark landed on the ground and stood beside him. Bruce was sitting on the wet grass next to an empty liquor bottle. His clothes were soaked and he was trembling.

“Bruce…” Clark pleaded softly, “It’s freezing out here. Let me take you home.”

Refusing to acknowledge him, Bruce continued to stare at the grave in silence.
“Come on, let’s go.” Clark reached down and grabbed his arm.

“No.” Bruce stubbornly yanked his arm away.

Clark frowned. “Bruce, you’re going to make yourself sick. I’m taking you home.”

“I’m staying here.”

Clark kneeled down and scooped Bruce into his arms, then he hovered off the ground.

“Put me down!” Bruce tried to shove him away.

In response, Clark merely tightened his grip, pressing Bruce against his chest. “Don’t fight me on this.”

“Dammit, Clark! Let me go!” Bruce thrashed wildly, punching and kicking at the Kryptonian.

Unaffected by the violence, Clark kept holding Bruce as he flew through the rain. “Just hold on. You’ll be home soon.”

“Let go!” Bruce yelled, still struggling in vain.

Against Superman’s strength, Bruce had no hope of breaking free, yet he fought anyway. It seemed irrational. Clark didn’t understand why Bruce was being so difficult, but it didn’t matter. Clark needed to get him out of the rain.

Soon, they arrived at Wayne Manor. Clark landed on the balcony and carried Bruce into his bedroom. Once they were inside, Clark finally released Bruce, letting him stand.

Bruce immediately turned around and slapped Clark in the face. “Don’t fucking do that to me!”

Clark let out an exasperated sigh. “It was for your own good. You can be mad at me all you want.”

Bruce still looked angry as he shivered from the cold. “F-Fuck you.”

“You need to get out of those wet clothes.” Clark walked over to a dresser and rummaged through a few drawers. He found a long sleeve shirt and a pair of sweatpants.

“Here.” He tossed the clothes to Bruce, then he turned around and faced the wall. “Get changed. I won’t look.”

“Quit bossing me around,” Bruce growled. “And get me a towel.”

“Heh, you’re the bossy one.” Clark strolled into the bathroom and grabbed a towel from a cabinet.

When he returned to the bedroom, he accidentally saw a glimpse of Bruce wearing nothing but his boxers.

Clark quickly looked away while holding out the towel. “Sorry.”

“Whatever. You’ve already seen me naked.” Bruce took the towel from him.

“Yeah, but…” Clark cringed as he remembered the last time he saw Bruce in a state of undress. Under the influence of red kryptonite, Clark had ripped off the Bat suit during that horrible, vicious assault. “You deserve privacy.”
“Privacy?” Bruce scoffed. “Is that what you call it when you listen to my heartbeat all day?”

Clark winced guiltily. “You know about that?”

“Well, I suspected as much. You confirmed it.”

Clark lowered his gaze and shook his head with a self-deprecating smile. Of course, Bruce outsmarted him. “I only listen because I worry about you. It gives me peace of mind to know your heart’s still beating.”

Bruce stepped around Clark and faced him. He was wearing dry clothes now, and he had the towel hanging around his shoulders. But his dark hair was still dripping wet. Bruce smiled slightly while staring into Clark’s eyes. “I know. That’s why I let you do it, stalker.”

Then he unexpectedly raised a hand and placed it on Clark’s chest, right over his heart. Bruce gazed down at his hand as if he was trying to focus on feeling Clark’s heartbeat. “If I had that ability, I know I’d do the same thing. It must be nice…to have that peace of mind.”

Clark rested a hand on top of his, squeezing Bruce’s hand gently. “Bruce?”

Bruce glanced up with a sad, resigned look in his eyes.

“What’s going on with you?” Clark asked.

Bruce slid his hand away as he muttered, “I’ve made my peace. I’m ending it.”

“Ending what?”

“What else? The game.”

Clark felt his blood run cold. “You mean your fight with the Joker?”

“It’s what Jason would’ve wanted,” Bruce said with a forlorn expression.

Clark’s eyes widened as he gaped at Bruce in disbelief. “You…You’re planning to kill him? You want to **kill** the Joker?”

“The game only ends one way.”

“Bruce, you can’t do this.” Clark leaned toward him, grabbing onto his shoulders. “You’re not a murderer. What about your rule? If you kill the Joker, it will ruin you.”

Bruce bowed his head in defeat. “I’m already ruined, Clark.”

“No, you’re not!” Clark argued frantically. “I know everything’s been really hard for you. And it may not seem like it, but things will get better. You can recover from this.”

“And, what about Jason? How can he recover? He’s dead.”

“I know, and I’m sorry that Jason’s gone. But killing the Joker won’t bring him back. And it won’t make you feel any better.”

“I don’t give a shit about feeling better!” Bruce yelled as he shoved Clark away. “It’s not about me! It’s about who’s next! Who will die next because of the Joker?! Will it be Dick? Alfred? Barbara? You?” His eyes shone with unshed tears as his voice cracked. “I…I can’t lose anyone else, Clark.”
Without thinking, Clark instantly pulled Bruce into a hug and held him tightly. Bruce leaned into the embrace, shaking as tears spilled down his face. He cried quietly with a few muffled sobs.

“Shh, it’s okay.” Clark whispered, “We’ll figure something out. You don’t have to kill the Joker. I won’t let him hurt you again.”

For a couple minutes, Clark stood still, holding Bruce protectively in his arms. More than anything, he just wanted to take Bruce’s pain away. But he didn’t know how… Bruce was so unstable right now, so broken. Somehow, Clark had to help him pick up the pieces. No matter how long it took, he needed Bruce to overcome this. For both their sakes.

When Bruce stopped crying, he finally stepped away and sat down on the bed. Clark sat down beside him, watching him with concern. Then he glanced at the clock on the nightstand. It was half past noon. His lunch break was over. Perry would be expecting him to return.

Bruce noticed him staring at the clock. “Do you have work?”

“Yeah, I was on my lunch break,” Clark admitted. “But if you need me here, I can-”

“No. I’m fine,” Bruce cut him off. “Go back to work.”

Clark stood with a sigh. “We both know you aren’t fine. If I go, promise me that you won’t do something stupid. If you leave the manor, I’ll know. I’ll be listening.”

“Stalker,” Bruce grumbled.

“Promise me.” Clark leaned down and caught Bruce’s chin between his thumb and index finger, tilting up the other man’s face.

Bruce looked up into his eyes and said, “I promise you won’t hear me leave the manor.”

Satisfied, Clark let go of Bruce’s face and walked towards the balcony. “Good. I’ll be back as soon as I can. Please try to take it easy.”

Bruce gave a noncommittal shrug. Clark knew that was the best response he was going to get, so he stepped onto the balcony and quickly flew away.

At the Daily Planet, Clark sat his desk, editing an article on his computer. He was the only one left in the office. He had been working for hours, writing several articles, doing research, and fact-checking for Perry. It was exhausting, but he managed to do a week’s worth of work in one day. At least he wasn’t behind anymore. Hopefully, Perry would stop threatening to fire him now.

Clark saved the final changes to the article and closed the word document on his computer. Then he glanced at the clock at the bottom of the screen. It was almost 8:30 PM. Clark had stayed longer than he wanted to. He needed to check on Bruce.

Shutting his eyes, Clark focused on his super-hearing. For a while, he listened for Bruce’s heartbeat, filtering out all other sounds. But he couldn’t hear anything.

His eyes snapped open as Clark jumped out of his chair. He kept listening for Bruce’s heartbeat, searching for him desperately. Clark could hear the pulsating drum of billions of hearts all over the globe, but none of them belonged to Bruce. Why can’t I hear him? What’s wrong?!
Clark felt a jolt of panic as he remembered Bruce’s last words to him.

“I promise you won’t hear me leave the manor.”

“That sneaky…” Clark clenched his fists, tensing with anger.

He knew Lex Luthor had the ability to hide from his super-hearing. Now Bruce must be using the same technology. Batman didn’t want to be found, which only meant one thing… He’s going after the Joker.

“Damn it, Bruce!” Clark rushed to the bathroom, changed into his Superman suit, and zoomed out the window.

Racing across the sky, Clark flew towards Gotham as fast as possible. He had to stop Bruce before he did something he’d regret.

Clark could only hope that he wasn’t too late.
Comfort

Chapter Summary

Batman chases the Joker. Superman calls in the Justice League.

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! Sorry for wait! I was super busy in December, but I'm back to writing now :) Thanks for all the comments and kudos! Much love <3

Flying over Gotham, Superman zoomed across the city as he searched frantically. Without his super hearing to guide him, he’d have to find Batman the old-fashioned way. But Gotham was a huge city, and Clark felt like he was looking for a needle in a haystack. He had checked hundreds of rooftops, warehouses, and alleyways, but he still couldn’t find Bruce.

Clark was starting to panic. If he didn’t find Batman soon, it would be too late. Bruce was on a path to self-destruction. Killing the Joker would also put an end to Batman. Breaking his one rule would finish him. It was a surrender, a betrayal of his own beliefs. Something that Bruce would never recover from…

Right now Batman was teetering on the edge of the abyss, and Superman had to pull him back. No matter what.

Clark landed on the roof of a tall building and pulled out his JL communicator. He pressed the orange emergency button, alerting the rest of the Justice League. To find Bruce, Clark was willing to use every resource available.

Within a couple seconds, a red and green blur streaked across the city and up the side of the building. On the roof, Flash came a screeching halt and released Green Lantern’s arm. Apparently, the speedster had dragged his boyfriend all the way here.

Hal groaned and leaned forward, rubbing the back of his neck. “Holy shit. I think I have whiplash.”

“Hey, Supes. What’s up?” Barry looked around like he was expecting an enemy to appear.

“Ah, my fucking neck!” Hal whined loudly while Clark and Barry both ignored him.

“We need to find Batman,” Clark explained.

“You can’t hear him?” Barry asked.

“No, he’s hiding his heartbeat from me.”

Overhead, Clark heard the roar of a jet engine. He glanced up and spotted Wonder Woman, sitting in the sky inside her invisible jet. She quickly landed the jet on the rooftop and jumped out, marching towards them.
“What’s the situation?” She demanded while drawing her sword.

“Batman is going to kill the Joker,” Superman said solemnly.

“And that’s a bad thing?” Hal scoffed.

“Yes, it’s bad!” Clark yelled at him. “The Justice League doesn’t kill! That’s Batman’s rule!”

Hal rolled his eyes. “Yeah, but… Come on, we’re talking about the Joker. If anyone should be the exception to the rule, it’s that sick bastard. He deserves to die.”

“For once I agree with Green Lantern,” Diana confessed.

Hal gave her an offended look. “What do you mean ‘for once’?”

“Jason’s death wasn’t an accident, was it?” Barry asked, perceptive as ever.


Hal scowled angrily as he growled, “Oh, that motherfucker…”

Superman gazed across the city, looking for the other league members. They didn’t have time to wait for Aquaman and Martian Manhunter.

“We can argue about ethics later. For now, split up and search for Batman. If you find him, call me immediately. That’s an order.” Superman instantly shot into the sky, flying over the city.

SxB

At the harbor, there was a maze of large steel storage containers. Batman ran on top of the steel cargo containers, leaping from one to another. Ahead of him, the Joker was only a short distance away. While Batman chased the villain, he reached into his utility belt and grabbed an explosive batarang. Then he hurled the batarang with all his strength, aiming it directly at the Joker’s head.

Before the batarang could hit its target, the Joker tripped as he ran. He fell forward, crashing onto hard steel. Right above him, the batarang detonated with a loud blast. Batman stood and watched angrily clenching his fists. If the lucky bastard hadn’t tripped, he would already be dead.

The Joker chuckled happily as he jumped to his feet. “Oh, my dear Batsy! You nearly killed me.”

“That’s the idea,” Batman snarled.

The Joker’s eyes widened in surprise, then his face broke into a nasty grin. “Finally. Let’s skip the foreplay.” He sauntered towards Batman. “If you’re gonna kill me, do it up close and personal. I wanna look into your pretty blue eyes during the, heh, climax. Ha, ha, ha!” The Joker let out a horrible, ear-piercing laugh.

Batman took a knife from his utility belt as he stormed toward the psychotic clown. He furiously grabbed the Joker and held the blade to his throat.

The Joker tilted his head back, baring his neck eagerly. “Come on, Bats. Do it. Do it! DO IT!” He shouted with a deranged look in his eyes.

Bruce hesitated, staring into those soulless eyes surrounded by dark greasepaint. The Joker had no fear of death. This was all just a game to him. And the insane bastard was about to win. Bruce tightened his grip on the knife, keeping his hand perfectly still. Neither pulling back nor pressing...
The Joker leaned towards him, nicking his skin on the blade. A thin trail of blood slid down his neck as he hissed angrily, “What are you waiting for, Bruce? KILL ME!”

Bruce blinked, suddenly having a moment of clarity. He wanted justice for Jason. He wanted the Joker to pay for all pain and suffering he caused, but this wasn’t the way to do it. For the Joker, death wasn’t a punishment. It was victory.

“Fuck you, Joker.” Batman threw the knife down. “I won’t give you what you want.”

The Joker’s face darkened as he shook with rage. “You nasty little cock-tease.”

Bruce simply turned and walked away, adding insult to injury. He knew how much the Joker craved his attention. So ignoring the bastard was literally the worst thing Batman could do to him.

When the Joker screamed, Bruce glanced over his shoulder to see the villain pick up the knife and charge at him. Right as the Joker tried to stab him, Superman suddenly appeared in front of Batman. The blade snapped in half as it hit the Kryptonian’s chest.

“Leave Batman alone,” Superman growled at the Joker.

In a blur of super-speed, Flash quickly appeared next to Superman and crossed his arms. Next, Green Lantern flew down and stood next to them. Then Wonder Woman leaped through the air and landed by the group. The four heroes all stood in front of Batman, forming a blockade between him and the Joker.

A green light shined from Hal’s ring as green shackles materialized around the Joker’s arms and legs. The Joker fell to his knees, glaring past the other heroes, focusing on Bruce.

“You’re gonna regret this, Batsy.” The Joker threatened viciously, “I’ll make you wish you killed me. You think Jason had it bad? Heh, heh.” He grinned like a bloodthirsty animal, baring its teeth. “I’m just getting started.”

Suddenly, a green muzzle appeared over the Joker’s mouth, shutting him up.

“That’s better.” Green Lantern stared at the villain with disdain.

“Take him back to Arkham Asylum,” Superman ordered. “I’m staying here with Batman.”

“Got it. Come on, GL.” Flash zoomed away.

“Hey, wait up!” Green Lantern flew after the speedster while using his ring to levitate the Joker next to him.

After Barry and Hal disappeared with the Joker, Wonder Woman marched over to Batman.

She abruptly flung her arms around him while Bruce froze in surprise. Diana hugged him tightly before letting go.

“Do not suffer alone,” she said with a worried expression on her face. “If you need help, call your friends. We are all here for you, Bruce.”

Batman averted his gaze and nodded slightly.

Then Wonder Woman walked away and jumped off the cargo container, leaving him alone with
Clark turned to face him. “She’s right, you know.”

Bruce kept his head tilted down, unable to look up at the hero. Ever since he became Batman, Bruce always had one rule… He was ashamed of himself for almost breaking it. What the hell had he been thinking? Bruce had let his emotions get the better of him. He felt like a hypocrite. Now the other league members probably thought he was too damaged and unstable to handle Gotham. How much respect did he lose tonight?

“Bruce?” Clark stepped toward him, sounding concerned.

“I’m sorry,” Bruce muttered.

“It’s okay.” Clark smiled. “You made the right decision in the end.”

“The Joker wanted me to kill him so badly… I just couldn’t let him win.”

“Well, you still did the right thing. I’m proud of you,” Clark said happily.

“I almost broke my own rule. That’s nothing to be proud of,” Bruce grumbled.

“You’re too hard on yourself.” Clark shook his head with a sigh. “Can I take you home?”

“…Okay.”

Clark stepped close to Bruce and swooped him off his feet, carrying him bridal style. Bruce held onto his shoulders as the Kryptonian shot into the sky. They soared across Gotham, high above the skyscrapers and towering buildings. Bruce gazed down at his city with a strange sense of peace. He had let the Joker live once again, and their game would continue. But at least Batman hadn’t lost. Killing the Joker would’ve ended everything, including himself.

Above all else, Batman was a symbol. And if he committed murder, that symbol would’ve ceased to exist… Everything he represented would’ve been destroyed. The Joker knew that. The game wasn’t about life and death. It was about ideologies. Batman and the Joker both represented things much bigger than themselves. While Batman had the power to inspire, the Joker had the power to corrupt. And the people of Gotham were caught in the middle. They were all trapped in a never-ending struggle. But wasn’t that the nature of fighting evil? The battle was always ongoing. The only way for Batman to win was to keep fighting. To stay uncorrupted. To stay true to what he represented. No matter what.

Bruce finally snapped out of his thoughts after they flew into the Batcave. Clark released him, letting him stand. Then Bruce headed toward the Batcomputer and checked the surveillance footage from Arkham Asylum. The Joker was back in his cage where he belonged.

With a sigh of relief, Bruce took off his cowl and set it down on the desk. Then he glanced over his shoulder at Clark, who was still watching him closely.

“I know…I haven’t been easy to deal with,” Bruce said guiltily. “I’ll stay home for the rest of the night. You don’t have to worry.”

“I always worry, so don’t feel bad.” Clark walked towards him, staring at his Bat suit. “How are you hiding your heartbeat?”

“I upgraded my suit with a sonic disruptor. It cancels out the noise.”
Clark frowned disapprovingly. “That’s LexCorp tech.”

Feeling generous, Bruce quickly yanked off the top of his Bat suit and tossed it on the floor. Then he crossed his arms over his bare chest, staring directly at Clark. Without the offensive garment, the Kryptonian should be able to hear his heartbeat again.

“Is that better?” Bruce asked.

Clark averted his gaze, blushing slightly. “Y-Yeah… Are you going to keep the disruptor in your suit?”

Bruce shrugged. “I can take it out if you want.”

“Thanks. I don’t like it when I can’t hear you,” Clark confessed somberly. “You could be dying and I wouldn’t even know.”

“I’ll take it out then. LexCorp has inferior equipment anyway.”

Clark laughed. “Well, Wayne tech is the best.”

“Of course.” Bruce smirked.

“So… Uh, I can stay here again tonight. If you want me to,” Clark offered nervously.

Bruce hesitated before asking, “Isn’t Lois expecting you?”

“No. I already told her that I’d probably spend the night here. She doesn’t mind.”

“Oh…” Bruce blinked in surprise. It seemed odd that Lois would approve of this. Didn’t she want Clark home with her? Usually she kept him on a tighter leash.

After a moment of silence, Clark looked disappointed. “If-If you want me to go-”

“No, stay here,” Bruce blurted out.

Clark’s eyes widened while Bruce felt his face heating up with embarrassment.

He quickly backtracked, “I-I mean it sounds like you already planned to stay here tonight, so you can. It’s not a big deal. Do whatever you want.”

Clark smiled warmly. “Okay, Bruce. I’ll stay.”

*Good.* Bruce shrugged, trying to act nonchalant.

Clark chuckled in amusement.

SxB

While Bruce was busy taking a shower, Clark took a quick trip back to Metropolis. In a blur of super speed, he rushed into his apartment, packed an overnight bag and zoomed out the window before Lois even noticed him. Flying across the sky, Clark headed back to Gotham and landed on the balcony outside Bruce’s bedroom. He entered the room and set his duffle bag on the floor.

Thanks to his super hearing, he could hear Bruce still in the bathroom, underneath the spray of running water. It was such a relief to hear Bruce’s heartbeat again. Clark loved the sound. Every beat of that pulse was like music to his ears. It meant Bruce was alive and within reach. The whole
world felt empty without that sound.

“Good evening, Mr. Kent.” Alfred suddenly appeared in the doorway.

Startled, Clark turned to face the butler. He had been so focused on Bruce’s heartbeat that he didn’t even notice Alfred approaching.

“Oh, uh, hey, Alfred.” Clark smiled nervously. “Bruce invited me to stay here tonight.”

“I’m sure he did,” Alfred said stiffly. The butler did not look pleased.

Feeling awkward, Clark stared down at the floor, unsure of what to say.

“Does he mourn in front of you?” Alfred asked unexpectedly.

“What?” Clark gave him a confused look.

“Have you seen Master Wayne cry?”


“I see.” Alfred let out a long sigh. “He will not cry in front of me or Master Dick. For better or worse, Master Wayne has decided to rely on you. Despite everything you have done to him… You are the only one he turns to for comfort.”

Clark winced guiltily. “Alfred, I’m sorry for-”

“I am not interested in your apologies, Mr. Kent.” Alfred snapped. “Right now, Master Bruce needs you so you will help him. But if you take advantage of the situation or harm Master Bruce in any way-”

“I won’t I promise,” Clark swore.

“For your sake, I hope you don’t,” Alfred said darkly. “I have access to the kryptonite vault, Mr. Kent.”

Clark gulped fearfully while the butler walked away, shutting the door on his way out.

*Did Alfred just threaten to kill me?*

SxB

After Bruce came out of the shower, Clark used the bathroom next. He showered quickly, borrowing Bruce’s shampoo and soap. For someone who acted so tough, Bruce had expensive, girly shampoo. It was funny. The shampoo bottle even had flowers on it. Giggling to himself, Clark rubbed the shampoo into his hair and rinsed it out. Then he stepped out of the shower stall and dried off with a towel.

Next, Clark took out some clothes from his overnight bag. Thankfully, he wouldn’t have to sleep in his Superman suit again. He really needed to do laundry. Clark pulled on a white t-shirt and pair of pajama pants before leaving the bathroom.

In the bedroom, Bruce was sitting on the bed, staring down at his cell phone. He had an angry scowl on his face like the phone offended him somehow.

“What’s wrong?” Clark asked, feeling concerned.
“Hal is being an annoying shit.” Bruce shut off the phone and flung it on the nightstand. “He won’t stop texting me. I never should’ve given him my personal number.”

Clark laughed a little. Honestly, it was relief that the problem was just Hal. “I can tell Barry to make him behave,” Clark offered.

“That actually works?” Bruce looked skeptical.

“Sometimes… Not often,” he admitted.

Bruce huffed in annoyance. “I don’t know how Barry puts up with him.”

Clark smirked, unable to hide his amusement. “That’s not very nice.”

“You don’t think Hal’s annoying?”

“I think he’s very…vocal.”

“That’s one way to put it.” Bruce scoffed.

“So, uh, where should I sleep tonight?” Clark asked. “Do you want to share the bed again?”

Bruce immediately looked away and shrugged. “If you want.”

Clark frowned while crossing his arms. “This is about what you want, Bruce. I’m gonna need a yes or a no. I don’t want to make you feel uncomfortable.”

“I’m not uncomfortable.”

“So, is that a yes?” Clark pried.

Bruce glared at him and snapped angrily, “Just get in bed! Quit making everything so complicated!”

“Okay, okay! Sorry.” Clark quickly jumped in bed and slid underneath the covers.

He laid down on his side, facing Bruce. Then Bruce shut off the lights and laid down next to him. The room was dark, but Clark could still see the outline of Bruce’s face. He was happy to be this close to Bruce, but Alfred’s warning was still fresh in his mind.

“If I do anything that bothers you, you’ll tell me, right? I know you’re vulnerable right now and—”

“Shut up, Clark.”

“Okay.”

“Call me vulnerable again and I’ll hit you,” he threatened.

Clark sighed. “I know you’re tough, Bruce. I wasn’t calling you weak—”

“Good. Now stop talking.”

Clark shut his mouth and laid there in silence. He felt like an idiot for saying the wrong things. Somehow, he always managed to piss Bruce off. Even though that wasn’t his intention at all… Honestly, Clark just wanted to help. Whatever Bruce wanted from him, Clark would give it. But at the same time, Clark was scared of screwing up and misinterpreting what exactly Bruce wanted.
Did he want Clark to stay on his side of the bed? Or did he want Clark to hold him again? Or did he want-?

Bruce unexpectedly scooted closer Clark, leaning against his shoulder.

Clark jolted in surprise. “Bruce?”

“It’s cold,” he whispered.

For a moment, Clark stared at him in confusion because it wasn’t cold at all under the blankets. Then he smiled as he realized that Bruce just needed an excuse.

Clark wrapped an arm around Bruce, pulling him closer. “Is that better?”

Bruce nodded silently while resting his head on Clark’s chest, snuggled against him. It was nice to see Bruce so at peace. Within a few minutes, he had slow even breathing like he was already asleep. Clark held him close, enjoying the embrace. He loved this cuddly side of Bruce.

*I wish I could hold him like this every night…*

Clark quickly shook that thought from his mind. Right now, Bruce just needed someone to comfort him. That was all. Clark couldn’t read too much into this. Bruce was his friend and Clark was helping him through a rough time. It was just that simple… Right?
At the Daily Planet, Clark sat at his desk, working on a new article. He hummed to himself while typing happily. He was in such a good mood today. Last night he had slept, cuddled up next to Bruce. And, when Clark woke up in the morning, Bruce was still in his arms. Before work, Clark had stayed in bed as long as possible, but eventually he had to get up. When he moved from the bed, Bruce had reached for him sleepily like he was trying to pull Clark back. Like he didn’t want Clark to leave…

It was so sweet. Clark smiled to himself while staring at his computer screen. Apparently, Bruce liked sharing a bed with him. Last night, Bruce even instigated the cuddling. He had scooted over to Clark and claimed it was ‘cold’. There were plenty of blankets on the bed. It definitely wasn’t cold. Bruce was just too proud to admit that he wanted to be held.

Clark’s smile widened. Underneath the tough guy act, Bruce could be so adorable.

SxB

After work, Clark walked home with Lois. It was already dark outside and the city was all lit up. In downtown Metropolis, it was always busy. Thankfully, Clark didn’t hear any crimes or cries for help nearby. It seemed like it would be a quiet night.

Clark glanced at Lois as they strolled down the sidewalk. Lois was being awfully quiet too. She barely spoke to him at all today. And at work, she mostly stayed in her office. Has she been avoiding him?

“Lois, is something wrong?” he asked.

She lowered her gaze while she walked, like she couldn’t even look at him. “We need to talk.”

“Oh.” Clark gulped nervously. “Okay.”

“Let’s wait until we get home.”

“…Alright.”

Clark knew that he could be oblivious at times, but there was no mistaking this situation. He knew what was coming. When a girlfriend says “we need to talk”, that only means one thing.
Eventually, Clark and Lois reached their apartment complex. They entered the building, then walked into the elevator. They headed up to the tenth floor while standing in an uncomfortable silence. When the elevator doors opened, they stepped out and strolled down the hall toward their apartment.

Lois unlocked the front door then Clark followed her inside. She headed to the living room and sat down on the couch. Clark hesitated for a moment before sitting down beside her. He avoided her gaze while anxiously wringing his hands.

After a couple minutes, Lois finally broke the silence. “I think we should break up.”

Clark let out a long sigh. Sadly, he wasn’t surprised at all. He only had himself to blame for this. “Okay… I understand. I haven’t been a very good boyfriend.”

“That isn’t it, Clark.” Lois huffed in frustration. “I just can’t be your second choice anymore.”

“What?” He gave her a confused look.

“You’re still in love with Bruce.”

Clark shook his head. “Lois, we’ve been over this. Bruce and I are just friends. I can’t have a relationship with him. Not after what happened with the red kryptonite. I’ve given up on that.”

Lois frowned while crossing her arms. “When you spent the night at his place, were you in his bed?”

“That’s…” Clark faltered before explaining, “We didn’t do anything sexual. I was comforting him.”

“Right.” Lois scoffed, “Because close male friends cuddle in bed all the time. Nothing weird about that.”

“He needed me.”

“And you need him! Clark, if you want to live in denial, that’s your problem. Because I’m done,” she said seriously. “The truth is you’re still in love with Bruce, and he loves you back.”

“No, he doesn’t.” Clark looked away sadly.

“Yes, he does. Otherwise, he wouldn’t let you in his bed. He wouldn’t let you comfort him or whatever you’re calling it.”

“Is that why you’re doing this?” Clark stood as he snapped angrily, “You think I’m having an affair? Bruce is hurting, and I would never take advantage of that!”

“I know you wouldn’t. Because you love him.” Lois smiled bitterly. “You love him more than you could ever love me. That’s why I’m doing this. One day you’re going to see that I’m right and then you’ll thank me for ending this sham of a relationship.”

“Oh, my God.” Clark groaned. “Lois, our relationship is not a sham.”

“Yes, it is!” She furiously shot off the couch, standing in front of Clark. “When we first started dating, both of us weren’t thinking straight. You were so fucked up after the red kryptonite. And, I…I was scared of losing you.” Lois admitted as tears sprang to her eyes, “I thought you might try to kill yourself again if you didn’t have something good in your life. And, I-I thought I could be
that good thing. I thought I could fix you…”

She choked back a sob, trembling. “But I’m not the one you need. It’s Bruce. It has always been Bruce. I see that now. I accept the truth, and so should you. Please get out.”

“Lois, I’m sorry if I hurt you,” Clark said guiltily.

“Just give me some space, Clark. Please.” She turned away from him, hiding her tears.

“Okay. Whatever you need. You can have the apartment. I’ll come back for my stuff later.” He gave her a concerned look, then he walked out the door and left.

SxB

In the Watchtower, Superman laid on his bed inside his quarters. The rest of the Watchtower was empty since the other justice league members had no reason to be there. For a couple hours, Clark laid still, staring up at the ceiling. He kept thinking about everything Lois had said, replaying her words over and over in his mind.

Was she right? Clark knew that he cared deeply for Bruce. There was no denying that. And a part of him would always love Bruce. But was he in love with Bruce? Did he want a romantic relationship with him? Ever since the red kryptonite disaster, Clark had assumed such a thing was impossible.

With a sigh, Clark rolled onto his side. Why was he wasting his time thinking about this? Even before Clark had been exposed to red kryptonite, he couldn’t get Bruce to agree to date him. Bruce had been worried about their enemies using their relationship against them. And Bruce had been right. That was exactly what happened.

A relationship with Bruce was impossible. Clark shouldn’t be considering it at all. It was a lost cause.

For a while, he laid in silence, then Lois’s voice popped in his head again.

“The truth is you’re still in love with Bruce, and he loves you back.”

Despite his reservations, Clark felt a jolt of hope. What if Lois was right? What if Bruce loved him back? Clark sat up and held his face in his hands. He was so confused. If Bruce actually loved him, that would change everything. Maybe Clark had a real chance to win Bruce over. Maybe they could have a relationship. Bruce definitely didn’t mind Clark touching him anymore. He didn’t mind cuddling either…

If there was chance that Clark could have Bruce, he had to take it. No matter how small. But Clark had to be careful. Before trying anything, he must be absolutely sure that a relationship’s something Bruce would want. He couldn’t do anything that would make Bruce uncomfortable. Also, Clark needed to wait. Bruce was still recovering from Jason’s death. He was emotionally vulnerable right now. Rushing into a relationship was a bad idea. Clark could take his time.

He stood and paced around the room. He couldn’t believe he was really considering any of this. His heart pounded with giddy excitement. There was a chance he could have Bruce. A slim chance. But still… Clark had hope again. Lois was usually pretty astute about these things. He wanted to believe that she was right. And God help him, he wanted Bruce…

Clark let out a breath that he didn’t even know he was holding. He wanted Bruce. He could finally admit that to himself again. And it was all thanks to Lois.
Full of nervous energy, Clark continued to pace back and forth. He wondered how Bruce was doing. Maybe he’d want Clark to spend the night with him again. Clark hoped so.

Grabbing the Bat-Comm, Clark hesitated before calling. “Hey, Bruce. Can you hear me?”

Within a few seconds, Bruce answered on the communicator, “What is it, Clark?”

“I, uh…” Clark paused nervously. “Do you think…?”

“What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” he said quickly. “I just have a lot on my mind. So, how are you doing? Do you want me to come over?”

“I’m okay.”

He frowned in disappointment. “Are you sure? I can fly over. It’s not trouble at all.”

“Clark… Are you okay?” Bruce asked perceptively.

“Y-Yeah.”

Bruce sighed. “Something happened. Just tell me.”

“No, everything’s fine. Really. Talk to you later.” Clark hung up in a hurry.

That was close. Maybe he should wait awhile before talking to Bruce again. Batman could read him like a book, and Clark wasn’t ready to talk about everything on his mind. Tomorrow, the Justice League was supposed to have their weekly meeting. He would see Bruce tomorrow.

Clark laid down on his bed again. For now, he’d try to rest.

SxB

Around 4 AM, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, staring at the screen. He had been watching the security footage from Arkham Asylum again. At the moment, the Joker was still in his cell. But Bruce knew from experience how quickly that could change. The Joker has escaped from the asylum several times. Batman needed to be vigilant.

With a yawn, Bruce continued to watch the computer screen. His eyes were burning from lack of sleep. So far, the Joker hasn’t moved or done anything in hours. It seemed like the criminal was actually asleep. Bruce could probably go to bed now without worrying about the Joker escaping.

Stumbling to his feet, Bruce shut the computer off and headed to the elevator. He took the elevator up to the manor and walked to his bedroom. Then he changed into his pajamas and climbed into bed.

Bruce closed his eyes, trying to fall asleep. Minutes slowly ticked by while his mind raced. He kept thinking about the Joker’s latest threat.

“You’re gonna regret this, Batsy. I’ll make you wish you killed me. You think Jason had it bad? Heh, heh. I’m just getting started.”

His eyes snapped open as Bruce felt a jolt of anxiety. He had a sudden urge to go back to the Batcave and check the asylum’s security cameras. Bruce considered getting up, but he really needed some sleep. If he let himself become too sleep-deprived, then he wouldn’t be able fight
when necessary.

Bruce shut his eyes again. For the next thirty minutes, he tossed and turned in bed, unable to fall asleep. Last night, Bruce didn’t have any trouble sleeping at all. When Clark was here, it had been so easy to relax. He didn’t worry as much when Clark was around… He felt safer.

Glancing to the side, Bruce looked at the clock on his nightstand. Now it was almost 5 AM. This was getting ridiculous. Bruce needed to sleep. Maybe he should call Clark on the Bat-Comm. If Bruce asked him to come, the hero would fly over here in an instant.

No. I’m not that needy. Bruce stubbornly turned away from the clock and pulled a blanket over his head. He couldn’t rely on Clark all the time. Bruce was completely fine on his own. Besides, he had already said that he was okay when Clark called earlier.

Bruce couldn’t go crying to Clark now, at five o’clock in the morning. What would Bruce even say? ‘I can’t sleep without you, Clark. Can you come here and hold me until I fall asleep?’ Bruce cringed in embarrassment. Like hell, he’d ever say that. Bruce would never allow himself to be that pathetic.

Another hour passed before Bruce finally dozed off. He slept intermittently, tossing and turning in bed. He woke up multiple times, unable to stay asleep for long.

SxB

The Justice League meeting was scheduled for noon. Superman was already at the Watchtower, so he entered the conference room early. He sat at the round table, waiting for the other league members to arrive. A few minutes later, Martian Manhunter came early as well. Next, Wonder Woman and Aquaman both arrived. Then Green Lantern and Flash entered the room together.

Right before noon, Batman was the last member to arrive. He walked over to his seat and sat down next to Clark.

“Let’s start the meeting.” Bruce swayed slightly in his chair and leaned against the table for support.

Clark gave him a concerned look. “Batman, are you feeling okay?”

“I’m fine.” Bruce straightened his back, sitting upright. Obviously, he was trying to seem normal even though something was wrong.

Using his x-ray vision, Superman tried to see past Batman’s cowl. Thankfully, the Bat suit was no longer lined with lead, so Clark could actually see Bruce’s face. Underneath the cowl, Bruce had dark circles around his eyes and he looked exhausted. Did he sleep at all last night?

Hal huffed in frustration. “Don’t lie to us, Spooky. We all know you aren’t fine. What the hell are we gonna do about the Joker?”

Barry crossed his arms as he claimed, “Obviously, Arkham Asylum can’t hold him. Something has to change. We can’t let the Joker escape again. He’s too dangerous.”

“I say we kill the freak,” Aquaman growled.

Batman shifted uncomfortably in his chair. Before he could say anything, Superman snapped, “The Justice League does not kill.”
Wonder Woman sighed. “I’m sorry, my friend. But I have to agree with Aquaman on this. The Joker deserves to die.”

“Thank you!” Hal exclaimed loudly. “That’s what I’ve been saying!”

“What gives us the authority to kill?” Martian Manhunter said wisely, “We are keepers of peace, not executioners.”

Flash nodded. “J’onn is right. The Joker is a horrible human being, but we can’t kill him.”

“Why the fuck not?” Green Lantern scoffed. “We’d be doing the world a favor!”

Barry glared at his boyfriend. “Hal, just shut up.”

“Don’t tell me to shut up!” Hal shouted, “Something has to change! You said so yourself!”

“I didn’t mean we should kill him!” Barry countered.

Hal banged his fist on the table as he yelled, “What else can we do?! That psycho won’t stop terrorizing Bruce! He even killed a Robin! He’s killing *children* now!”

“We all know the Joker is evil! That doesn’t mean we can kill him!” Barry argued.

“Well, it should. If no one else wants to do it, I’ll kill him myself.”

“Don’t you dare,” Barry hissed angrily. “Hal, I swear if you-”

“Enough with the lover’s quarrel,” Batman cut him off. “No one is killing anybody. I’ll deal with the Joker myself.”

Hal huffed and crossed his arms. “Come on, Spooky, I know you want the Joker dead. You hate that bastard more than any of us. Hell, you were about to kill him the other night-”

“Hal, that’s enough.” Superman growled, barely containing his anger. “We are not killing the Joker and that’s final. I don’t want to hear anything else about it.”

“But-” Hal tried to argue.

“Another word and you’re kicked out of the league,” Clark threatened.

Hal’s eyes widened in surprise, then he scowled, fuming silently.

“Batman, do you have any announcements?” Clark asked.

“No…” Bruce gave him a pensive look.

“Okay. Meeting adjourned,” Superman announced, ending the meeting early.

Hal furiously shot from his chair and stormed out of the room.

Barry looked worried as he chased after him. “Hal, wait up. Talk to me.”

“What a bunch of drama,” Aquaman grumbled, then he stood and walked away.

Diana and J’onn both stood and left the room as well. Now Bruce and Clark were the only ones still sitting at the table. With a sigh, Bruce took off his cowl and held his face in his hands, grinding the heels of his palms against his eyes. He looked so worn out.
“That was a fucking mess,” he complained.

“You know you’re right about Hal,” Clark admitted.

Bruce lifted his head, looking confused. “What?”

“He’s annoying.”

“Heh.” Bruce smirked a little. “He’s just upset. The Joker has that effect on people.”

“If anyone should be upset, it’s you. Hal is making this all about himself. He should just listen to Barry and shut up for once.”

“Were you serious about banning him from the league? He’s useful.”

“I won’t kick him out.” Clark sighed. “I just wanted him to shut up. Hal knows how you feel about killing.”

Bruce shrugged. “Barry will calm him down. This will all blow over.”

“I hope so.” Clark gave him a concerned look. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine. I’m just tired. I didn’t sleep well last night.” Bruce pulled his cowl back on, then he stood to leave.

Clark stood too. “Do you want me to come over tonight?”

Bruce opened his mouth to answer, but then he hesitated like he was torn. He lowered his gaze as he muttered, “I’m not a needy person.”

Clark raised an eyebrow in confusion. “I know that.”

“Don’t worry about me. I can take care of myself.” Bruce turned to walk away.

Before he could leave, Clark caught his arm, stopping him. “I know that it’s hard for you to rely on people, but…I like helping you.” Clark pleaded, “Can you please drop the tough guy act?”

“It’s not an act!” Bruce ripped his arm away.

Clark just stared at him, then Bruce gazed down at floor, looking embarrassed.

“Do you sleep better when I’m with you?” Clark asked calmly.

Bruce bit his bottom lip. He didn’t say anything, but his silence was an answer in itself. Then he finally admitted, “I don’t want you to think I’m clingy.”

“What?” Clark gaped at him in disbelief. “Bruce, you’re the least clingy person I know. Why are you even worried about that?”

“I shouldn’t monopolize all of your time. I’m sure you have other things you need to attend to.”

“There is nothing more important than you,” Clark blurted out, without thinking.

Bruce’s eyes widened in surprise. “What…What about Lois?”

“Uh…” Clark rubbed the back of his neck as he revealed, “Lois and I broke up.”
“Oh. Was it mutual or-?”

“It’s complicated,” Clark said uncomfortably.

“Oh… So, did you move out?” Bruce asked, seeming very interested.

“Yeah, kinda. Most of my stuff is still there.”

“Where are you staying now?”

“Here. At the Watchtower.” Clark explained, “It may take a while for me to find a new place. Apartments in Metropolis are so expensive.”

“I have guest rooms at the manor.”

“Yeah, I bet. Your place is huge.” Clark blinked as he realized what Bruce was implying. “Wait. Are—are you offering-?”

Bruce shrugged. “Well, the manor is a better place to stay than the Watchtower. It’s closer to Metropolis, you don’t have to share space with the whole Justice League, and Alfred takes care of all the cooking and laundry-”

“Thank you, Bruce!” Clark pulled him into a hug. “I’d love to live with you.” He nervously released Bruce and stepped back. “I-I mean temporarily. Until I find my own place, of course.”

“Yeah. Of course,” Bruce agreed quickly.

Clark grinned happily and hugged him again. “Thank you so much!”

At Wayne Manor, Clark moved into a guest room down the hallway from Bruce’s bedroom. There were larger guest rooms further away, but Clark wanted one near Bruce. Only two rooms were closer to Bruce’s bedroom. One was Dick’s old bedroom, and the other was Jason’s… Even though Jason had passed away, his room still looked exactly the same. It was a sad reminder, but Clark understood why Bruce and Alfred didn’t want to move any of Jason’s stuff. Clark’s room was right next to Jason’s.

Throughout the night, Clark made a few trips to Metropolis and flew back with some of his belongings. Clark filled up the closet with all of his clothes, put his toiletries in the bathroom, set his laptop on the desk, and plugged in his alarm clock. Soon, the guest room was already feeling like home. It was definitely nicer than some of the apartments he’s had before.

After he finished moving in, Clark headed down to the Batcave and found Bruce, sitting in front of the Batcomputer. Clark sat next to him and watched him work for a while. Then Alfred came down with some coffee and left. Bruce and Clark drank the coffee together and hung out like old times.

Around midnight, Clark could barely keep his eyes open. With a yawn, he said, “I’m tired, Bruce. I’m going to bed.”

“Fine. I still have work to do.” Bruce continued to type on the Batcomputer.

Clark frowned slightly. “You know, you should try to get some sleep too.”

“I will. When I’m done with this,” Bruce replied stubbornly.
Clark sighed, then he stood and walked away. “Goodnight, Bruce.”

“Night.” Batman was still facing the computer screen when Clark took the elevator up to the manor.

Inside the manor, it was dark and quiet. Alfred had probably gone to bed too. Clark headed up the stairs to his room, changed into his pajamas, and laid down. In bed, he pulled up the blankets and shut his eyes. He was so tired. Within minutes, he was fast asleep.

A while later, Clark heard the door creak open. He woke up and glanced at the doorway. Bruce was standing in the dark room, watching him.

Clark blinked in surprise. “Bruce?”

“I can’t sleep,” he muttered.

“C’mere.” Clark lifted the blanket with his arm.

Bruce walked toward him and climbed underneath the blanket. He laid on the bed, then Clark wrapped an arm around him, spooning him from behind.

Cuddled next to Bruce, Clark fell back to sleep with a smile on his face.
In Arkham Asylum, the fluorescent lights flickered overhead as Lex Luthor walked down the hall. He had paid off guards to sneak him inside. At exactly 4:30 AM, the security cameras were all shut off before Luthor’s arrival. There couldn’t be any evidence of this secret visit.

While he headed down the hall, Luthor passed by several cells. The caged inmates were all yelling and banging on the bars like wild animals. The asylum was a disgusting horrible place, but Luthor had a reason for coming here.

At the end of hall, Luthor stopped in front of a cell and faced the Joker on the other side of the steel bars. The Joker stood in his cell, dressed in an orange jumpsuit.

“Heya, Lexy.” The Joker grinned. “Long time no see. How’s the leg?”

Luthor clenched his fists as he glared at the madman. The last time they met in person, the Joker had stabbed him in the leg with a knife. “Shut up, Joker. I’m here to make a deal.”

The Joker’s eyes lit up with interest. “Oh. What kind of deal?”

“I’ll get you out of this shithole. But first, you have to do something for me.”

“And what’s that, Lexy-poo?” he purred.

“You’re going to help me kill Superman,” Luthor said with determination in his voice.

The Joker’s face broke into a nasty grin then he laughed hysterically. “Oh, Lexy, my bald ray of sunshine! I missed you.”

SxB

At 7:30 AM, the alarm clock started beeping. With a yawn, Clark reached over and shut off the alarm. Then he rubbed at his eyes, slowly waking up. Laying next to him in bed, Bruce stirred
slightly. Clark rolled onto his side and flung an arm around Bruce, holding him close. In the embrace, Bruce seemed to relax again as he continued to sleep. Clark smiled while watching him.

Soon, Clark would need to leave for work, but he wanted Bruce to stay in bed a while longer. He knew Bruce hasn’t been sleeping much lately.

About ten minutes later, Clark finally released Bruce and sat up. He moved carefully from the bed, hoping not to wake Bruce. Clark almost thought he succeeded, but then he noticed Bruce staring up at him. The poor guy still had dark circles under his eyes. He obviously needed more sleep.

Bruce glanced at the clock on the nightstand and immediately sat up.

Clark rested a hand on his shoulder, trying to stop him. “It’s still pretty early, Bruce. How about you stay in bed for a bit?”

Bruce frowned. “I have to check the security footage.”

“The Joker is still in the asylum. I can hear him.” Clark insisted, “Come on, you need more sleep.”

“I’m fine.” Bruce smacked his hand away and walked off, as stubborn as ever.

Clark sighed while watching him leave. He really wished that Bruce would rest more, but no one could tell Batman what to do. The vigilante definitely had a mind of his own… Even if Superman pulled rank and ordered him to rest, the Dark Knight wouldn’t listen.

In a blur of super speed, Clark prepared for work and zoomed out the window. He soared across the sky, heading towards Metropolis with a briefcase in his grasp. His business suit was packed inside the case. He’d have to change clothes before reaching the office.

At the Daily Planet, Clark sat at his desk, working on his computer. When he heard Lois enter the work room, he stopped typing and glanced at her. She walked by his desk without saying anything to him. She didn’t even acknowledge that he was there. Was she ignoring him now? Even though they broke up, Clark still wanted to be friends.

“Hey, Lois,” he called out to her.

Lois gazed over her shoulder at him and replied sadly, “Hey.”

Then she rushed into her office and shut the door. Obviously, she wasn’t ready talk yet. Clark slumped in his chair, feeling guilty. He never meant to hurt Lois. She was one of his best friends. At least he hoped she still was.

Suddenly, the door to Perry’s office swung open. “Kent, get over here!” Perry yelled before slamming the door shut again.

With a sigh, Clark stood and walked to his boss’s office. He knocked on the door before entering. Inside his office, Perry was sitting at his desk, arguing with someone on the phone. Then he abruptly hung up and banged the phone on his desk.

“Sir, you wanted to see me?” Clark asked politely.

“Yes! I’ve got great news, Kent.” Perry said excitedly, “You’re going back to Gotham for the interview of a lifetime. I mean, this is could really launch your career.”
Clark gave him a confused look. “What are you talking about?”

“The Joker! You’re going to interview the Joker!”

“W-What?” Clark gaped at him in horror.

Perry grinned proudly. “I know, right? It’s hard to believe. The Gotham Gazette has been trying to interview that psycho for years! But we’ll be the first ones to do it. We’re going to sell millions of copies!”

Clark felt a wave of anxiety as his heart raced. This was bad. Clearly, the Joker knew Superman’s secret identity. Now the villain was trying to reach him through his job.

“Sir… I’d prefer it if you sent someone else for this interview,” Clark said evenly, trying to remain calm.

“What?! I can’t send anyone else! It’s part of the deal. The Joker agreed to an interview but only with you.”

“I’m sorry to disappoint you, but-”

“I don’t want any excuses, Kent!” Perry snapped angrily. “You’re doing this interview or you’re fired. Is that understood?”

Clark glared at his boss as he answered, “Yes, sir.”

“Good.” Perry pointed to the door. “Now get out of here. You need to be in Gotham by tomorrow morning.”

Furious, Clark stormed out of his boss’s office and headed back to his desk. He sat down and held his face in hands, shutting his eyes for a moment. He took a few deep breath, trying to contain his anger. He was so sick of Perry’s bullshit. Maybe Clark should refuse to do the interview and just quit. He didn’t know what the Joker was planning, but Clark didn’t want to be anywhere near the lunatic.

**What would Bruce think of this?**

Clark cringed as he imagined Bruce’s reaction. If Batman knew what was happening, he’d rush over to Arkham Asylum right now and deal with the Joker himself. But…what if that’s the Joker’s real plan? Does the villain really want Clark to go to the asylum or is he trying to lure in Batman? What if there’s a trap for Bruce?

Damn it! Bruce wasn’t ready for any of this. Losing Jason had been so traumatizing for him. He could barely even sleep at night. Why couldn’t Bruce have a break for once?! The Joker was so hell-bent on torturing him! Clark couldn’t let this go on. He had to protect Bruce!

“Smallville?”

Clark raised his head and gazed up at Lois. She was standing by his desk with a worried expression on her face.

“Is everything okay? What did Perry want?” she asked.

Clark stood and gave her a troubled look. “Can we talk in your office?”

“Uh, yeah. Sure.” She shrugged.
He followed her across the room into her office, then she shut the door. Clark paced anxiously around her office while she watched him.

“So…” Lois nervously broke the silence. “What’s up?”

“Perry wants me to interview the Joker,” Clark blurted out.

Her eyes widened in shock. “What?! That’s insane! You told him no, right?”

“Of course, I did. Then Perry threatened to fire me.”

“You should tell Bruce,” Lois advised. “He still owns the company. He can make Perry back off.”

Clark sighed while shaking his head. “I don’t want to involve Bruce in this.”

“Are you kidding me? You have to tell him! The Joker is probably planning something. The interview has to be a trap.”

“I’m aware of that…” Clark replied solemnly, “I’ll deal with it on my own. Bruce has been through so much lately. I can’t dump this on him right now.”

Lois huffed and crossed her arms. “No offense, but Bruce is the expert on the Joker. Not you. Let him handle it.”

“No. Bruce is still recovering from Jason’s death, and… He’s not well. A few nights ago, he almost killed the Joker. He almost broke his one rule. That’s how close he is to losing it.” Clark gave her a pleading look. “Please don’t tell Bruce about this. I just want him to rest. He doesn’t need any more stress right now. If you tell him about the interview, Bruce will go straight to the asylum and confront the Joker. I know he will. Don’t tell him, Lois. Please.”

She frowned, looking worried. “If you go to that interview, you’ll be walking into a trap.”

“I know. I’ll be careful, I promise.”

“God damn it.” Lois cursed under her breath, then she reluctantly caved in, “Fine. I won’t say anything. But you have to call me right after the interview, so I know you’re okay.”


“Hmph. You’re still an idiot,” she fussed at him. “Going to the interview is a bad idea.”

“I can take care of myself. Bruce has dealt with the Joker for years. Now it’s my turn. He deserves a break,” Clark argued.

Lois gave him a resigned look. “I really hope you know what you’re doing.”

“Yeah… Me too.”

SxB

27 minutes. From 4:30 to 4:57 AM, there were 27 minutes missing from Arkham’s security footage. It was clearly an inside job. The guards must’ve been paid off. But by who? And what happened during those 27 minutes?

In the Batcave, Bruce sat at his desk, staring at the Batcomputer. On the large screen, he was watching live footage from the asylum’s security cameras. Right now, the Joker was still sitting in
his cell like nothing had changed. What the hell was he planning? The Joker could’ve escaped during those 27 minutes, but he didn’t, which meant he stayed in his cell by choice. For some reason, he wants to be in the asylum like he’s waiting for something…

Frustrated, Batman yanked off his cowl and threw it aside. He rubbed at his tired eyes and continued to stare at the computer screen. *What the fuck is going on?! What am I missing here?*

He needed to figure out the Joker’s plan before it was too late. Bruce nervously tapped his fingers on his desk while watching the screen. He could feel his heart pounding against his ribcage as he remembered the Joker’s threat.

“You think Jason had it bad? Heh, heh. I’m just getting started.”

Bruce shot out of his chair and began to pace around the cave. He felt so restless. He couldn’t just sit here and wait. The Joker’s planning something. He must be planning something! Who was his next target? It would be someone close to Bruce. Maybe Alfred, or Dick, or—or Clark.

Suddenly, Bruce felt like he had been punched in the gut. He leaned over, trying to catch his breath. But no matter how fast he breathed, it was never enough. He felt like he was suffocating. Images of Jason’s beaten scorched body flashed before his eyes, and Bruce felt sick to his stomach. Who was next? Who would the Joker kill next?

Now the whole room was spinning. Bruce stumbled on his feet and leaned his back against a wall. He slid down to the floor, still hyperventilating. He felt so light-headed and dizzy, but he was still able to diagnose the problem. This was a panic attack. He was breathing too fast and exhaling too much carbon dioxide. If he slowed down his breathing, then the dizziness would disappear.

Logically, Bruce knew that. But he couldn’t regain control. The Joker’s laughter was echoing in his head, filling him with panic and fear. Batman wasn’t supposed to be afraid of anything, but he was. He was so fucking scared. Scared of failing again. Scared of losing someone again.

A gust of wind blew into the cave, then Superman suddenly appeared in front of him.

Clark kneeled on the floor next to him, his blue eyes filled with concern. “Bruce, what’s wrong? Why is your heart beating so fast?”

“I-I’m fine,” he muttered between gasps for air.

“You aren’t fine. Tell me what’s wrong,” Superman demanded.

“It’s nothing. I just need to calm down.” Bruce swallowed and struggled to control his breathing.

“This is stupid. I’m sorry. Really, I’m fine.”

“It’s not stupid. And you have nothing to apologize for.”

“Just go back to work,” he pleaded. *Please. I don’t want you to see me like this. I must look so fucking pathetic.*

“I’m not going anywhere.” Clark leaned his back against the wall and sat next to Bruce on the floor.

Bruce curled his knees toward his chest and leaned his head down, trying to hide his face while he slowed his breathing. Then he felt Clark’s hand on his back, rubbing in a circular motion. Without thinking, Bruce leaned into the touch. It had a calming effect on him. Almost everything Clark did seemed to reassure Bruce lately. Like the hero’s very presence was enough to soothe all of his fears.
It was disconcerting. How much Bruce relied on the Kryptonian. Now he couldn’t even sleep without Clark in his bed, without that warmth and security…

“Can you tell me what’s bothering you?” Clark asked gently. “I know you must’ve panicked for a reason.”

Bruce raised his head and glanced at the Batcomputer. On the large screen, the Joker was still sitting in his cage. “When we were asleep, someone shut off the security cameras inside Arkham Asylum. There’s 27 minutes of missing footage. I know the Joker is planning something, but I don’t know what it is.”

Clark stilled his hand, no longer rubbing circles in Bruce’s back. “Can you do me a favor, Bruce?”

Bruce turned to the side, meeting his gaze. “Sure. What is it?”

“Stop watching the security footage. Don’t worry about the asylum anymore.”

“What?” Bruce blinked in confusion.

“I’ll pay attention to Arkham Asylum. If the Joker escapes, I’ll hear it. I’ll know immediately and I can deal with it. Let me handle the Joker for now.”

Bruce protested, “But the Joker is my problem—”

“Anything that hurts you is my problem too,” Clark declared with a serious, authoritative tone.

Apparently, there was no use arguing with Superman on this. Bruce huffed as he averted his gaze. Then Clark reached toward Bruce’s face and cupped his cheek. Bristling slightly, Bruce stared back at the hero.

“I know that you feel obligated to fight the Joker. Gotham will always be your city, but you know I’m capable of protecting it. Can you please take a break for a while?” Clark begged, his face etched with worry. “Please, Bruce. You need some rest. I’m really worried about you.”

Bruce hesitated for a moment. Part of him still wanted to argue, but he felt guilty for troubling Clark so much. Maybe taking a break wasn’t such a bad idea. Bruce tilted his head down as he yielded, “Okay... But only for a few days.”

Clark smiled, looking relieved. “Thank you, Bruce.”

Bruce shrugged, then Clark quickly pulled him into a hug. He leaned against Clark’s chest while strong muscular arms enveloped him. Bruce melted into the embrace, relaxing instantly. It was so easy to give in to Clark. Bruce hoped that the Kryptonian would never figure out how much influence he truly had.

SxB

That night, Clark ate dinner with Bruce in the manor. Then they both went to bed early. For anyone else 10 PM was a normal bedtime, but for Batman, it was incredibly early. Now it was almost 11 o’clock and Bruce was fast asleep. Clark was laying next to him in bed, watching him sleep. Bruce was curled up beside him, breathing softly. He looked so peaceful.

Clark ran a hand through Bruce’s hair, brushing a few strands out of his face. In his sleep, Bruce always seemed much younger when his brow wasn’t furrowed with anger, worry, or frustration. Batman’s life was constantly full of stress. Clark hoped that he could ease some of that burden...
In the morning, Clark was supposed to visit Arkham Asylum. He’d have to interview the Joker. Clark knew that there was probably a trap waiting for him, so he needed to be vigilant. He’d find out what the Joker was planning and he’d put a stop to it. Superman could handle this. There was no need to involve Batman. Although…Clark didn’t like hiding things from him.

Clark wrapped an arm around Bruce and held him close. Still asleep, Bruce nestled against him comfortably. Who knew the Dark Knight could be so cuddly? It was cute. When it was time for bed, Bruce had pulled Clark into his bedroom without saying anything. Apparently, Bruce expected Clark to share a bed with him now. Somehow, it had become the new norm. Clark was more than happy with the arrangement.

Smiling to himself, Clark shut his eyes. He would do anything for Bruce and that included fighting his enemies. Tomorrow Clark would face the Joker on his own, so Bruce wouldn’t have to.

SxB

Early in the morning, Clark awoke with Bruce in his arms. Sunlight shined though the window, illuminating the bedroom. Clark let out a sigh as he remembered what he needed to do today. He was dreading it, but he had to prepare for the interview. He had to be ready for anything. Clark sat up as he carefully untangled himself from Bruce. When he stood, he noticed Bruce barely opening his eyes.

“Clark?” Bruce gaze up at him sleepily.

“It’s okay, Bruce. Go back to sleep,” Clark whispered.

To his surprise, Bruce obediently shut his eyes and dozed off. For a moment, Clark gaped at the vigilante in disbelief. Wow. He actually listened to me. Well, there’s a first time for everything.

While Bruce slept peacefully, Clark left the bedroom and headed down the hall toward his own room. In his bathroom, Clark showered and prepared for the day. He changed into his business clothes, but he wore the Superman suit underneath just in case. Then he headed downstairs to the kitchen. Alfred had already cooked some scrambled eggs, sausage, and toast.

Clark ate breakfast at the kitchen table, in an awkward silence while the butler watched him. Since Clark had moved in, Alfred had been polite as usual in front of Bruce. But now Bruce wasn’t around.

Once he finished eating, Clark stood and collected all the dirty dishes. “Thanks for breakfast, Alfred. It was great.”

He walked toward the sink, then Alfred snatched the dirty dishes from him. “I’ll handle that, Mr. Kent.”

The butler set the dishes in the sink and began washing them. “It seems Master Wayne is finally catching up on his beauty sleep. I believe I have you to thank for that.”

“Uh, yeah, I guess,” Clark replied sheepishly.

“Have a good day at work, Mr. Kent.”

“Thanks, Alfred.” Clark grinned, feeling relieved. He really hoped that the butler didn’t hate him. Maybe one day he could earn Alfred’s forgiveness.

After grabbing his briefcase, Clark walked out of manor, heading to work. Today, he had an
unpleasant job to do.

SxB

In Arkham Asylum, Clark strolled down a long hallway, following a guard. On both sides of the hall, there were men locked inside cells. The inmates banged on the bars of their cells, yelling crazily. It was so loud in the asylum. With his super hearing, Clark listened to everything inside and around the building, searching for any traps. He had to be vigilant. The Joker was definitely planning something.

“So, you’re really here to interview the Joker?” the guard asked.

Clark nodded. “Yes, that’s right. I work for the Daily Planet.”

“Heh. You poor bastard.” The guard unlocked the door to a room and stepped aside.

Clark peered inside the dank, dimly-lit room. It was mostly empty, with only a steel table and two chairs. The Joker was already seated in the room, smiling as usual. He was dressed in an orange jumpsuit and both of his wrists were shackled in handcuffs.

“Well, have fun,” the guard said sarcastically.

“Oh, the fun has already begun!” The Joker grinned at the guard and jingled his handcuffs. “Before you go, can you be a dear and take these off? Don’t worry about Four-Eyes. You see, Clark and I are old friends because he’s such a super guy.”

The guard glanced at Clark. “Do you want the cuffs off?”

“Leave them on.”

The Joker gasped in mock surprise. “Are you afraid of little old me?”

Clark scowled at him. “No, but I don’t trust you.”

The Joker shrugged. “Ah, I guess you’re smarter than you look.”

The guard pointed to a red button on the wall. “If you need help, there’s the panic button. I’ll be right outside.”

“Thanks.” Clark walked across the room and sat down in the other chair.

Then the guard shut the door, leaving Clark and the Joker alone in the room. Clark set his briefcase on the table and took out a pen and some paper. This was supposed to be an interview after all.

“You know, I wasn’t sure that you’d come.” The Joker chuckled.

“I didn’t have much of a choice. Now say what you want to say, so I can leave.”

“I’m afraid it won’t be that easy, Supes.”

Clark glared at him.

The Joker rolled his eyes. “Don’t get your red panties in a twist. There are no cameras in this room. No one can hear us. It’s just you and me.”
Clark took off his glasses and set them down on the table. Obviously, the disguise was useless. “Why did you want me to come here?” he demanded.

“So we could talk, of course. Isn’t that how an interview works?” The Joker leaned back in his chair.

“Then talk. Quit wasting my time.”

“Hehehe. So testy. I think Bats is rubbing off on you. I kinda like it.” The Joker winked at him. “How is my Batsy doing by the way?”

“That’s none of your business.”

“Hmph, you’re wrong about that. Very wrong. Everything about Brucie is my business. He completes me, you know. He’s like my soulmate.”

“Your what?” Clark gaped at him in disgust.

“Everything about our relationship is so chaotic, volatile, and just…perfect,” The Joker said wistfully. “We were made for each other. He is mine, and I am his. Together we’re going to spiral into oblivion. One day he’ll take my life and I’ll take his sanity. He will kill me and then I will own him forever.”

He’s completely insane. Clark frowned. “You’re wrong. Batman will never kill you.”

“All he needs is a little push. Soon, he’ll be mine.” The Joker grinned widely, baring his jagged yellow teeth. “But I have to admit. I am a bit jealous, Supes. I always wondered. What was it like to rape Batman?”

Clark clenched his fists, shaking with anger. He wanted to punch the Joker in the face, but he knew that the villain was trying to provoke him. Clark needed to stay level-headed. He couldn’t let the Joker get under his skin.

“I didn’t,” Clark finally answered. “Batman was able to stop me and take off the red kryptonite ring.”

“But you got really close, didn’t you? I can tell.” The Joker licked his lips as he smiled excitedly. “What was it like? It must’ve felt so good. Forcing him down and ripping off that Kevlar. Was he scared? Did he scream?”

Clark barely contained his anger as he growled, “It was the worst day of my life, you sick fuck.”

The Joker laughed cheerfully. “Ha, ha, ha! Don’t worry, Supes. You aren’t the only one with a rape fantasy. I’d love to force myself on Batman. I even know how I’d do it.”

“What?” Clark paled in horror.

“I have it all planned out,” the Joker explained. “I’d wait for Bats come home after a busy night on patrol. He’d fall asleep in his room, then I’d sneak in through the balcony. You know what balcony I’m talking about.” The villain smiled menacingly. “I’d catch Batsy by surprise, tie him up, then I’d find that old geezer. What’s his name? Albert, Alfonzo-?”

“Alfred…”

“Yeah, that’s right. Alfred. I’d get Alfred and bring him up to the room. Then I’d hold a knife to
his throat and tell Brucie that he better behave or I’d have to kill the old man. I bet Batsy would do anything I say.” The Joker cackled. “He’d be so scared of losing the old man. Especially after what I did to Barbara and Jason.” He leaned over the table, grinning madly at Clark. “Bruce would let me do whatever I want. He’d cry and beg and scream until I break him completely.”

Clark furiously banged his fist on the table as he yelled, “I’d never let that happen! Never! I’d stop you!”

“Hehehe. Oh, you’d stop me if you could. For my plan to work, I’d have to weaken you with kryptonite. I bet I can borrow some from my good pal Lexy. I could make you too weak to protect Bruce.” The Joker hissed viciously, “Better yet, I’ll make you watch as I fuck him bloody—”

Enraged, Clark threw the table aside as he lunged at the Joker. He grabbed the Joker by the throat and slammed him against the wall, strangling him. Clark couldn’t control himself. He was seeing red. He was so fucking angry!

Then the Joker reached up and grabbed his wrist. Clark felt something prick his skin. Alarmed, he immediately released the Joker. The villain fell to the floor, coughing and laughing at the same time. Meanwhile Clark stared at the small red dot on his wrist.

The Joker held up his hand, revealing a hidden tack. He grinned wickedly. “Gotcha.”

Clark’s eyes widened as he realized his mistake. The Joker said all of those horrible things to provoke him, and Clark had fallen for it. The room began to spin as Clark stumbled on his feet, suddenly light-headed. He must be drugged with something.

His vision blurred, then he lost his balance and collapsed on the floor. Before Clark passed out, he could hear the Joker laughing hysterically.
Bruce slept soundly until he heard his phone vibrate. Still half-asleep, Bruce rolled onto his side and pulled a blanket over his head. He ignored the phone until the humming stopped. There were two seconds of silence before the phone started vibrating again.

Annoyed, Bruce finally sat up and grabbed his cell phone off the nightstand. He blinked in surprise as he read the caller ID. Lois was calling him.

He answered the call. “Lois?”

“Oh my God. This chapter... It's so intense!”

“About time you pick up!” Lois ranted angrily, “You have to help your stupid boyfriend! That’s right. He’s YOUR boyfriend. Not mine! The idiot is your responsibility now! That fucking moron! I warned him! Why didn’t he listen to me?!”

Bruce grimaced while rubbing his temples. Lois was giving him a headache. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“Go save Clark!” she shouted.

Bruce jumped out of bed as he demanded, “What happened to Clark?”

“He went to Arkham Asylum to interview the Joker.”

“What?!”

“It was for work,” she explained. “Perry forced him to go. Clark didn’t want to worry you, so he didn’t tell you about it. He was supposed to call me after the interview, but he didn’t. Something bad must’ve happened. I think he’s in trouble.”

“That fucking moron!” Bruce screamed into the phone.

Lois chuckled nervously. “Heh. That’s what I said.”

“I’ll take care of this,” he growled as he hung up.

Bruce stormed out of his room and headed down to the Batcave. He quickly changed into a Bat suit, then he checked the asylum’s live security feed on the Batcomputer. The Joker was missing from his cell. \textit{Fuck!} Batman furiously banged his fist on his desk, then he ran to the Batplane. He’d
reach the asylum quicker in a jet. If he could find the Joker, then he should be able to find Clark.

SxB

Batman landed his jet on top of a building, across from the Arkham Asylum. The Batplane had a cloaking device, so it was invisible to the naked eye. He had borrowed the technology from Wonder Woman when he studied her invisible jet.

On the roof of the tall building, Batman watched the asylum from afar, using binoculars. Soon he spotted a familiar employee in the parking lot. The employee was an incompetent overweight security guard who frequently patrolled the area near the Joker’s cell.

Batman leapt off the roof and fired his grappling gun. Then he swung over the tall iron gate, into the parking lot. He threw batarangs at nearby security cameras as he landed on top of a brand new Mercedes.

The Arkham employee froze, gaping at him in shock. “H-Holy shit.”

Batman jumped down from the car and stalked toward him. “Where is the Joker?”

The guard backed away fearfully. “I-I don’t know. He escaped.”

“You helped him,” Batman snarled.

“No, I didn’t!”

Batman grabbed the fat man and threw him into the brand new car. Bruce shook with anger as he hissed, “That’s a nice Mercedes. How did you afford that on your salary?”

“It-It was a gift,” the guard stuttered.

“Wrong answer.” Batman punched the man in the face. “I know you were paid off! Start talking!”

“I really don’t know where the Joker is! I swear!” The fat man sniveled and cowered in fear, his nose bleeding from the hit. “Oh, God! Please don’t hurt me!”

“Yesterday at 4:30 AM, the security cameras were off for 27 minutes. What happened?”

“L-Lex Luthor. He came to see the Joker.”

“Luthor...” Batman seethed with rage. Of course, this was Luthor’s doing. The bastard must’ve teamed up with the Joker again.

Using his grappling hook, Batman swung out of the parking lot and headed back to his jet. He sat in the Batplane and immediately shot into the sky, flying towards Metropolis. Knowing Luthor, he’d probably take Superman to LexCorp. That place was the most well-equipped to hold the Kryptonian hostage.

While piloting the jet, Batman took out his JL communicator. He pressed the emergency button, alerting everyone in the Justice League.

SxB

His head ached as Clark opened his eyes. At first the room was blurry, then it slowly came into focus. All of the walls were white and there was lab equipment everywhere. Clark tried to move, but his arms and legs were bound. He was strapped to a gurney, in an upright position, dressed only
Superman struggled to break free, yanking on his restraints. His whole body was strapped down and there were handcuffs around his wrists and ankles. But they weren’t ordinary handcuffs. He couldn’t snap them off. Every time he tried, he felt a sharp pain followed by a wave of nausea. Clark recognized that feeling instantly. The restraints must contain kryptonite. And the IV needle in his arm must contain kryptonite too, or else it wouldn’t penetrate his skin. All of these things were invented just for him in mind.

“Hey there, Supes. Have a nice nap?” The Joker stood nearby, cackling.

Meanwhile Luthor walked over to the lab equipment, carrying a clipboard. The evil billionaire set down the clipboard and stared at a computer screen connected to one of the machines.

“What are you doing to me?!” Clark yelled as he struggled against the restraints once again.

“Collecting samples.” Luthor typed on the computer. “Once I have everything I need, you’re dead.”

“Ugh. You mean you aren’t done yet?” The Joker whined impatiently.

“I need this for my experiments,” Luthor explained.

“What experiments?!” Clark panicked as he thrashed on the gurney, still trying to break free. “Let me go!”

Luthor glared at him and threatened, “Shut up, Clark. Or I’ll take a kryptonite blade and cut out your tongue.”

Superman immediately shut his mouth. He knew that his enemy wasn’t bluffing.

Luthor gazed back at the computer screen. “Hm. Interesting.”

“I’m bored, Lexy! This is taking forever.” The Joker huffed and stomped away, then he grabbed a weapon that was hanging on the wall. “What does this do?”

Luthor glanced over his shoulder and continued working. “That’s a sonic cannon.”

“And what’s this?” The Joker picked up another weapon that was shaped like a gun.

“A death ray.”

“Hehe.” The Joker giggled and twirled the death ray. “What a corny name. I love it.”

“I’m trying to concentrate, Joker.” Luthor snapped while typing on the computer.

Next, the Joker opened a display cabinet, then he grinned wickedly. “Oooh. I know what this is.” He took out a steel collar that contained a red gem in the center.

Clark’s eyes widened as he instantly recognized the red crystal. That collar had red kryptonite imbedded in it.

Luthor gave the clown an exasperated look. “Put that away. We don’t need it.”

The Joker held up the red kryptonite collar, admiring it. “But think of the chaos, Lexy.”
Obviously annoyed, Luthor marched over to the Joker and snatched the collar from him. “Quit touching everything.”

When Luthor turned around, the Joker took out a gun and suddenly bashed him in the head with it. The bald man collapsed on the floor, seemingly unconscious. Then the Joker swiped the collar and a set of keys from him.

Superman tensed anxiously as the Joker stalked towards him, carrying the red kryptonite.

“S-Stay away from me!” Clark yelled, his heart pounding against his ribcage.

The Joker smiled. “Y’know, Lexy means well, but he lacks imagination. He forgets that there are things worse than death. But you remember, don’t you?”

As the madman approached with the red kryptonite, Clark frantically yanked on the handcuffs until his wrists bled. Panic and fear bubbled up inside him, consuming all rational thought. This was his worst nightmare. The red kryptonite was getting closer. And he was trapped. It was impossible to get away.

“Don’t do this! Please don’t! Anything but this!” Clark screamed, scared out of his mind. He couldn’t let this happen. Not again! He’d rather die!

“I wonder who you’ll hurt this time.” The Joker smirked and held the collar towards his neck.

Terrified, Clark thrashed back and forth on the gurney, shouting, “Just kill me! Just fucking KILL ME!”


Suddenly, an alarm wailed loudly. Clark glanced to the side and spotted Luthor, leaning against the wall, next to a red panic button.

The Joker pouted. “Aw, Lexy. Why’d you have to go and do that?”

Five LexCorp guards barged into the lab, but the Joker took out his gun and quickly shot all of them. Then the Joker grabbed onto the gurney and wheeled Clark into an elevator. The elevator doors shut as more guards rushed into the lab.

In the elevator, the Joker leaned against the gurney with his gun ready. The elevator went all the way up to the roof before the doors slid open again. Then the Joker wheeled him outside. On the roof, Clark immediately recognized his surroundings. They were on top of the LexCorp building in Metropolis.

Wind blew all around them as the Joker spread out his arms, laughing cheerfully. “Can you feel it, Supes?! It’s time for the grand finale!”

The crazed villain stepped toward him, holding up the red kryptonite collar.

Clark cringed, fighting against the restraints in vain. His wrists were so bloody and torn that he could feel the handcuffs scraping on bone. He tried to fly, but he was too weakened by the kryptonite in the restraints.

“No! No, get that away from me! Please don’t do this!” Clark pleaded desperately as tears sprang to his eyes.
“Shhh. My agent of chaos. You’ll enjoy this.” The Joker opened the collar and began to slide it around Clark’s neck.

“No! NO!” Clark screamed, thrashing his head back and forth, trying to escape the collar.

With a loud snap, the steel collar locked around his neck. Now Clark could feel the red kryptonite touching his skin. He groaned as he shook with an overwhelming rage. In an instant, he was full of nothing but hatred. The uncontrollable urge to hurt, to kill, to maim… It flowed through his veins like fire, burning him from the inside out.

The Joker took out a set of keys and began unlocking the Kryptonian from the gurney. As the restraints came off, one by one, Clark could feel his strength returning. Soon, he was completely free.

No longer bound, Superman took a step forward, away from the gurney.


“Joker…” Superman growled darkly, “Do you know what I want more than anything?”

“A sexier costume? Maybe a purple suit?” The villain quipped.

“I want to kill you.”

The Joker tilted his head back and laughed. “Oh, I’m flattered.”

Enraged, Superman immediately snatched the Joker by the throat, choking him. “You piece of shit! I WILL FUCKING KILL YOU!”

SxB

As soon as he received the message from Batman, Flash ran all the way to Metropolis. In a blur of super speed, he zigzagged around cars, down the busy street. When he reached the LexCorp building, he ran up the side of the tall skyscraper, heading to the roof.

Above LexCorp, Superman hovered in the sky, holding the Joker by his neck. The clown wasn’t moving at all. His whole body was completely limp. Did Clark kill him?

Flash stood on the roof, staring up at Superman in shock. Then he noticed the steel collar around Clark’s neck. In the collar, there was a shining red stone... Red kryptonite!

“Oh, shit.” Barry’s eyes widened as he realized the severity of the situation. That red kryptonite was locked around Superman’s neck. Now Clark couldn’t control himself.

Still holding the Joker, Superman’s eyes turned red like he was about shoot heat vision through the villain’s skull. Reacting quickly, Flash leapt into the air and grabbed onto the Joker while kicking Superman in the face.

Then Flash landed on the roof and ran away, carrying the Joker on his back. With great speed, Flash zoomed across Metropolis. As he ran, he glanced over his shoulder and spotted Superman right behind him with bright red eyes. The Kryptonian was about to fire lasers at him!

Evading the blast, Flash quickly turned around the building. Superman chased after him as they zigzagged all over Metropolis. Fortunately for Flash, they were both evenly matched in speed. The Kryptonian couldn’t catch him.
After a couple minutes, Superman screeched to a halt, tearing apart pavement in the street. At a safe distance, Flash stopped as well, watching Clark cautiously.

Superman glared at him with a dangerous look in his eyes. “No more running. Hand over the Joker or I’ll destroy this city.”

“What?!” Flash gaped at him in disbelief. “You can’t be serious! Superman, this is your city! These people are innocent!”

“Hand over the Joker. NOW!” Superman roared, his voice shaking nearby buildings.

Flash stumbled slightly as the ground tremored. It was terrifying… How much raw power Superman possessed. He could destroy the whole world in the blink of an eye. But even so, Barry couldn’t surrender the Joker to him.

Swallowing his fear, Flash stared down the strongest being on the planet. “I can’t do that.”

The Kryptonian scowled at him with glowing red eyes. Then he abruptly turned to the side and shot lasers at a nearby building.

“Superman, no!” Flash cried out.

Right before the building was hit, a large green shield appeared in front of the blast, absorbing the brunt of the attack. The green shield shattered, revealing Hal on the other side, dressed in his Green Lantern suit. Flash let out a sigh of relief. Finally, he had some help.

“Supes, have you lost your damn mind?!” Green Lantern shouted angrily.

“Look at his neck!” Flash called out, “It’s red kryptonite!”

“Fuck…” Hal flew over to Barry, then he noticed the Joker, hanging limply on the speedster’s back. He blinked in surprise before yelling, “Dammit, Flash! Get out of here!”

“But…”

“I won’t let you die to protect the fucking Joker.” Hal stood in front of Barry, forming a gigantic green dragon. “I got this. Run!”

With a burst of energy, Superman charged at them and punched the green dragon, destroying it with a single hit. Next, Green Lantern quickly formed a green tank, launching a counter attack. While they battled, Flash zoomed away, carrying the Joker to safety.

Zigzagging around cars, Flash sped across Metropolis until he spotted the Batplane in the sky. Oh, thank God! Barry grinned, despite the horrible situation. If anyone could fix all of this, it was Batman. Bruce would know what to do.

When the Batplane landed on top of a building, Flash ran up to the roof, eager to greet him.

As soon as Batman stepped out of the jet, Flash yelled frantically, “Batman, we’ve got to do something! Superman is on a rampage! It’s the red kryptonite again! He’s completely lost it!”

“What happened to the Joker?” Batman stared at the unconscious villain on Flash’s back.

Flash quickly set the Joker down on the ground. “Clark did this. He was trying to kill him.”

Batman kneeled beside the Joker and touched his neck like he was feeling for a pulse. The clown
always wore white paint on his face, yet he looked more pale than usual. His skin actually had a bluish tone to it now. And he still wasn’t moving… His chest was completely still like he wasn’t breathing at all.

Flash gulped nervously. “Is-Is he dead?”

“He’s hypoxic, but he’s still alive. Barely.” Bruce rushed back to the Batplane and returned with a first aid kit. Then he opened the kit and took out a scalpel.

Flash blanched while Batman cut a hole in the Joker’s neck.

“What are you doing?” Barry asked.

“Most of his trachea is crushed. I have to create a new airway.” Batman pushed a tube through the hole in the Joker’s neck. Then the villain’s chest rose like he was taking a deep breath. He was definitely still alive.

“Wow.” Barry watched in awe, totally impressed. “You could be a doctor.”

Bruce shrugged as he stood.

Suddenly, there was a loud crash and the building shook slightly. Flash hurried to the edge of the roof and looked down below. In front of the building, the street was torn apart, and Green Lantern was laying at the bottom of a large crater.

**Hal!** Flash immediately leapt off the roof and ran down the side of the building. He zoomed over to Hal and kneeled beside him.

“Hal, are you okay?” Barry asked, tense with worry.

“Ugh. Yeah, I’m fine.” Hal tried to sit up, then he winced in pain.

Using his grappling hook, Batman swung down from the roof and landed beside them. “Where’s Superman?”

“I dunno. He just flew off,” Hal muttered.

“You idiot.” Barry pulled Hal into his arms, hugging him tightly. “You shouldn’t have fought Clark on your own.”

“He’s going to LexCorp,” Batman said abruptly.

“What?” Flash glanced up at him.

“Clark already tried to kill the Joker. Luthor must be his next target,” Bruce deduced.

Flash untangled himself from Hal and stood. “I’m on it. I’ll get Luthor.”

“I’m coming with you.” Green Lantern groaned as he tried to stand up.


When Green Lantern opened his mouth to argue, Flash leaned down and gave him a quick peck on the lips.
“Be right back.” Flash disappeared in a blur.

SxB

Luthor crashed through several floors, falling to the lowest level of the LexCorp building. Thankfully, he was wearing his mechanized Warsuit. Otherwise, he would be dead. Groaning in pain, Luthor sat up and pulled himself from the rubble. It was difficult to see. The room was full of debris and smoke.

When he spotted two red dots, Luthor quickly ducked to the side. The lasers just barely missed him. Then Superman suddenly appeared in front of him. The Kryptonian grabbed onto the Warsuit and ripped a hole through the armored plates.

Scared for his life, Luthor kicked and screamed as Superman yanked him out of the Warsuit.

“Let go of me! We can talk about this!” Luthor implored desperately.

“No. No deals.” Superman sneered. “Earlier you wanted to cut out my tongue.”

“L-Let’s make a deal.”

“No. No deals.” Superman hurled him across the room.

With a loud thud, Luthor slammed into the wall and slid to the floor. He leaned against the wall while clutching the right side of his ribcage. It felt like a couple of his ribs were broken. He grimaced and took a few shallow breaths, trying to ignore the pain. In all of their fights, Superman had never hit him this hard. The red kryptonite was definitely affecting the alien, making him dangerous.

The Kryptonian stalked towards him as Luthor scrambled to his feet.

“I’m sick of your shit, Luthor. I should’ve killed you a long time ago,” Superman growled viciously.

As the alien approached, Luthor’s heart raced a mile a minute, his mind clouded with anxiety and fear. If he didn’t do something quick, Superman would seriously kill him! Luthor frantically scanned his surroundings until he recognized a metal safe nearby, in the debris. That was his only hope of surviving this. Luthor ran and lunged at the safe, skidding across the floor. Then he quickly dialed the combination and opened the safe, taking out a piece of green kryptonite.

Luthor felt a rush of triumph as he stood and held up the green rock. “Stay back!”

Superman merely stared at the green kryptonite and smirked. “You think that will protect you?”

The alien’s eyes glowed red, shooting lasers at Luthor’s arm. Luthor screamed in agony as the lasers sliced through his flesh, severing his right arm from the rest of his body. His arm skidded across the floor, along with the piece of green kryptonite.

Still screaming, Luthor fell to the ground, holding the bloody stump, where his right arm used to be. The pain was excruciating, and the absolute horror of losing a limb left him reeling. This almost felt like an out-of-body experience. Part of Luthor couldn’t believe that this was happening, that Superman would actually do this to him.

“Hmph. Look at you. You’re pathetic.” Superman slowly walked towards him. “You can have all the gadgets and money in the world, Luthor. But compared to me, you’re still nothing.”
He tried to stand, then Superman kicked him in the back, forcing him to fall on his face. Blood gushed from his right shoulder as Luthor crawled across the floor, still trying to escape. Superman watched for a moment before stomping on Luthor’s back. The Kryptonian was stepping on him like he was an insect, like he was something lowly. It was a blow to Luthor’s pride, but it hurt his broken ribs even more. With all that pressure on his back, he felt like he couldn’t breathe.

“Please, s-stop,” Luthor gasped, overwhelmed by the sheer amount of pain.

Superman chuckled above him. “Don’t worry, Luthor. I won’t kill you that quickly.”

The Kryptonian lifted his foot, so Luthor could finally breathe. Then he kicked Luthor again and sent him flying across the room. Luthor crashed into a pile of rubble, coughing and groaning in pain. He tried to crawl away again while Superman walked leisurely toward him.

“This is just the beginning.” Superman grabbed the back of Luthor’s neck, forcing him to his knees. The alien leaned close as he hissed, “First, I’ll break every bone in your body. Then I’ll tear off your other limbs, one by one.” Superman grinned sadistically. “Next, I’ll take your eyes, and your ears, and your tongue. So when you die, you won’t be able to see, hear, or even speak. All you will know is pain.”

“Oh, God!” Luthor flailed in the Kryptonian’s grip, trying to get away.

“God won’t save you, Luthor. No one will.” Superman smiled, his eyes shining bright red like a demon.

Frozen in fear, Luthor stared up at the alien as he realized that this was the end. There was no escape. The Kryptonian was too powerful. Luthor felt a wave of dizziness as his vision blurred. He had lost so much blood. And, the smell of his own burnt flesh made him want to vomit. All of this was too much. Too horrific. Too painful. Luthor just wanted this suffering to end, even if it meant death. Shutting his eyes, Luthor surrendered himself to the darkness.

Unexpectedly, Luthor felt someone grab him and the wind blowing against his face. He opened his eyes and saw his surroundings whizzing past him in a blur. Then he glanced to the side and spotted a familiar red mask.

Flash… Luthor recognized the hero before losing consciousness.

SxB

On the roof of the Daily Planet, Batman stood by the Batplane while he watched over the Joker. The villain was still out cold, which was a good thing. This way he was easier to deal with. Bruce kneeled beside the Joker, studying the bruises on his neck. The marks were shaped like a handprint. Clark’s handprint… Superman had almost strangled the Joker to death. Now his neck was so damaged that the Joker couldn’t even breathe without a hole in his trachea. The cricothyrotomy had saved his life.

Green Lantern stood next to Batman, looking at the Joker with disgust. “Ugh. You just had to save him, didn’t you? Why couldn’t you let him die?”

“If the Joker dies now, that means Superman is a murderer,” Bruce answered solemnly.

Hal shut his mouth, looking away. “I know that red kryptonite affects him… But, Jesus Christ, it’s like he’s an entirely different person. When we were fighting, I think he seriously tried to kill me.”

Bruce felt his heart clench in his chest. He had hoped that this would never happen again. He did
everything in his power to stop this. For over a year, Bruce had searched high and low for red kryptonite, destroying it every chance he got. But apparently, his efforts weren’t enough. This still happened. *Again.*

Green Lantern paced nervously, heading to the edge of the roof. “I have to help Flash.”

Batman stood and looked over the city of Metropolis. In the distance, he spotted a red blur zigzagging through the streets. “Stay where you are. Flash is almost here.”

Within a second, Flash zoomed up to the roof, carrying Luthor in his arms. The bald man was incredibly pale and drenched in blood. Batman’s eyes widened in shock when he saw where all of the blood was coming from. Luthor’s right arm was missing. Clark had *maimed* him.

“Got a new patient for you.” Flash dropped Luthor’s limp body before speeding away.

In the sky, a blue blur was hurtling towards them. Without a doubt, it was Superman, coming to finish off Luthor and the Joker.

Green Lantern immediately shot into the sky, forming a large green mallet. He swung the mallet at Superman, but the Kryptonian caught the weapon effortlessly with one hand. Superman threw the mallet aside, then he lunged at Hal, about to punch him in the face. But before he could hit Hal, a red blur whizzed by, pushing Hal out of the way.

While Green Lantern and Flash both fought Superman, Batman kneeled beside Luthor, assessing the damage. First, he needed to stop the bleeding. Bruce grabbed the first aid kit again and took out a tourniquet. He strapped the tourniquet below Luthor’s right shoulder, directly above the bloody stump where an arm used to be. Then he tightened the tourniquet until the bleeding finally stopped. Now Luthor needed a blood transfusion. Lucky for him, Batman was always prepared.

Bruce grabbed onto Luthor and dragged the unconscious man into the Batplane. Inside the jet, Batman had even more medical supplies, including a couple bags of O negative blood. Bruce secured Luthor down to a bench seat, then he opened the small refrigerator at the back of the plane. He took out a bag of blood and quickly started an IV in Luthor’s left arm. After connecting the tubing, he hung the bag of blood on a hook above Luthor.

With a sigh of relief, Batman watched as the blood flowed through the IV tubing into Luthor’s left arm. At least Clark hadn’t murdered anyone…yet.

Anxious, Bruce stepped out of the Batplane and hurried to the edge of the roof. He gazed down below at the crowds of people, fleeing the city. A few streets away, a streak of blue was chasing a red blur. When Superman caught up to Flash, he grabbed the speedster and threw him into a building. Flash crashed into a pile of rubble, then Green Lantern charged at Superman with his green ring shining brightly. He formed a huge green battle tank, which the Kryptonian obliterated.

Batman frowned while observing the fight. Time was limited. He knew that Green Lantern and Flash wouldn’t last much longer. Superman was too powerful for them. This fight could kill them both. Hal and Barry were in real danger. Not to mention, everyone else in this city. Somehow, Bruce needed to take the fight away from Metropolis.

He glanced at the Joker, who was still unconscious on the roof. Fortunately, he had the perfect bait.

Bruce quickly grabbed the Joker and pulled him into the Batplane. He strapped the Joker down to a seat, then he hurried to the cockpit and started the jet.
The engine whirred as the Batplane shot into the sky, flying out of Metropolis. For a couple of minutes, the jet zoomed away, cutting through the clouds. Batman piloted the plane while scanning his surroundings. Now he was far away from the city. He had reached an unpopulated area near a canyon.

Suddenly, there was a loud explosion. In the cockpit, several warning lights flashed while Batman struggled to control the plane. The jet fell from the sky, hurtling towards the rocky ground. Batman released the jet’s emergency parachute, easing the Batplane’s descent. Bruce pulled back on the steering wheel as the plane skidded roughly across the ground. The bottom of the plane scrapped against the rocky earth until the aircraft finally came to a stop. It had been a rough landing, but at least he didn’t crash.

Batman stepped out of the cockpit and jumped down in front of the Batplane. With a gust of wind, Superman landed across from him, creating a dent in the ground. The Kryptonian glared at him, his brow furrowed with anger. Around his neck, the red kryptonite glistened in the steel collar.

“Get out of my way, Bruce. They deserve to die,” he snarled.

Batman rested a hand on his utility belt, ready for a fight. “If you want to kill them, you have to get through me first.”

Superman took a step forward, then he froze unexpectedly. For a split second, something flashed in his eyes and his expression changed. He almost looked afraid. Then Clark leaned over, holding his head in his hands. His whole body trembled, and he whimpered as if he was in pain.

Bruce watched him, confused by the strange reaction. “Clark?”

*What the hell is going on? Is the red kryptonite actually hurting him? Or…* His eyes widened as Bruce considered a new possibility. *Is Clark trying to fight it?*

Bruce felt a glimmer of hope as he stepped toward the cowering Kryptonian. “Clark, can you hear me? I can help you.”

Before he could get any closer, Wonder Woman leapt out of the sky and landed between them. She drew her sword from its sheath, revealing a blade with green lines of kryptonite welded into the metal. Clark instantly jumped back, glaring at Wonder Woman, his face darkened with bloodthirsty rage.

Batman stared at the weapon, studying it. “What the hell is that?”

“It’s a kryptonite sword.” Wonder Woman raised the blade, pointing it at Superman. “Clark gave it to me. He asked me to kill him if he ever lost control to red kryptonite again.”

“What?!” Bruce snapped in outrage.

Diana glanced over her shoulder at him, her blue eyes glistening with unshed tears. “I’m sorry. But I must fulfill my promise to my friend.”

Without another word, the amazon princess charged at Superman and swung her sword. In a blur of super speed, Clark evaded the attack and fired lasers at her. Diana deflected the blast with her magical gauntlets, then she lunged at him again, swinging the kryptonite sword.

Batman watched the battle, still disturbed by what Wonder Woman said. Clark had planned to die in this situation… He even gave Diana the means to slay him.
When Aquaman appeared, he jumped down from a rocky ledge, landing next to Bruce.

“We have to stop her,” Batman told the Atlantean king.

Aquaman merely shook his head. “I’m with Diana on this. A man has a right to decide how he wants to die. And this is what Superman would want.”

“But he doesn’t have to die!” Bruce argued. “We can get the red kryptonite away from him!”

“Look at his neck.” Aquaman pointed at Clark while the Kryptonian continued to fight with Wonder Woman. “That collar is locked on. Do you really think you can get close enough to take it off?”

“Yes, I can!” Bruce shouted stubbornly.

Arthur sighed. “That’s a risk you shouldn’t take. You know how easily he could kill you. Clark is a threat to everyone in this state. He’s too dangerous. He has to die.”

“No, he doesn’t! We can save him!”

Ignoring Bruce, Aquaman charged into battle. Lightning crackled around his trident as he thrust the weapon at Superman. The electricity shocked the Kryptonian, throwing him back. Clark fell to the ground, then Wonder Woman appeared above him, swinging her sword down. Superman rolled to the side, barely dodging the blade. Then he flew to safety before attacking again.

With Wonder Woman and Aquaman teamed up against him, Superman began to take more and more hits. Diana even slashed him a couple times with the kryptonite sword. She cut him enough to make him bleed, but so far her attacks haven’t been lethal.

Bruce angrily clenched his fists as he watched the battle between his super-powered allies. He couldn’t just stand on the sidelines and do nothing! Batman scanned the area, searching for a familiar face. There was still one member of the Justice League who hasn’t joined the fight yet. At the top of the rocky canyon, he finally spotted the green alien.

Using his grappling gun, Batman swung up to the rocky ledge and stood next to Martian Manhunter. J’onn was watching the fight too with a pained expression on his face.

“You think we can save Clark, don’t you?” Batman asked gruffly.

“Of course, we can,” J’onn agreed with a sigh.

“Can you reach Clark telepathically?”

“Yes…” J’onn grimaced. “His mind is very chaotic.”

“Is he fighting the effects of the red kryptonite?”

“Yes, I believe so.”

“Can you help him fight it?” Bruce asked hopefully.

“I will try.” J’onn shut his eyes and touched his temples like he was concentrating.

While Martian Manhunter focused on his telepathy, Batman gazed down at the battle. Below, Superman dodged another attack from Diana, then he punched Aquaman in the face. The Atlantean king crashed into the rocky ground, forming a large crater. Next, Superman turned to face Wonder
Woman with glowing red eyes. He was about to use his heat vision, but then he blinked, his eyes returning to normal. For a moment, Clark looked confused then he doubled over and cradled his head like he was in pain. Bruce felt a rush of relief. *He’s fighting the red kryptonite again!*

But, his relief instantly turned to panic when Wonder Woman charged at Superman, swinging her sword. She slashed him across his chest, then Clark fell to the ground.

“Diana, stop!” Batman fired his grappling gun and swung down to the battle.

Wonder Woman stood over Clark and held the kryptonite blade in the air, about to deliver a finishing blow. At the last second, Bruce hurled a batarang at her. The batarang hit her wrist, knocking the sword out of her hand. She stumbled back, then Clark sprang up and punched her. Diana flew through the air, crashing into a large rock.

Superman turned to face Bruce, then he grimaced again and cradled his head in his hands.

“Clark?” Bruce stepped toward him.

Clark gritted his teeth as he struggled to speak, “S-Stay back. Please.”

“No.” Batman stubbornly marched closer to the Kryptonian. “I will not abandon you,” he said, his voice firm with determination. “You can fight this, Clark. I know you can.”

In the corner of his eye, Bruce spotted a red streak zooming towards them. Flash came to an abrupt stop and stood with Green Lantern, who was leaning against him for support.

“Bruce, get away from him!” Hal shouted.

Clark immediately glared at them and snarled, his eyes glowing red again.

“Back off! Don’t interfere!” Batman yelled at the other Justice League members. Then he moved in front of them, blocking them from Superman’s sight.

“Clark, calm down.” Bruce held up his hands in a placating gesture as he slowly approached the Kryptonian. “Don’t look at them. Just focus on me.”

Superman trembled while shaking his head. “I-I can’t.”

“Clark, you can do this.”

“It’s too much. Too many voices!” Clark shut his eyes and screamed, tightly gripping his head in his hands. “Shut up, J’onn! I can’t think!”

“Look at me.” Bruce stood close to him, within arm’s reach.

Clark obeyed, opening his eyes. The red glow disappeared as his eyes reverted back to their natural color. Clark stared at him with teary blue eyes, still trembling. “Bruce, I’m scared. What if I hurt you again? I can’t-”

Bruce took another step, closing the gap between them. He could see the real Clark shining through. *His Clark. “You won’t hurt me.”*

“No, no. Stay away.” Clark fearfully backed away, but Bruce grabbed his arm before he could flee.

Batman was so close to the red kryptonite now. He couldn’t let Clark get away. Not before he had a chance to remove the collar… Somehow, he needed to keep Clark’s focus while also distracting
him from his fears.

When Clark tried to yank his arm away, Bruce leaned in and kissed him. Clark froze, his eyes widening in shock. He made no attempt to escape while Bruce reached for the collar around his neck. For a moment, Bruce fiddled with the lock on the collar. Meanwhile Clark pressed against him and tilted his head to the side, returning the affection. They kissed until Bruce finally unlocked the steel collar.

In one swift movement, Bruce removed the red kryptonite from Clark’s neck and threw it to the ground. Then Clark broke from the kiss and wrapped his arms around Bruce, hugging him tightly.

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.” Clark shook as he cried into Bruce’s shoulder.

Bruce hugged him back, trying to comfort him. “It’s okay. I got you. It’s over.”

“I’m a monster.” Clark sobbed.

“Shh. No, you’re not. You didn’t kill anyone. It’s okay.” Bruce held him close and whispered in his ear, “Everything’s okay.”
Clark sat on a bed while Bruce stood in front of him, bandaging his injuries. They were alone in the infirmary, inside the Watchtower. After the fight, Luthor and the Joker were taken to a hospital, then the whole Justice League had traveled to their headquarters in space. At first, Clark had expected Batman to call for an official meeting. But instead he took Superman by the arm and led him straight to the infirmary.

With sterile water and gauze, Bruce cleaned the deep gashes around Clark’s wrists and bandaged them tightly. Clark winced slightly, but he didn’t complain about the pain. His wrists were so torn up from trying to escape the restraints in Luthor’s lab. Those handcuffs definitely contained kryptonite. Clark had some nasty wounds on his chest too, from the kryptonite sword…

After both wrists were bandaged, Bruce began ripping the material of the Superman suit, to reveal all the injuries on Clark’s chest.

“Hey-” Clark protested. Bruce may have dozens of Bat suits, but Superman only had a few of his.

“I’ll make you a new one,” Batman grumbled while ripping the suit apart.

With a sigh, Clark yanked off the shredded remains of his top. His chest was bare now, so his injuries were in plain sight. Bruce wiped the dried blood off Clark’s chest, then he started rolling sterile gauze around his torso. While Bruce worked, Clark turned his head to the side, looking away. Since Superman was rarely injured, he didn’t know much about bandaging wounds. Batman definitely had more experience with first aid. And Clark was grateful for the help… Although he didn’t feel like he deserved it.

“I’m sorry…for everything,” Clark apologized once again. “It’s all my fault.”

“No, it’s not. Stop beating yourself up over it.” Bruce finished bandaging Clark’s chest and taped down the gauze.

“I went to Arkham Asylum without telling you,” Clark confessed, clenching his fists in his lap. “I thought I could handle the Joker on my own. But I was wrong. If I wasn’t captured, none of this would’ve happened.”

“Yeah, you should’ve told me.”

Clark felt a pang of guilt as he sadly lowered his head.
“But you can’t blame yourself,” Bruce quickly added. “Luthor and the Joker are responsible for what happened. Not you.”

Violent images flashed through his mind as Clark remembered what he had done. Whenever he was under the influence of red kryptonite, everything always seemed to happen so fast. It was like a waking nightmare. He would say and do horrible things before he had any time to process it, any time to stop himself… “I almost killed them,” Clark muttered, trembling slightly. “I-I cut off Luthor’s arm.”

Bruce shrugged. “They’ll survive. Honestly, I don’t have much sympathy for them. In a way, this is a good thing.”

“A good thing?” Clark gaped at him in disbelief.

“AFTER today, Luthor will want to destroy all of the red kryptonite just as much as we do. And the Joker only had access to it through Luthor. I doubt you’ll be exposed to red kryptonite again anytime soon. And even if you are, we know how to deal with it now. You can fight its effects.”

Clark heaved a long sigh, hanging his head in shame. “But I still lost control… Everyone was in danger because of me.”

Before Bruce could reply, the door to the infirmary slid open. Clark glanced up to see Wonder Woman and Aquaman enter the room. Diana averted her gaze as soon as Clark saw her. Her eyes were red and puffy like she had been crying. Even Aquaman seemed distraught with a deeply furrowed brow.

“Hey, Clark.” Arthur shifted awkwardly on his feet. “How are you holding up?”

“I’ll be okay. I heal pretty fast.” Clark faked a smile, trying to reassure them.

“I…I’m so sorry.” Diana sniffled like she was barely holding back tears.

Clark gave her a concerned look. “You didn’t do anything wrong, Diana.”

“I almost killed you!” She screamed, her voice cracking with emotion. Tears streamed down her face as she turned and stormed away.

“I’ll tend to her.” Arthur quickly followed Diana out of the room.

They both left in a hurry while Clark watched, feeling more guilty than ever. He knew that it hadn’t been easy for Diana to keep her promise. It was never a vow that she wanted to keep. But Clark had forced it on her. When he gave her the kryptonite sword, he hadn’t given her much of a choice. He even threatened to take his own life… Diana only promised to kill him in order to save him. And after he was exposed to red kryptonite again, she kept her word and attacked him with the kryptonite sword. Because Diana was a woman of honor. She always kept her word. No matter how much it hurt her.

“I feel horrible. I shouldn’t have made her promise…” Clark felt so ashamed of himself. “It wasn’t fair to her. This wasn’t fair to anyone. None of you should have to go through this. I caused everyone so much trouble.”

Bruce watched him with a soft look in his eyes. “It’s alright, Clark.”

“No, it’s not. I could’ve killed you or our friends.”
“But you didn’t.”

“Only because you stopped me. That kiss…” Clark paused and gazed down at his hands, frowning. “I know it was just a distraction. You were trying to calm me down, right? It must’ve been really uncomfortable for you. I’m sorry you had to force yourself to do that.”

“I didn’t force myself.” Bruce huffed and crossed his arms. Then he fell silent for a while like he was hesitating. “Clark, I… There’s something you should know.”

“What is it?” Clark asked with a miserable, monotone voice.

“About a year ago, before the Joker first exposed you to red kryptonite… Do you remember what we talked about?”

“Before the red kryptonite?”

“Yeah, the day before,” Bruce clarified. “You asked me if we could be together.”

Clark felt his chest tighten as he muttered, “Of course, I remember.”

On that day, Bruce had announced the No-Dating Rule in front of the whole Justice League, then Clark had confronted him later in the Batcave. They had argued and Clark even threatened to date Lois just to prove a point. But, in the end, Bruce had surprised him when he asked for a day to think things over. At the time, it seemed like Bruce was seriously considering it. Like a relationship was actually possible. Clark had been so hopeful. It was just pathetic… How excited and happy he had been. All of those high hopes were dashed by the red kryptonite, by the horrifying things he had done.

His dark thoughts were interrupted when Bruce dropped a bombshell.

“I never got the chance to tell you, but my answer was yes.”

Clark froze for a moment, his eyes widened in shock. He couldn’t have heard that right. “W-What?” He choked slightly.

“I was going to say yes,” Bruce repeated.

Clark blinked a few times, still gaping at Bruce in disbelief. He felt like his brain had short-circuited. “Why are you telling me this now?”

“I don’t expect it to change anything.” Bruce shrugged while averting his gaze. “I just thought you should know.”

“Bruce, I… I don’t even know what to say.”

“You don’t have to say anything.”

Suddenly nervous, Clark stood and backed away from the other man. “I’m sorry. Can you, uh, give me a moment? I-I need some time to think.”

“Take all the time you need.” Bruce walked toward the exit. “I’m going back to the manor. Don’t do anything stupid.”

“Yeah, okay,” Clark agreed quickly.

“And keep your bandages clean.”
“Okay.”

For a second, Bruce looked like he wanted to say something else, but instead, he turned and left the infirmary.

SxB

“I never got the chance to tell you, but my answer was yes.”

“I was going to say yes.”

Those words kept echoing inside Clark’s mind over and over. It was like a continuous loop. He couldn’t escape the sound of Bruce’s voice. Of those words. Of what it all meant. His head was swimming with a confused mix of emotions. The joy, the sorrow, the anger… It was a bittersweet knowledge that Bruce was going to say yes. That he would’ve said yes. In some ways, it filled Clark with hope. But, it also made him want to cry and scream. Because Bruce would’ve said yes. Somehow, it made the assault even more tragic. Even more heartbreaking…

If Clark had never been exposed to red kryptonite, would he be dating Bruce right now? Would they be happy and in love? It felt like someone had reached into Clark’s chest and ripped his heart out. Just knowing what could have been. And knowing why it hadn’t happened.

Eventually, Clark left the infirmary and headed down the hall to his quarters. In his room, he changed into a clean Superman suit, then he walked down the hall again. Clark paced anxiously without any destination in mind. When he listened for Bruce’s heartbeat, he could hear the vigilante back in Gotham. Bruce was at Wayne Manor like he said he would be. Clark knew that they still needed to talk. But he wasn’t ready to face Bruce just yet. He still didn’t know what to say. Clark had to understand his own mess of feelings, before asking about Bruce’s.

He wandered aimlessly for a while until he spotted Green Lantern down the hall. Hal was leaning against the wall, staring out a window into space like he was deep in thought. When Hal noticed the other hero, he turned to face Clark and limped towards him. Obviously, Clark wasn’t the only one injured from the fight.

“Hey, Supes.” Hal tried to smile, but it looked more like a grimace. He was clearly in pain.

“I’m sorry,” Clark immediately apologized. “I’m so sorry for hurting you. If you don’t want to forgive me, I understand.”

Hal waved a hand flippantly. “Oh, stop it. I’m fine. If anything, I feel like I should apologize.”

“Hal, you don’t have to-”

“Yeah, I do.” Hal seriously met his gaze. “I’m sorry, man.”

Clark felt his eyes water as he swallowed a lump in his throat, trying not to cry.
Hal blinked in surprise. “Whoa. Are you crying?”

“N-No.” Clark sniffled, still teary-eyed.

“Oh, come on, man.” Hal panicked. “Get a hold of yourself!”

“I’m trying!”

In a blur of super speed, Flash appeared next to them. “Hey, guys.” Then he noticed Clark’s tearful expression and angrily smacked Hal. “Oh, my God! What did you do to him?!”

“I didn’t do anything!” Hal screeched defensively.

“We talked about this,” Barry fussed at him. “You said you were going to be nicer.”

“I was being nice!”

“Yeah, he was, Barry.” Clark defended the other man. “I’m just a mess right now.”

“Oh, okay…” Barry still looked worried. “Hal and I are about to head home. You can come too if you want. We’ll keep you company.”

“No, I’m fine, really. Thanks though.” Clark smiled and continued down the hall. “I’ll see you guys later.”

“Well, okay. Take it easy, big guy.” Flash called out from behind him, “If you need someone to talk to, you can always call me.”

“Thanks. Bye, guys.” Clark waved at them before turning around a corner.

He walked down a long corridor, to the other side of the Watchtower. Clark wasn’t wandering aimlessly anymore. Now he was heading toward the exit. He had decided to find another place where he could think in peace. He still had so many feelings to work through.

At the end of the hallway, Martian Manhunter was standing by the exit like he had been waiting. As Clark approached the green alien, he could feel the telepath’s presence probing his mind.

Clark glared at him. “Get out of my head, J’onn.”

The Martian instantly withdrew from his mind. “Sorry. I respect your privacy. I am merely concerned. Your last experience with red kryptonite caused a great deal of psychological damage.”

“I’m not suicidal.”

J’onn seemed to relax a bit. “That is a relief. Last time you were-”

“Last time was different.”

“Yes, it was.” J’onn agreed.

Clark shifted on his feet as he said sheepishly, “Thank you. For helping me. Without you and Bruce, I…”

“Your willpower was very strong. I believe Bruce’s presence had a much greater impact than my telepathy ever did.”
Clark shrugged. “I just didn’t want to hurt him.”

“I know.” J’onn smiled. “Your love for him is deafening.”

“What?” Clark’s eyes widened, his face heating with a blush.

“Sorry. Sometimes I can’t help but overhear.” The Martian smirked and strolled away. “I hope you seize the opportunity given to you, Clark. As the Earthlings say ‘Better late than never’.”

Clark watched the telepath walk away while mulling over his advice.

*Better late than never…*

SxB

After he left the Watchtower, Superman flew around the Earth a few times. Eventually, he landed in familiar area, in the Arctic. It was freezing cold and the wind was blowing fiercely, adding to the brutal chill. Any normal person would develop hypothermia in these conditions. But for Clark, the cold only made him feel more awake like he had taken an icy shower. It helped clear his head.

For a while, Clark walked in through the snow until he reached the Fortress of Solitude. He gazed up at the icy structure, contemplating his next move. Before the red kryptonite, Clark used to come here all the time to think. And he’d talk to Jor-El for advice. But ever since the assault, Clark had avoided this place like the plague. The last time he came here, he had brought Kara because she begged him to. Kara had spoken to Jor-El, but Clark couldn’t even stand being inside the fortress for long.

A strong gust of wind rushed by, blowing his red cape to the side. Clark stood at the entrance for a long time, staring at the door and listening to the sound of his cape flapping in the wind. Why had he come here?

*Because it’s time.* Clark realized. It was time for him to stop running from this place, from what happened here. He needed to face it head-on.

Taking a deep breath, Clark finally reached for the door and pushed it open. He stepped inside the fortress, slowly moving forward. As he walked, he gazed down at the floor where he had pinned Bruce during the assault. He remembered how scared Bruce was. How desperately he fought and screamed.

Clark felt sick to his stomach as he turned his head away, shutting his eyes. This was a mistake. He wasn’t ready to face this. He would never be ready.

“No!” His eyes shot open at the memory of Bruce’s voice. “You shut up and listen to me! I don’t hate you and I never will!” Clark stumbled on his feet, shaken by the sudden clarity of that voice. “It doesn’t matter how much you hurt me or how many of my bones you break! My loyalty isn’t that weak, you stupid asshole!”

“I know, Bruce,” Clark muttered, his mouth tugging into a small smile. “I’m sorry for being stupid.”

*Incredibly stupid.* The voice agreed.

Clark’s smile widened. Was it strange that his inner voice sounded exactly like Bruce? Was this his new way of coping? The sound of Bruce yelling at him and calling him stupid? It actually worked though.
With a newfound calm, Clark continued down the corridor, deeper into the fortress. When he reached the large computer, Clark stood at the podium and turned on his father’s A.I. program. In a flash of light, the hologram of Jor-El appeared.

“Kal-El?” His father looked surprised to see him. “How are you, my son? Are you well?”

“Yes, I… I’m okay,” Clark replied sheepishly. “I’m sorry for disappearing on you. I’ll visit more often, I promise.”

“What has happened since I last saw you?”

“Uh, a lot. It’s been a pretty tough year.”

“You can tell me anything, Kal-El.”

“I know.” He stared down at the floor, feeling lost. “It’s just complicated.”

“Perhaps, you should start at the beginning,” his father suggested.

Clark took a deep breath before revealing, “My enemies used red kryptonite against me.”

“I see…” Jor-El gazed at him with sympathy. “I am sorry to hear that.”

“I attacked Bruce. Here. At the fortress.” Clark confessed uncomfortably. “That’s why I’ve been staying away. It had nothing to do with you. I just… couldn’t be here.”

“How is your beloved now?”

“He’s doing better, I think.” Clark shrugged. “We’re on better terms, at least. He doesn’t hate me even though I hurt him.”

“Kal-El, if you were under the influence of red kryptonite, you can’t be held accountable—”

“Bullshit,” Clark hissed, suddenly angry with himself. “Today I was exposed to red kryptonite again, but I fought it. I didn’t hurt Bruce this time. So, why couldn’t I fight it the first time? Why couldn’t I stop myself?!”

“Because you will gain resistance with every exposure.”


“It is the same way with green kryptonite,” Jor-El explained calmly. “You haven’t noticed? Slowly, it will take more and more kryptonite to have the same effect.”

“So… If I’m exposed to red kryptonite again, it’ll be easier to fight it?”

“Essentially, yes.”

“Bruce is safe then?” Clark asked hopefully. “I won’t lose control and hurt him again?”

“I believe so. With every exposure, you will gain more resistance to the red kryptonite and more self-control.”

“That… That’s huge.” Clark smiled, almost dizzy with relief. “Thank you for telling me.”

“I would’ve told you sooner if you had come to me.”
He winced guiltily. “Sorry.”

“It is all right, my son. I only wish for your happiness.” The hologram still looked concerned. “Are you happy, Kal-El?”

Clark paused for a moment, unsure of what to say. “I…I’m glad that Bruce isn’t hurt.”

“How is your relationship with him?” Jor-El pried.

“Like I said, he doesn’t hate me.” Clark sighed, his thoughts circling back to what Bruce had said earlier.

“I was going to say yes.” Those words had completely thrown Clark off balance. He still didn’t know how to process it.

“Before the red kryptonite…” He said hesitantly, “Before everything went to hell, I asked Bruce if we could be together. At the time, he didn’t have a chance to tell me his answer.”

“But you know his answer now?”

“He was going to say yes.” Clark trembled as tears sprang to his eyes. “He was about to tell me yes, and I hurt him. I hurt him so badly. All this time I had no idea… I had no idea how close I was to having everything I ever wanted.”

“If his answer was yes once, maybe it will be again.”

“I know, and that should make me happy, but I just feel…” Clark stopped, choking on his words.

“Feel what, my son?”

“Like I don’t deserve him.” Clark blinked, causing tears to stream down his face. “Honestly, I still don’t know how he can look at me with anything other than hatred and disgust. I don’t know how he can trust me, how he can have so much faith in me. This time I had red kryptonite locked around my neck, and he didn’t run away. No, instead he walked towards me. He said that I could fight it. That he knew I could. He believed in me. He trusted me. How…? After everything I did, he still…”

“Kal-El?”

“It scares me. I don’t want to disappoint him or let him down.”

“You must have faith in yourself.”

Clark scoffed, “I’m not the most reliable person. Touch a stupid red rock and I’m a monster.”

“You are gaining resistance, Kal-El,” his father reminded him. “All of this self-loathing will accomplish nothing. Don’t you think it’s time for you to forgive yourself?”

“I don’t know if I can,” he admitted sadly.

“You must forgive yourself or the past will always haunt you,” Jor-El said wisely. “Tell me. Has Bruce forgiven you?”

“He…He never blamed me in the first place.”

Jor-El smiled approvingly. “I’ve always liked your beloved. Do you trust his judgment?”
“Of course, I do. But-”

“Would Bruce want you to blame yourself?” His father asked.

Clark let out a long sigh and conceded reluctantly, “…No. He wouldn’t.”

“Then, perhaps it’s time you stop.”

“It’s not that simple.”

“Yes, it is. What you need most of all is forgiveness. The kind you can only give yourself.” Jor-El said earnestly, “Believe in yourself, Kal-El. Just as your beloved believes in you. If you think you are undeserving, then become worthy. Become the man you want to be. The only one holding you back is yourself.”

That statement struck him, ringing in his ears like a bell. Clark wiped the tears off his face and straightened his back, standing a little taller, holding his head a little higher. For the first time in a long time, he felt more at ease with himself. Like he was capable of anything. *Become the man you want to be.*

“Father… Thank you.”
The First Move

Chapter Summary

Clark waits patiently. Bruce is flustered.

Chapter Notes

Thanks for reading :)
Lol, things are getting much happier

Bright green auroras streaked across the sky, illuminating the landscape. Clark stood in the snow while he watched the northern lights. For hours, he took the time to reflect on everything that has happened. Forgiveness did not come easy, but he decided to follow Jor-El’s advice. He needed to move forward. Nothing could ever change the past. But he could control his future. And he definitely learned from his mistakes.

From this point on, everything would be different. Clark knew what he wanted most in life, and he wouldn’t let the past hold him back anymore. He was determined. It may require a lot of time and patience, but his goal was clear in his mind.

Win back Bruce.

Before their relationship was derailed by the red kryptonite, Bruce’s answer had been yes. More than anything, Clark wanted another chance, another yes. He wanted to win Bruce back, and finally start a real committed relationship with him. Clark was in for the long haul. Honestly, he could see himself living the rest of his life with Bruce. His feelings had never been this strong for anyone else. There wasn’t a single doubt in his mind. Bruce was the one. The absolute love of his life.

When Clark flew back to Gotham, the sun was already rising on the horizon. He had been out all night. At Wayne Manor, Clark landed outside and knocked on the front door. When he first moved in, he had been given a key, but he didn’t have it with him. Knocking seemed like the most polite thing to do.

Soon, Alfred opened the front door and greeted him. “Good morning, Mr. Kent.”

“Hi, Alfred.” Clark smiled apologetically. “Sorry, I lost my key.”

“That’s quite all right. I’ll have the locks changed.” The butler motioned for him to come inside. “Would you like some breakfast?”

“Yeah, that would be great. Thanks.” Clark entered the manor and followed Alfred down the corridor to the kitchen.

In the kitchen, Alfred took out a frying pan and started cooking. While the butler worked, Clark stood by the counter, watching him. He wanted to talk to Alfred about Bruce, but he wasn’t sure
how to start the conversation.

“I saw you on the telly yesterday,” Alfred said unexpectedly.

“Oh.” Clark grimaced, thinking of all damage he caused in Metropolis. Of course, it had been in the news. “I wasn’t myself yesterday… It was the red kryptonite again.”

“Yes, I know.” Alfred cracked a couple of eggs and added them to the frying pan. “I heard you attacked the Joker.”

“Yeah… I almost killed him,” Clark admitted.

“Next time finish the job.”

“What?” Clark gaped at him in shock.

Alfred smirked a little. “Don’t look so mortified. The Joker is a monster, and the world would be a better place without him. You and Master Bruce are both so idealistic, sparing your enemies over and over.”

Clark frowned. “Killing is wrong—”

“Not always, Mr. Kent.” Alfred let out an exasperated sigh. “Sometimes, it is your only option. Unfortunately, Master Bruce is too stubborn to see that.”

For a while Clark watched the old man, studying him. There was something very candid about the way he spoke. It almost seemed like Alfred was talking from experience. “Have you killed before?”

“A long time ago, I was an operative in the Special Operations Executive.”

“The what?” Clark gave him a confused look.

“It was a military organization,” Alfred explained. “Also known as Churchill’s Secret Army.”

Churchill? Clark blinked in surprise. “You mean you killed Nazis?”

“I spied on Nazis, then I would kill them,” Alfred said casually while he cooked. “I never regretted it either.”

“Wow.” He stared at the butler in awe. Clark had always respected Alfred, but now he was even more impressed. The men who fought in World War II were the real deal. True heroes.

Alfred flipped the eggs over, glaring down at the frying pan. “Master Bruce may never kill the Joker, but I will if I’m ever given the opportunity.” His expression turned dark as he confessed, “Some nights, I stay up late, hoping for that monster to come here. When he does, I shall be waiting with my shotgun. Not even the Joker can survive a point blank shot to the head.”

Clark swallowed nervously. “Alfred… You’re kinda scary.”

The butler quickly schooled his features, reigning in his anger. “Master Bruce’s safety is very important to me.”

“It is to me too.” Clark shifted anxiously on his feet before saying, “Alfred, I… I need you to know that Bruce is safe with me. Even if I come in contact with red kryptonite again, I can fight its effects now. I have more self-control, and I will never attack Bruce or hurt him like that again. I
promise.” He swore as he seriously met Alfred’s gaze, desperate for the old man’s approval. “Please believe me.”

In response, Alfred merely scraped the food onto a plate. Then he handed the meal over to Clark. “I believe you.”

Clark grinned, so happy and overcome with relief. “Thank you, Alfred.”

“Enjoy your breakfast.” The butler smiled.

SxB

A ray of sunlight shone through the curtains while Bruce lay in bed, staring up at the ceiling. He had been tossing and turning all night, unable to sleep. He had stayed in the Batcave until 3 AM, waiting for Clark to return. When the Kryptonian never showed, Bruce finally gave up and went to bed. Yet he still couldn’t rest…

Because he had no idea where Clark was.

When Superman left the Watchtower yesterday, he didn’t take any communicators with him, so Batman couldn’t track him. Clark could’ve gone anywhere.

Frustrated, Bruce sat up and ran a hand through his hair. How could he rest when he didn’t know Clark’s location? It had been a mistake to leave Clark alone. Yesterday had been so hard on him. Between the kidnapping and the red kryptonite, Clark must be an emotional wreck right now. What if he hurt himself?

Bruce felt a jolt of anxiety as he jumped out of bed. He needed to make sure Clark was okay. He’d take the Batplane and fly around the whole world if he had to. He’d find Clark. No matter what.

Pulling on a black robe, Bruce rushed out his room and headed downstairs. The smell of coffee was coming from the kitchen, so he hurried towards it. With his lack of sleep, he would need the caffeine to stay awake and focus.

Bruce entered the kitchen and froze when he spotted Clark. He immediately felt relieved, but also annoyed. Apparently, he didn’t need to search the whole world. While he was worried sick, the Kryptonian was sitting at his kitchen table, eating breakfast.

“How morning, Master Bruce.” Alfred greeted him. “Would you like some coffee?”

“Yeah, sure.” Bruce muttered as he walked to the kitchen table. He sat down across from Clark, glaring at him.

Clark noticed the angry expression and smiled nervously. “Uh. Hey, Bruce.”

Alfred set down the cup of coffee. “I will take my leave. I am sure you gentlemen have much to discuss.”

The butler strolled away, leaving them alone in the kitchen.

“Where the hell were you?” Bruce growled.


“You were gone all night.”
“Oh.” Clark scratched the back of his head. “But you said I could take all the time I need.”

“Yes, but I didn’t-“ I didn’t think you’d be gone that long. Bruce crossed his arms as he grumbled, “I had no idea where you were.”

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to worry you.”

“I wasn’t worried,” he snapped.

“Uh-huh. Sure.” Clark smirked at him, obviously seeing through the lie.

Embarrassed, Bruce felt his face heat up as he looked away.

“I went to see Jor-El.”

“What?” Bruce gazed back at Clark, forgetting his embarrassment.

“That’s where I was. In the Arctic,” Clark explained.

“Oh.”

“I needed a lot of time to think, but I feel better now.”

“That’s good.” Bruce leaned back in his chair and drank some coffee. At least Clark seemed to be doing well.

“Bruce, there’s something I need to tell you,” Clark said seriously.

“Oh…” He gave Clark a suspicious look. “What is it?”

“I love you.”

Bruce almost choked on the coffee as he slammed the cup down on the table. He stared at Clark with wide eyes, surprised by the sudden declaration.

“I love you so, so much.” Clark smiled. “I never stopped loving you.”

“C-Clark, I-” Bruce faltered, trying to find his voice.

“You don’t have to say anything. I know you may need some time and that’s totally fine,” Clark said calmly. “Obviously, I want to be with you. I want a relationship. But I won’t do anything until you’re ready, I promise. I don’t want you to feel pressured. So, I’ve decided to wait for you to make the first move.”

Bruce raised an eyebrow. “The first move?”

“Yep.” Clark nodded happily. “I’m going to let you decide when the timing is right. Until then, I won’t try anything. That would be for the best.”

“Hmph. You’re that sure I’m going to make a move on you?” Bruce scoffed. “You could be waiting forever.”

Clark kept smiling, unperturbed. “I don’t mind. You’re worth it.”

His heart skipped a beat as Bruce bowed his head. He stared down at his cup of coffee, unsure of what to say. He didn’t expect to be bombarded with all of these love confessions.
“Please don’t be nervous. I really won’t try anything,” Clark reassured him. “When or if you ever decide you want a relationship, just know that my answer is yes. It will always be yes. No matter how long I have to wait. I will never stop loving you.”

Bruce felt a twinge in his chest as he tried to swallow. Suddenly, his throat was so dry.

Clark stood and walked away. “Well, I’m going to bed. I didn’t sleep at all last night. See you later, Bruce.”

While Clark left, Bruce stayed in his chair, frozen in place. His heart was pounding loudly and he felt light-headed. It took a long time to digest everything Clark had said. And, Bruce still didn’t know how to respond to any of this. The whole situation made him nervous, but not necessarily in a bad way. It was a giddy kind of excitement. Almost like he enjoyed—

No. Bruce immediately stopped that train of thought. He had been down this road before. And the first time didn’t end well. Just as Bruce predicted, their enemies had used their relationship against them. Bruce couldn’t let something like that happen again.

A romantic relationship was out of the question. Pushing Clark away would be the safest thing to do. Yet…Bruce couldn’t bring himself to do that. He liked having Clark around. He had come to depend on it, actually.

Ever since Jason died, Bruce has been clinging to the Kryptonian. He knew that it wasn’t a good idea. But Bruce couldn’t help himself. Sometimes, Clark’s presence was the only thing that could calm him down. He needed Clark. As much as Bruce didn’t want to admit it, he couldn’t live without the Kryptonian anymore. He relied on Clark too much. His mental health would deteriorate without him. Bruce needed someone to help him cope with all the fucked-up shit in his life. Otherwise, he’d lose his mind. So far, it was Clark who kept him going.

With a sigh, Bruce held his face in his hands. He still didn’t know what to do, and now he had a splitting headache. He was so tired. At the moment, he just wanted some sleep.

Lowering his hands, Bruce gazed down at the cup of coffee again. The coffee was definitely cold by now. He grabbed the cup and walked over to the sink. He poured out the coffee, then he left the kitchen, heading upstairs. On the second floor, Bruce walked past his own bedroom and continued down the hall to Clark’s room.

He slowly creaked the door open and entered. Inside the dark room, Clark was laying in bed, fast asleep. As Bruce approached the bed, Clark awoke in daze, blinking at him.

“Bruce?” Clark mumbled sleepily.

“I’m not making a move.” Bruce huffed as he climbed into the bed. “I’m just tired.”

He laid down and pulled a blanket over himself. Clark watched him, smiling.

“You didn’t sleep well without me?”

“Shut up.”

Clark laughed softly and held up an arm. “C’mere.”

Bruce scooted closer, then Clark lowered the arm around him, pulling him into an embrace.

Clark snuggled against him and whispered in his ear, “I love you.”
Blushing, Bruce hid his face in Clark’s chest, clutching him tight. He tensed as his heart fluttered again. His head was swimming with a conflicting mess of emotions. Logically, he knew that he shouldn’t be in Clark’s bed, clinging to him like this.

Yet Bruce couldn’t let go.

SxB

That night, Clark headed down to the Batcave, where he found Bruce, sitting in front of the Batcomputer. The vigilant was dressed in his full Batman garb, ready for a night of hard work. Meanwhile Clark was still wearing his pajamas. For most of the day, Clark had stayed in bed, comfortably wrapped around Bruce. It was late in the afternoon by the time they both woke up. They had eaten dinner together before Bruce ran off to the cave.

“Hey, Bruce.” Clark sat down in a chair next to him.

“Hey,” Bruce said absent-mindedly while skimming through information on the Batcomputer.

His black cape swooshed to the side when he stood and hurried away.

“You’re going on patrol already?” Clark asked.

Bruce stopped in his tracks and turned to face him. “It’s what I always do.”

“I know. I just thought you were going to take a break.”

“Hmph. Yeah, I was. Until someone got himself kidnapped.” Bruce crossed his arms as he growled, “Don’t tell me to stop watching security footage again.”

Clark held up his hands in placating gesture. “I won’t. I learned my lesson.” With a defeated sigh, he slumped in his chair while turning away. “Forget I said anything. I was just hoping you’d relax a bit.”

For a moment, the cave was completely silent. Then he heard the sound of Bruce’s footsteps approaching him. To his surprise, Bruce sat back down in the chair next to him.

“Aren’t you going out?”

Bruce shrugged and continued working on the computer. “The Bat signal isn’t up. I can’t be needed that badly.”

Clark smiled gratefully.

For the rest of the night, Batman didn’t leave the cave.

SxB

Time moved so fast. Days turned into weeks, and soon a whole month had passed. Clark liked living at the manor. He had settled into a routine. On weekdays, he’d fly to Metropolis in the morning and go to work. At the Daily Planet, Perry didn’t bother him that much anymore. After the disaster with the Joker interview, Clark was sure that Bruce had threatened the editor. Now Perry seemed to avoid Clark as much as possible. At least that made his job easier. He was also happy that Lois was talking to him again. Despite the break-up, they had managed to stay friends.

After work, Clark would fly back to Gotham, and he’d help Alfred cook dinner. For the past few weeks, he had started helping around the manor, doing various chores. He had learned a lot from
the butler. Clark could even cook lobster thermidor now, which Bruce could apparently eat every
day. It was funny. In some ways, Bruce was pretty spoiled.

At night, Clark would spend time with Bruce, either in the Batcave or on patrol. Whenever there
was an emergency in Metropolis, Superman would rush over to save his city. But most of the time,
he stayed in Gotham. At the manor, he would go to sleep in his room. Then Bruce would come
later, around three or four in the morning. Clark always welcomed him with open arms, and they
would fall asleep together in the same bed.

In the morning, the routine would start over again. It was a good life. Clark was happy. He
especially liked weekends because he could spend even more time at the manor.

Now it was a Saturday, and Clark was helping Alfred as usual. Today, the weather was nice, and
the butler had planned to work in the garden.

In the kitchen, Clark ate a sandwich, then he headed toward the side door, which led to the garden.
Before he could step outside, Bruce hurried into the kitchen, dressed in his Batman gear.

“Clark, where are you going?” Bruce fussed at him, “It’s almost noon. We have a Justice League
meeting.”

“Huh?” Clark was surprised for a moment, then he winced guiltily. “Oh, sorry. I forgot.”

“Come on, let’s go.” Bruce turned to leave.

Instead of following him, Clark glanced out a window. He stared wistfully at the garden, stalling.

“What? Do you have something more important to do?” Bruce growled in annoyance.

“No, it’s just… I told Alfred that I’d help plant the petunias.”

Bruce gave him an incredulous look. “What?”

“I don’t want Alfred to think I ditched him. Can I go help him really fast?”

“No,” Bruce snapped angrily, then he grabbed Clark’s arm and dragged him away. “We’re going to
the meeting. Now.”

SxB

In the Watchtower, Batman headed down the hallway toward the conference room. Next to him,
Superman walked silently, dragging his feet and sulking.

Bruce let out an exasperated sigh. “Forget about the fucking petunias.”

“But I want to help Alfred,” Clark whined.

“He doesn’t need your help.”

“But I like helping around the manor,” Clark complained. “And you won’t let me pay any of the
bills. So, I have to help with chores, or else I’ll feel like a freeloader.”

“You aren’t a freeloader. I invited you to stay-” Bruce stopped when a red blur suddenly zipped in
front of them.

Flash came to a screeching halt, gasping in surprise. He obviously overheard some of their
Barry grinned excitedly. “Are you two living together?”

“Uh…” Clark froze like a deer caught in the headlights.

“So what if we are. Keep your mouth shut about it,” Bruce growled and continued walking.

He stormed into the conference room with Clark trailing behind him. Then they both sat down at the round table. Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and Martian Manhunter were already seated. After a couple minutes, Flash and Green Lantern finally walked in together.

With all the members in attendance, Batman began the meeting. First, he gave a quick report on Brainiac’s whereabouts. At the moment, the alien android posed the biggest threat to the Justice League. Thankfully, Lex Luthor and the Joker were still recovering from their injuries. Those two haven’t caused any trouble since the savage beating they took from Superman. Bruce couldn’t say he felt sorry for them. It was well-deserved.

During the meeting, Bruce noticed Hal and Barry whispering to each other and snickering.

“Lantern, what the hell is so amusing?” Batman glared at them.

Hal cracked up, laughing, then he pointed at Batman and Superman. “You and Clark are shacked up together!”

_Damnit, Barry._ “I told you to keep your mouth shut,” Bruce snarled at Flash.

“I’m sorry!” Barry smiled apologetically. “I’m just so happy for you. It’s great that you two finally got together.”

Diana grinned as well, and patted Clark on the back. “This is wonderful. Congratulations.”

Arthur nodded in agreement. “Yeah, it’s about time. I'll be expecting a wedding invitation.”

“Oh, yes! I want one too!” Diana beamed excitedly.

Clark’s eyes grew wide as he stuttered, “W-Wedding?”

“This is a misunderstanding.” Batman scowled at them all.

“Y-Yeah. I’m just staying with Bruce until I find a new apartment,” Clark tried to explain.

“Oh, come on.” Hal rolled his eyes. “We all saw you kiss.”

“Bruce only did that to calm me down,” Clark argued.

“What happened with your old apartment?” Flash asked curiously.

Superman shrugged. “Well, Lois and I broke up, so I had to move out.”

Hal laughed obnoxiously. “Wow, so you stole Clark away! Way to go, Bruce.”

In a burst of anger, Bruce tightly clenched his jaw, grinding his teeth together. He had to fight the sudden urge to grab ahold of Hal and punch him repeatedly in the face. That little prick. Bruce didn’t _steal_ Clark away. _I can’t steal what’s rightfully mine!_

As soon as that thought crossed his mind, J’onn gave him a startled look. _Fuck!_ Did the telepath hear that? Bruce tried to clear his thoughts, his anger quickly dissipating. But it was too late.
Martian Manhunter was smiling at him knowingly.

Blushing underneath his cowl, Batman stood and stormed away. “Meeting adjourned.”

He fled the room, rushing down the hall. Rightfully mine? Was that really what he believed? That Clark was his? Bruce could feel his heart pounding against his ribcage as he panicked internally. His mind was screaming at him. Clark isn’t yours! You don’t own him! Another inner voice rang out. Oh, but you can. Just tell Clark you want him and he’s yours. It’s that easy.

Shut up! Bruce yelled at himself mentally. He didn’t know if J’onn was still listening. He needed to get these chaotic thoughts under control. Clark wasn’t his. They weren’t a couple. And that was the way Bruce liked it.

“Bruce, wait!” Clark hurried down the hall towards him. “I’m sorry. This is my fault. Me and my big mouth.”

With a sigh, Bruce turned to face him. “I’m not mad at you, Clark.”

“Really?” He smiled with relief.

Bruce nodded, then he fell silent for a moment, thinking of Clark’s relationship with Lois. Whenever Bruce had seen them together, they looked happy enough. “Did I really steal you?”

“What?” Clark furrowed his brow in confusion.

“From Lois…” He shifted uncomfortably. “Am I the reason?”

Clark seemed hesitant. “Are you sure you want to know?”

“Just tell me.”

Clark took a deep breath like he was preparing himself. Then he gazed into Bruce’s eyes as he confessed, “Lois broke up with me because she knows how much I love you. She said that I would always love you more than her. And she’s right. I care about Lois, but what I felt for her… It doesn’t even compare to what I feel for you.” He smiled fondly. “Nothing compares.”

Bruce froze in place, staring at him with wide eyes. His heart was racing again and he could feel a knot in his stomach, tightening. This was ridiculous. Lately, all of Clark’s confessions have had an overwhelming impact on him.

When Clark leaned close to him, Bruce stumbled back, his face burning with a blush.

“Bruce…” Clark gently cupped the side of Bruce’s face, touching exposed skin below the cowl.

“You-You said-”

Clark instantly pulled his hand away. “Make the first move, Bruce. I’ll be waiting.”

He smirked. Then he turned and walked away while Bruce watched him. Cocky bastard. Bruce wanted to feel angry, but instead he was left shaky and breathless. He held a hand up against his face. His skin was still tingling where Clark had touched him.
When Bruce woke up, he was alone in bed. He gazed across the empty mattress, frowning slightly. It was 10:30 on a Sunday morning. Usually, Clark would sleep in with him on the weekends, but the Kryptonian was missing. Not that I care.

With an annoyed huff, Bruce stood and walked into the bathroom. He quickly prepared for the day, brushing his teeth and combing his hair. Then he pulled on some casual clothes—a black shirt and a pair of pants. There was no need to dress up. He was planning to stay at the manor all day until it was time to go on patrol.

Once he was ready, Bruce left his room and headed down the stairs.

“Hey, Bruce!” Clark’s voice came from above.

Bruce froze on the stairs and gazed up at the ceiling. Clark was hovering in the air, smiling happily and holding a duster in his hand.

Bruce raised an eyebrow. “Clark, what are you doing?”

“Oh, I’m helping Alfred clean places that are hard to reach.” Clark flew to a corner of the ceiling and brushed the area with the duster.

While Clark cleaned, Alfred walked down the corridor towards them. “Mr. Kent had been quite helpful.”

“All done!” Clark flew down to the floor and faced Alfred. “What’s next?”

“Come with me.” The butler strolled away while Clark followed him cheerfully.

What the hell? Bruce watched them leave, feeling like he had missed something. He knew that Clark had been helping with chores, but now Alfred was treating him like an assistant. Clark was the strongest being on the planet. He was Superman, not a maid.

Shaking his head, Bruce headed to the kitchen. He’d never understand the Kryptonian. How could anyone be that happy to do housework? Didn’t Superman have something better to do? If he was
that bored, Batman could find a mission for him.

Although… a mission could require Clark to leave for a while. On his last away mission, he was gone for a whole week. *That’s too long.* Bruce immediately ditched the idea. Clark needed time to recuperate. A mission wouldn’t be good for him right now.

In the kitchen, Bruce poured himself a cup of coffee. He took a sip, then he suddenly felt the ground shake underneath him.

Alarmed, Bruce set the cup down and hurried outside. He rushed through the garden until he spotted Clark, holding a large tree in the air. Clark dropped the tree on the ground with a loud thud. Then he looked at Alfred expectantly.

“What now?”

The butler stood next to him, staring at the tree thoughtfully. “Chop the tree into firewood. We’ll save it for winter.”

“Okay. I’ll get an axe.” Clark disappeared in a blur of super-speed.

“Alfred, what’s going on?” Bruce stormed toward him.

“I’m afraid the oak tree had grown too close to manor.” Alfred sighed. “It’s a shame, really.”

“No, I mean why are you using Clark as free labor?” Bruce growled at him, “If you wanted the tree removed, I could’ve paid someone to do it.”

“Yes, I’m aware of that, Master Bruce. But Mr. Kent is very efficient.”

Clark quickly returned with an axe. “Aw, thanks, Alfred.”

Bruce glared at the old man. “That’s not the point. Clark is living here as my guest. He’s not your assistant.”

“Oh, come on, Bruce. I like helping around manor. It’s not a big deal.” Clark smirked mischievously. “If you want me to be official, I can get a little butler outfit and start calling you master.”

“No!” Bruce blushed at his suggestive tone.

“I think Mr. Kent would look quite dashing in a butler uniform,” Alfred declared.

“Really? Thanks, Alfred!” Clark grinned happily.

“Don’t encourage him!” Bruce snapped at the butler.

Clark laughed while Alfred smirked with an amused twinkle in his eye. Apparently, they were both having fun at Bruce’s expense. Somehow, without him noticing, Clark and Alfred had teamed up together.

“Unbelievable,” Bruce grumbled angrily as he stomped away.

**SxB**

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, researching the recent gang activity in Gotham. The Joker still hasn’t returned, but the city had no shortage of criminals. Last week, the
Riddler was stirring up trouble. Now Falcone and his goons were shipping in more illegal firearms than ever before. Batman would pay them a visit tonight. He needed to stop the next shipment.

After forming a plan for the night, Bruce leaned back in his chair, letting his mind wander. He wondered what Clark was up to. Was he still in the backyard, playing lumberjack?

Bruce typed on the Batcomputer, checking on the manor’s security system. There were several hidden cameras all over the manor, so Bruce could see everything from inside the cave. One of the cameras was outside and had a perfect view of the garden. On the computer screen, he maximized the live security footage of the garden and found Clark easily.

The Kryptonian was still chopping firewood, but now he was shirtless. Every time he swung the axe, the powerful muscles in his back would ripple. It was a sunny day outside, so the sunlight was shining on his skin, highlighting the contours of his sculpted chest and back.

Bruce swallowed while staring at the screen, captivated by the rhythmic motion of Clark swinging the axe. He loved watching the movement of those muscles. Most of the time Bruce tried to ignore it, but Clark was undeniably attractive. His body was a work of art like a sculpture of a Greek god.

“Enjoying the view?” Alfred said behind him.

Bruce nearly fell out of his chair as he quickly shut off the computer screen. He flushed in embarrassment while glaring at the butler. Alfred stood next to him, holding a cup of tea.

“Tea, Master Bruce?” Alfred gave him a knowing smile.

“You think this is funny?” Bruce hissed, “Are you ganging up with Clark just to fuck with me?”

“I assure you my motives are not so sinister.”

“And, what are your motives, exactly?”

Alfred sighed while setting down the cup of tea. “I won’t be here forever, Master Bruce. Sooner or later, you will have to live without me.”

“What?” Bruce felt a pang of anxiety as he shot out of his chair. “What’s wrong? Are you sick?”

“No, don’t worry. I’m not ill,” Alfred said reassuringly. “But I am not getting any younger either… When I am gone, I hope to leave you with someone capable.”

Someone capable? Bruce blinked in confusion. “You mean Clark? That’s why you keep giving him work. Because you’re training him?”

“He learns quickly.”

“This is ridiculous.” Bruce crossed his arms. “You don’t need to train a replacement, Alfred. I can take care of myself.”

Alfred raised an eyebrow, giving him a skeptical look. “Master Bruce, with all due respect, you could not function without me.”

“Yes, I could!” He bristled with indignation.

“Your idea of cooking is popping a frozen dinner in the microwave.”

“So what? I can buy food,” Bruce argued.
“Sometimes, you skip meals and forget to eat entirely. I have to remind you.”

“I’m just busy,” Bruce said defensively. “I dedicate all of my time to being Batman.”

“And, who cleans your Bat suits? You can’t send that to the dry cleaners.”

“I can do laundry.”

“The last time you tried to do the laundry, all of your clothes turned pink,” Alfred countered.

Bruce glared at him, grinding his teeth furiously. This was why he hated arguing with the old man. It was nearly impossible to win.

Alfred continued, driving his point home, “For someone so meticulous, you are surprisingly terrible at housework. Mr. Kent, on the other hand, is rather handy. I believe it’s due to his upbringing on a farm. I’m afraid I may have spoiled you too much in your youth.”

“Whatever! I get it.” Bruce sat down and grumpily crossed his arms as he accused, “You think I’m incompetent and I need Clark to take care of me.”

“That is not what I said at all, Master Bruce.” Alfred sighed. “I believe you and Mr. Kent are well matched. His strengths are your weaknesses and vice versa. Together you two are a very good team… But you already knew that.”

“Hmph.” Bruce huffed while looking away.

“I hope you realize how lucky you are. Mr. Kent adores you,” the butler said before walking away. For a while, Bruce listened to the sound of Alfred’s footsteps until he muttered, “…I thought you hated him.”

Alfred stopped and turned to face him. “After he hurt you, yes, I did. But Mr. Kent has assured me that the red kryptonite is no longer a problem. Is that correct?”

Bruce nodded. “Yeah, he has more control now. He won’t attack me.”

“Good. As long as you’re safe with him, Mr. Kent has my approval.”

“Your approval?”

Alfred smirked. “Isn’t it customary to ask for the father’s permission?”

“I’m not a fucking bride,” Bruce growled at him.

In response, Alfred merely chuckled and walked away. Bruce watched him leave, feeling annoyed. The Englishman was being a cheeky bastard today.

SxB

For the next few hours, Bruce sat alone in the Batcave, sulking. He worked on the Batcomputer, trying to focus solely on his responsibility as Batman. Trying, and failing… It was difficult to focus with so much weighing on his mind. Even though he didn’t want to admit it, Alfred’s approval was hugely important. The butler had raised him. Bruce always took Alfred’s advice to heart. And Alfred seemed to think that being with Clark was a good idea…

“Make the first move, Bruce. I’ll be waiting.”
The memory of Clark’s voice sent a shiver down his spine. Bruce felt his heart beating faster as he quickly stood and paced around the cave. He needed to clear his head. So what if Alfred approved? A relationship was still out of the question. Batman didn’t do relationships, and with good reason.

Frustrated, Bruce ran a hand through his hair, then he headed to the elevator. He took the secret elevator up to the manor and walked down the main corridor, towards the kitchen. He had a headache after arguing with Alfred and he desperately needed some coffee or something with caffeine. While he strolled down the hall, he spotted Clark in the laundry room, standing behind an ironing board.

Bruce stopped by the laundry room and let out an exasperated sigh. “What are you doing now?”

“I’m ironing your clothes. See. They look so much better now.” Clark proudly held up a pressed blazer, then he set it down and picked up a wrinkly white dress shirt.

Bruce remembered Alfred’s words as he angrily snatched the shirt. “I can iron my own clothes.” He threw the shirt on the ironing board, then he forcefully pressed the hot iron down on the clothing.

Clark watched nervously. “Uh, Bruce, have you ever ironed before?”

“What?” He glared at Clark.

“You’re gonna burn your shirt.”

“Shit!” Bruce quickly lifted the iron as steam filled the air.

Clark chuckled and reached for the iron. “Here. Let me do it.”

“No,” he refused stubbornly.

Clark gave him a confused look. “What’s the big deal? You let Alfred iron your clothes. Why can’t I do it?”

“Because it’s different when you do it.”

“Huh? That doesn’t make any sense,” Clark complained. “Why can’t I-?”

“Damn it! Because you aren’t a housewife!” Bruce yelled as he grabbed all of his clothes and stomped away.

While he stormed down the hall, Clark called out, “Hey! I would be a househusband! Not a housewife!”

“Same fucking thing!” He turned around a corner, escaping.

SxB

After dinner, Bruce changed into a Bat suit and headed down to the cave. He checked a few things on the Batcomputer, preparing for the night. Soon Clark entered the Batcave as well, dressed in his Superman attire.

“Hey, Bruce.” Clark greeted him happily.

“Hey.” Bruce continued to stare at the computer screen.
“So, what are you doing tonight?” Clark asked.

Bruce shut off the Batcomputer as he stood. “I’m going to stop the mafia from smuggling more guns into Gotham.”

“Cool. Can I come?”

Bruce crossed his arms. “Only if you’re quiet and don’t interfere.”

“Aw, come on. I can help a little,” Clark whined before he suddenly froze, his expression turning serious. “Crap.”

“What? Do you hear something?”

He frowned. “Yeah, I’ve got to go. There’s trouble in Metropolis.”

Bruce nodded understandingly. “Alright. See you later.”

In a burst of super-speed, Superman flew out of the cave, causing a gust of wind. His black cape blew to the side while Bruce watched the Kryptonian disappear. Then he headed to the Batmobile, ready for tonight. After all, Batman had his own city to attend to.

SxB

Exhausted, Superman laid down on the roof of a skyscraper, breathing heavily. It had been a rough night. Metropolis had been attacked by a villain called Metallo—a cyborg who used green kryptonite as an energy source. Needless to say, it wasn’t an easy battle to win. Superman definitely took some punches and his whole body was sore. During the fight, Clark considered calling for help a few times, but eventually he was able to defeat the villain on his own. In the end, the Man of Steel was victorious.

Groaning slightly, Clark sat up and hovered off the building. It was getting late, and he was ready to go to bed. He was so tired. Soaring across the sky, he flew back to Gotham, towards Wayne Manor, and entered the Batcave. He walked through the dark cave until he noticed the sound of Bruce’s heartbeat up ahead. His heart was pounding too fast like something was wrong.

Worried, Clark rushed toward the sound. Deeper in the cave, he found Bruce and Alfred, sitting at a work table. Bruce was leaning against the table, grimacing and breathing in short gasps. His cowl and the top of his Bat suit were off, revealing a gunshot wound in his upper right arm. There were medical supplies all over the table and a bottle of whiskey.

“What happened?” Clark anxiously hurried to Bruce’s side.

“What does it look like?” Bruce scoffed and drank some whiskey straight from the bottle. “I got shot.”

“The bullet doesn’t appear to be in too deep.” Alfred inspected Bruce’s arm closely. “After we remove it, you should recover easily enough.”

“Great. So, get the damn thing out,” Bruce growled, clearly in pain.

Alfred grabbed a pair of metal forceps, then he unexpectedly offered them to Clark. “Mr. Kent, I would prefer having you remove the bullet.”

“Now isn’t the time for this bullshit, Alfred!” Bruce yelled impatiently.

“I insist on Mr. Kent doing this,” Alfred persisted.

“Huh? Why me?!” Clark was so confused by this strange turn of events.

“Because Alfred is training you to become his future replacement,” Bruce said resentfully.

Clark’s eyes widened in disbelief. “What? Seriously?”

“These are skills Mr. Kent needs to learn,” the butler argued.

“Well, you can teach him later!” Bruce shouted. “Clark doesn’t know shit about first aid. If I was left-handed, I’d yank the bullet out myself. But I’m not, so I can’t. Dammit, Alfred, I need you to do this!”

“Yeah, I agree with Bruce. You’re more experienced, right? So you should do it,” Clark said nervously.

“You have two options, Master Bruce.” Alfred gave him a stern look. “Either I take you to a hospital or you allow Mr. Kent to remove the bullet. I assure you that I will give him thorough instructions.”

“Fuck…” Bruce grimaced, tightly clenching his jaw. Then he lowered his head while his messy dark hair concealed his eyes. “Clark, just do it.”

“What?! This is crazy!” Clark panicked, shaking his head. “I can’t do it. I’m sorry, Alfred, but I can’t replace you. I don’t think anyone can.”

“Clark, please…” Bruce trembled as he gripped the table with his left hand. His voice came out with a whimper, “This really fucking hurts.”

That desperate plea shook Clark to the core. He hated seeing Bruce suffer like this. He couldn’t stand it. If there was anything he could do to take away Bruce’s pain, then it had to be done.

Determined, Clark took the forceps from Alfred. “Tell me what to do.”

Following the butler’s instructions, Clark sterilized all of the equipment before he began. Meanwhile Bruce was guzzling down more of the whiskey, trying to dull his senses. When Clark was finally ready, he grabbed Bruce’s right arm and dug the thin forceps into the gunshot wound. Bruce jerked suddenly, wincing in pain. His whole body trembled as he gritted his teeth, obviously fighting the urge to scream. While Clark searched for the bullet, Alfred spoke calmly, keeping him focused on the task. Within seconds, Clark grasped the bullet with the forceps and carefully extracted it from Bruce’s arm. He dropped the bloody bullet on the table while Bruce leaned over, gasping for air.

Clark pressed some gauze over the wound, soaking up blood. Then he wrapped an arm around Bruce and pulled the shuddering man against his chest. Only with Bruce in his arms, Clark finally realized that he was shaking too. He couldn’t believe what he had just done.

“Shh. It’s okay, Bruce,” Clark whispered softly. “It’s okay.”

SxB

Around midnight, Bruce spiked a fever. He was laying in bed now, with his right arm properly
bandaged, dozing in and out of consciousness. His eyes were shut and he had a sheen of sweat on his forehead as he grimaced in pain. Clark stood next to the bed, watching him. The bullet had been removed. Wasn’t Bruce supposed to feel better, not worse? Clark clenched his fists, frustrated with how helpless he felt.

“What’s wrong? Why is this happening?” He turned to face Alfred, who was standing behind him.

“His body is fighting an infection,” the butler explained.

“But we sterilized everything.”

Alfred sighed. “Gotham is filthy. Master Bruce was probably shot in a dirty alleyway.”

“Oh, God.” Clark felt sick with worry. “So, what do we do? Should we take him to a hospital?”

“No…” Bruce mumbled under his breath, “No hospital.”

“We will treat him here, Mr. Kent. I’ll bring some medicine.” Alfred walked away.

In a couple minutes, the butler returned with a glass of water and two pill bottles. He set the glass on the nightstand, then he opened the pill bottles and handed two pills over to Clark.

“That’s Tylenol and an antibiotic. Master Bruce needs to take them both.”

“Okay.” Clark sat on the edge of the bed and slid a hand underneath Bruce’s head, propping him up slightly. “Come on, Bruce. You have to take your medicine.”

Bruce barely opened his eyes while Clark slipped a pill into his mouth and held the glass of water to his lips. After Bruce drank some water, Clark slipped the second pill into his mouth. Once he swallowed both pills, Clark gently eased his head back down on a pillow.

“I’m cold.” Bruce’s eyes were still open, but they looked glazed over like he was delirious from the fever.

“I’ll get you more blankets.” Clark stood quickly.

“Don’t.” Alfred shook his head. “Master Bruce may feel cold, but that’s due to the fever. He needs to cool down.”

“Oh, okay…” Clark deflated somewhat and sat down on the bed again. “I’m sorry, Bruce. No more blankets.”

“C-Cold.” Bruce shivered.

“I know. I’m sorry.”

To Clark’s surprise, Bruce rolled onto his side and curled up beside him. “Stay.”

Clark could feel his heart melt as he smiled fondly. “Of course, I’ll stay.”

Bruce nuzzled against him, resting his head in Clark’s lap. He slept soundly while Clark gazed down at him with love in his eyes. They stayed in the same position for a while until Clark leaned against the bed’s headboard, relaxing a bit. Bruce was still cuddled against him, laying partially in Clark’s lap. With a smile, Clark brushed a hand through Bruce’s hair, enjoying the closeness.

When Alfred headed to the door, Clark glanced up at the butler. “Where are you going?”
“I believe Master Bruce is in good hands.” Alfred gave him an appreciative look before exiting the room.

SxB

When Bruce awoke, he was laying in bed, snuggled against Clark. His head was resting on the man’s thigh. Apparently, he had used Clark as a pillow. Meanwhile the Kryptonian was still fast asleep, leaning back against the headboard, in a sitting position. That couldn’t be comfortable.

Bruce sat up as memories slowly trickled through his mind. Last night, Batman had successfully stopped Falcone’s next shipment of guns from reaching the city, but in the process, he had been shot. Bruce gazed down at the bandages on his right arm. It didn’t hurt as much now. Clark actually did a good job removing the bullet. Although Bruce was still annoyed with Alfred for using the situation as a teaching moment.

Glancing to the side, Bruce looked at the clock on the nightstand. It was 7:42 AM on a Monday. Soon Clark would need to go to his job at the Daily Planet.

Bruce grabbed Clark’s shoulder, shaking him slightly. “Clark, wake up. You have to get ready for work.”

Clark woke up slowly, blinking at Bruce. Then he instantly shot up and placed a hand on Bruce’s forehead.

“How are you feeling? Do you still have a fever?” He sounded worried.

“I’m fine.” Bruce turned his head to the side, looking away. “Thank you…for helping me.”

“Don’t mention it. I like helping you.” Clark grinned brightly as he joked, “That’s what househusbands are for.”

Bruce smiled back, unable to stop himself. “You’re employed. I think that disqualifies you as a househusband.”

“Aw, man.” Clark pouted, making a disappointed face.

“You can quit your job if you want.”

“What?” His eyes widened in surprise.

“I’d support you.” Bruce shrugged, then he stood and walked away.

Before he could enter the bathroom, Clark claimed, “I’ll only quit my job if you let me iron your clothes.”

Bruce laughed at the stupid demand. “Not happening.”

“Why not?” Clark whined.
The Teen Titans

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark visit the Teen Titans

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! I had a lot of fun on my vacation :D I went to Gyeongbuk Palace in Seoul, South Korea, and I also went to the DMZ. Apparently, they have lots of gift shops around the Northern border. LOL I also went to Tokyo, saw Mt. Fuji, and I fed the deer in Nara. I also went to a cat cafe! It was so cute!

Anyway, I'm glad to be back. Sorry for the delay. :)

P.S. For those who've watched Teen Titans, this chapter happens after the Apprentice episodes.

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, fast-forwarding through security footage. A few days ago, some Wayne Tech was stolen from a research facility in Jump City. All the security cameras near the building had been destroyed, and it took a while to salvage the lost footage. As soon as Lucius Fox recovered the security footage, he immediately sent it to Bruce with an ominous message, saying that he needed to see the evidence for himself.

Batman anxiously watched the computer screen until he saw a flicker of movement and paused the video. His eyes widened in disbelief. On the roof of the Wayne building, Dick was holding the stolen weapon in his hand and he was dressed like Slade. Instead of his Robin suit, Dick was wearing black pants and a top that was half black and half orange. On his chest, there was a metal S pinned on the orange half. Without a doubt, that was Slade’s insignia.

What the hell? Bruce played the video, then he saw Dick run across the roof and shoot at the camera with the stolen tech. The screen went black as the sound of static echoed throughout the cave. Why? Why would Dick do this?

Bruce replayed the video and watched Dick run across the roof again. Right before Dick blasted the camera, Bruce paused the security footage. He stared at the screen, studying Dick’s face. The boy was still wearing a mask over his eyes, and he also had a small black earpiece inside his right ear. Someone had been communicating with him during the robbery. Probably Slade, giving orders. That bastard!

Batman furiously clenched his jaw as he shot out of his chair.

“Clark!” he shouted. “Clark, get down here!”

In a flash, Superman suddenly appeared next to him in the cave. “What is it? What’s wrong?”
“Can you hear Dick’s heartbeat?”

Clark paused, looking confused for a moment. “Well, yeah.”

“Where is he?” Bruce demanded.

“Jump City. At Titans Tower. Why-?” Clark stared at the computer screen. “Is that Dick?”

“Yes, unfortunately,” Batman growled. “A few days ago, Dick was taped stealing from Wayne Enterprises.”

Clark gasped in shock. “Wait, he stole from you? Why would he-?”

“Look at his armor. He’s wearing Slade’s insignia.”

“Slade?”

“Deathstroke,” Bruce clarified.

Clark’s eyes widened as he exclaimed, “You mean the assassin?! Dick was working for him?!”

“That’s what it seems like.”

Superman shook his head, frowning. “No, that can’t be right. Dick wouldn’t do something like that.”

“The evidence is right here!” Batman yelled, pointing at the screen.

“Well, he must’ve been forced into it.”

“Hmph. I don’t see a gun to his head, do you?” Bruce grumbled bitterly.

“Oh, come on. You know Dick. He’d never betray you,” Clark defended the teen.

Bruce let out a long sigh. “I want to believe that...”

This whole situation was disconcerting. Either Dick had lost his way or he was being forced into crime. Of course, Bruce preferred to believe the latter, but that meant Slade had gained control of Robin somehow. Dick was probably in danger.

Batman turned to face the Kryptonian. “Take me to him. Right now.”

“You want me to fly you?” Clark asked.

“It’s the fastest way.”

“Okay. Let’s go.” Superman grabbed onto him and zoomed out of the cave.

They soared across the sky, heading west toward Jump City. Superman was carrying Batman bridal style as usual. By now, Bruce had grown so accustomed to it that it’d feel strange to be carried any other way. He impatiently crossed his arms, waiting to reach their destination. Since the sun was setting, the light was shining directly in his eyes. Bruce turned his head and rested his chin on Clark’s shoulder, curling towards him.

Clark swallowed nervously. “Uh, Bruce?”

“Are we almost there?”
“Yep!”

Superman flew down and landed on the balcony at the Titans Tower. Then he released Batman, letting him stand. The Teen Titans’ headquarters was a tall T-shaped building on an island in Jump City Bay. Bruce had never visited the tower before, but he knew the entire layout of the building. After all, he was the one who paid for the place.

Batman stormed across the balcony and kicked a door open. He barged into the living room, where he found all of the Teen Titans sitting together on a large couch. They all looked surprised to see him.

The green kid known as Beast Boy screeched loudly while Cyborg jumped up and yelled, “Holy shit! It’s Batman!”

“And, look behind him!” The Tamaranean girl pointed at Superman. “It’s the man who is most super!”

“You mean Superman, Starfire.” Raven sighed while correcting her.

“W-What are you guys doing here?” Dick asked anxiously as he stood. He was dressed in his Robin suit and he looked just as surprised as the other titans.

“We need to talk. Alone.” Batman marched toward Robin and grabbed him by the arm, dragging him away.

SxB

After Batman and Robin disappeared down a hallway, Superman was left alone with the other titans in the living room. Clark hadn’t met any of Dick’s friends before, but sometimes he heard about them in the news. So, at least, he knew their names.

Right now, the Teen Titans were gathered around him, watching him with large curious eyes.

“Uh… Hi.” Clark waved at them awkwardly.

“Oh, my God! You’re so cool!” Beast Boy screamed, teeming with excitement. “Can I have your autograph?”

“Really? Um, okay-” Clark shrugged.

“Oh, I want one too! So, I can sell it on eBay!” Cyborg added happily.

“W-What?” Clark gaped at the teens.

“Sir, Kryptonian, sir.” Starfire tugged on the sleeve of his Superman’s suit. “Is it true that your strength comes from the sun?”

He tried to answer, “Well, yeah. Sunlight-”

Beast Boy interrupted him. “Oh! Is it true that you can turn back time if you fly around the Earth really fast?”

Clark chuckled. “Heh, no. I wish-”

“Is it true that you and Wonder Woman are a thing?” Cyborg winked as he pried.
Starfire let out a high-pitched squeal. “Yes, please do tell!”

Superman shook his head. “No, Wonder Woman is just a friend.”

“Aww.” The alien girl looked disappointed.

“Hell yeah!” Cyborg pumped his fist in the air. “So, she’s single, right?”

“Pfft. Why are you asking? Like you have a chance with her,” Beast Boy sneered.

“Hey, man! Don’t crush my dreams!” Cyborg yelled at his friend.

Standing behind the other titans, Raven watched Superman with a serious expression on her pale face. Unlike her silly teammates, she seemed much more mature. “Why did you and Batman come here?” she asked.

Clark scratched the back of his head and smiled nervously. “Well… Batman needed to talk to Robin about something.”

“About Slade?” Raven presumed.

As soon as she mentioned the villain, the other three titans scowled. Their cheerful smiles disappeared immediately, replaced with somber expressions. Apparently, Slade was a sore subject for them all.

“Yes, actually,” Clark admitted. “About Slade… Do you guys know if Robin ever worked for him?”

“That wasn’t Robin’s fault!” Starfire exclaimed, her green eyes glowing with emotion.

Cyborg sighed. “Robin didn’t have a choice, man.”

“Yeah, it was totally screwed up,” Beast Boy complained.

Clark blinked in confusion. “What do you mean? What happened?”

SxB

“Slade infected the team with nanoscopic probes. He could kill all of the Teen Titans with the push of a button,” Dick explained bitterly, clenching his fists. “He forced me to steal for him. He threatened to kill my friends if I didn’t obey.”

In Robin’s bedroom, Batman stood against a wall with his arms crossed, listening to the teen’s story. At Titans Tower, each member of the team had their own quarters. Robin’s room was dark and messy with photos and clues about Slade plastered all over the walls. It was worrisome to say the least. Dick has obviously become obsessed with catching the evil mercenary.

“All of the probes are gone now. We found a way to get rid of them,” Robin continued tersely. “My friends aren’t in danger anymore. I’m sorry for stealing. It won’t happen again, I promise.”

“Why you?” Batman asked.

“What?”

“Why did Slade want you to steal for him? He could’ve done it himself. So, why did he send you?”
Dick lowered his head, looking ashamed. “Be-Because it was training…”

“Training?”

Flinching slightly, Dick hesitated before muttering, “Slade wants me to be his apprentice.”

“His what?!” Bruce exploded in outrage.

Dick raised his hands in a placating gesture. “I won’t work for him or steal for him ever again, I swear.”

“You’re damn right, you won’t!” Bruce shouted angrily. “Who the fuck does Slade think he is?! That one-eyed son of a bitch!”

Dick sighed. “Please don’t freak out. I got everything under control.”

“You call this under control?!” Bruce pointed at the photos of Slade on the wall. “What the hell is wrong with you?! You’re obsessed!”

“No, I’m not!” Dick yelled back. “I just hate Slade like you hate the Joker!”

Bruce froze, disturbed by that comparison. His war with the Joker was a huge source of grief and misery. The psychotic clown had took so much from him. He would never wish an enemy like that on anyone. If Dick’s relationship with Slade was even remotely similar… No, I won’t let this continue.

Batman grabbed Robin’s arm and yanked him out of the room. “This isn’t healthy. Come on, we’re going home.”

“What?! You can’t do this!” Dick yelled as he tried to pry himself from Batman’s ironclad grip.

“Watch me.” Batman stormed down the hall, dragging the boy behind him.

“But I have to lead the titans!”

“Forget the titans!”

When they entered the living room, Superman and the other Teen Titans all turned to watch them. Batman kept dragging Robin forward until the teen leapt into the air and kicked him in the shoulder. Grunting in pain, he finally released his ward.

“No! I can’t leave!” Robin shouted stubbornly. “I have a responsibility to my team and Jump City. I can handle Slade. I won’t run away!”

“Can’t you see that Slade is toying with you?!” Batman snarled. “He’s grooming you for God knows what! And I won’t let it happen!”

“I can handle it!”

“No, you can’t! Deathstroke is out of your league. You’re coming back to Gotham where I can keep you safe.”

“Oh, like you kept Jason safe?” Dick countered spitefully.

Stunned into silence, Bruce stared at the teen with wide, disbelieving eyes. He was mortified that Dick would say that to him. It was like a slap to the face. Did Dick really blame him for Jason’s
death? Bruce was left reeling, the shame of his failures weighing down on him.

Meanwhile the other Teen Titans all looked confused.

“Who’s Jason?” the green boy asked.

Trembling with rage, Superman stomped toward Robin, shouting, “You apologize to Batman right now!”

Dick fearfully backed away. “I-I didn’t mean-”

Bruce held out his arm in front of Clark, stopping the furious hero. “No, he’s right. I failed Jason. Robin should doubt my ability to protect him.”

“That’s not what I-” Dick tried to explain himself.

“Stay here if you want.” Bruce turned away from the teen and tugged on Clark’s arm. “Come on, let’s go.”

“Dude, seriously, who is Jason?!” Beast Boy asked loudly.

“Silence!” Starfire hissed at him.

“Man, shut up!” Cyborg snapped. “Can’t you see this is some serious Bat Family drama?”

“But I just wanna know-” Beast Boy whined before Raven sealed his mouth shut with a burst of dark energy.

“Mmph!” The green idiot fell to the floor, trying to claw the dark magic off his face.

During the kids’ antics, Batman and Superman left the living room and walked outside, onto the balcony.

“Are you sure you want to leave?” Clark whispered, “Maybe you should try talking to Dick again.”

Bruce tilted his head down, feeling miserable. “Just take me home.”

With a gust of wind, Superman suddenly grabbed him and took off, into the sky.

SxB

When they returned to the Batcave, Bruce immediately jumped down from Clark’s arms and marched over to the Batcomputer. He sat down and started typing, searching multiple databases for information about Deathstroke. He needed to know what Slade was planning. Even though Dick didn’t want his help, the brat was getting it anyway. Bruce refused to let his ward become Slade’s pawn or whatever the sick bastard had planned.

While Batman focused on the computer, Superman stood behind him, watching him.

“Bruce, are you okay?” He sounded worried.

“I’m fine,” Bruce muttered, his hands shaking slightly over the keyboard. No matter what, he had to protect Dick. He couldn’t fail again. Not again…

Clark placed a hand on his shoulder, obviously trying to comfort him. “What happened to Jason wasn’t your fault. Dick knows that.”
Of course, it's my fault. Bruce felt a searing pain in his chest as his eyes watered. “…Clark.”

“Yeah?”

“Can you leave me alone for a while?”

“Oh, okay.” Clark took his hand away. “If that’s really what you want.”

Bruce blinked the moisture from his eyes, struggling to maintain his composure. “I’m not mad at you. I just…want some time alone.”

“Okay. I’ll be upstairs if you need me.”

“Alright.”

To his surprise, Clark suddenly leaned down and wrapped his arms around him, resting his chin on Bruce’s shoulder. “And, don’t worry. I’m listening to Jump City. I won’t let anything bad happen to Dick.”

Bruce could feel the heat rising to his face while Clark held him. “T-Thanks.”

“You don’t have to thank me.” With a kind smile, Clark released him and took a step away.

Before he could leave, Bruce quickly reached out and grabbed Clark’s hand. The Kryptonian looked down at him with surprised blue eyes.

Clearing his throat, Bruce stared at the computer screen, avoiding Clark’s gaze. “On second thought, you can stay.”

Without a word, Clark sat in the chair next to him, smiling happily. Then Bruce continued to work on the Batcomputer, collecting more intel on Slade. Minutes slowly ticked by while they sat together.

And, the whole time Bruce ignored the fact that he was still holding Clark’s hand.
A Good Leader

Chapter Summary

Dick is a good leader. Bruce is a good dad.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the comments and kudos! <3 <3

At Titans Tower, Dick stood on the balcony, watching the sunrise over the bay. It was early in the morning and the other Teen Titans were still asleep. Dick couldn’t sleep at all last night. His argument with Bruce kept repeating in his head over and over. Dick felt horrible about what he said. He had blurted it out without thinking.

“Oh, like you kept Jason safe?”

That was such a low blow. Dick had regretted those words as soon as they left his mouth. Lately, Dick has felt like a complete screw-up. He was still angry at himself for letting Slade get the best of him. When the Teen Titans had been infected with the probes, Robin was forced to stay at Slade’s hideout for days. The villain had tormented him, forcing Robin to kneel and call Slade his master.

Clenching his fists, Dick could feel an overwhelming rage swell inside him. He wanted to make Slade pay. Dick wanted to find the bastard and beat him into oblivion. Thoughts of killing Slade crossed his mind, then Dick heaved a sigh, trying to control his anger. *I may be a screw-up, but I’m not a killer.*

Ever since Jason died, everything has been so hard. Leading the Teen Titans was already stressful, but Dick had been proud of his work. Then Jason died, and Dick didn’t even have time to mourn. He just went back to work. And since he had to protect his secret identity, Dick couldn’t tell the other titans what he was going through. He tried calling Barbara a few times, but she was having a rough time too, adjusting to life in a wheelchair.

*Why is everything so fucked up?* Dick sighed again and leaned back against the building, feeling exhausted. When he formed the Teen Titans, he wanted a chance to become a good leader. He wanted to step out of Batman’s shadow and prove that he could be a hero on his own and lead his own team…

At the moment, it seemed like he had failed. Obviously, Bruce didn’t think Dick was good enough to fight Slade. And that hurt Dick’s pride most of all, which was why he lashed out.

“Oh, like you kept Jason safe?”

Dick cringed, remembering those words again. He felt so guilty for saying that. He really hoped Bruce was okay. The last time Dick went to the manor, it was the day of the funeral and Bruce had
been so self-destructive, drinking way too much. What if Bruce started drinking again? It would be Dick’s fault.

Worried, Robin pulled the Bat-Comm out of his utility belt, but then he hesitated. He wanted to check on Bruce, but Dick wasn’t ready to talk to him yet. Putting the Bat-Comm away, Dick decided to try another approach.

Robin walked towards the railing and yelled, “Superman! Hey, Superman! Are you listening?!”

With a large gust of wind, Superman suddenly appeared in front of the balcony, hovering in midair. “Is something wrong?”

“I…I just wanted to talk.” Dick swallowed nervously. “How’s Bruce?”

Clark flew over the railing and landed on the balcony next to him. “He’s at home, sleeping.” The superhero frowned. “You know you should talk to Bruce, not me.”

Dick looked away guiltily. “I doubt he wants to see me right now. I’m really sorry…about what I said.”

Clark’s expression softened, easily forgiving the teen. “Of course, Bruce wants to see you. You should apologize to him in person. I can take you to him.”

“No thanks. If you take me to the manor, Bruce won’t let me leave.”

“He just wants to protect you.”

“I can protect myself,” Dick snapped. “I know I screwed up with Slade, but it won’t happen again. I can lead my team. I’m not as incompetent as Bruce thinks.”

Clark looked confused. “What? Bruce doesn’t think that.”

“He said that Slade is out of my league.” Dick sadly lowered his head as he complained, “Bruce must think I’m a failure. That I’m not good enough to lead…”

“Dick, that’s not true at all. You know Bruce is proud of you.”

“He never says it,” Dick muttered under his breath.

Clark let out a frustrated sigh. “You should really talk to him.”

“I know…I’ll do it later.”

“Well, don’t wait too long. Bruce is pretty upset,” Clark warned.

“Okay, I’ll keep that in mind.” Dick turned and walked away. “Thanks for coming.” The teen left the balcony, shutting the door behind him.

SxB

When Bruce woke up, it was almost noon. Clark had already left, off to work at the Daily Planet. After eating lunch, Bruce headed down to the Batcave. He sat in front of the Batcomputer and reviewed all the information he had gathered on Deathstroke. Then he decided to test the Teen Titan’s security system at their tower. Much to his dismay, Bruce easily hacked into titan’s computer network. Those kids really needed to be more careful. If Batman could hack in, then Slade could too.
For a while, Bruce searched through the Titans Tower’s security footage. There were hidden cameras all over the place, probably installed by Robin. Curious, Batman started rewinding the security footage, looking for anything out of the ordinary. Then he spotted Superman on the balcony and paused the video. This had been taped earlier today. What was Clark doing over there?

Bruce played the video, watching closely. Clark and Dick were talking alone on the balcony. When Bruce heard his name, he shifted uncomfortably. They had been talking about him.

Dick looked so upset on the video. “He said that Slade is out of my league. Bruce must think I’m a failure. That I’m not good enough to lead…”

Clark tried to comfort the teen. “Dick, that’s not true at all. You know Bruce is proud of you.”

“He never says it.”

Bruce paused the footage again, taking a moment to think. He knew that he wasn’t great at expressing his feelings… But maybe he should try more. Obviously, Dick had gotten the wrong idea. Of course, Bruce believed in Robin’s abilities. He was just worried.

With a sigh, Bruce leaned back in his chair. Tonight he’d have a talk with Dick.

SxB

Around 8 PM, Clark finally left the Daily Planet and headed back to Gotham. He flew into the Batcave, where he found Bruce sitting by the computer, dressed in his Bat suit.

Superman landed on the ground beside him. “Hey, Bruce. Sorry I’m late. Perry gave me some extra work.”

“I figured as much.” Batman held up a cup of coffee. “Here.”

“Thanks.” Clark smiled as he took the cup. He sat in the chair next to Bruce and drank some of the lukewarm coffee. On the desk, Bruce’s cup was already empty. Obviously, Batman had been sitting in the cave for quite a while.

“So, uh, have you heard anything from Dick?” Clark asked.

“No.”

Clark groaned in frustration. He warned Dick about waiting too long. “I talked to him this morning. He’s sorry for what he said.”

“I know.”

“Huh?” Clark gave him a confused look.

“I hacked into their tower’s security system. I saw your whole conversation with him,” Bruce explained.

“Oh…” Clark frowned slightly. “Geez, Bruce. You don’t have to spy on the kid.”

“I only hacked in to see if I could. I was testing their security system.”

“Still though…”
“What?” Bruce snarled.

“Nothing.” Clark shrank back in his chair, avoiding Batman’s angry stare.

“How? You spy on people more than I do,” Bruce said accusingly.

“No, I don’t.”

“Really? What’s my heart rate right now?”

About 70. Clark looked away sheepishly as he conceded, “Okay... Point taken.”

Bruce smirked. “Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

Suddenly, Clark noticed a sharp increase in Dick’s heartbeat. Superman shut his eyes for a moment and focused on his super-hearing. On the roof of a building in Jump City, Dick was screaming at the top of his lungs, “SLADE!”

“Hello, Robin. I’ve been expecting you,” a deep sinister voice replied.

“Teen Titans, go!”

Clark quickly shot out of his chair, worried for Dick’s safety. “Oh, no.”

“What is it?” Bruce demanded.

“The Teen Titans are fighting Slade.”

“Let’s go.” Bruce stood and placed his hands on Clark’s shoulders.

In a flash, Clark grabbed him and zoomed out of the cave. Carrying Batman in his arms, Superman soared across the sky, heading west. Soon they reached the downtown area of Jump City. Clark could see the Teen Titans on top of a nearby building, fighting Deathstroke.

Batman pointed at an adjacent building. “Land over there. Stay hidden.”

“Why?” Clark asked in confusion.

“Just do it.”

Following Batman’s orders, Superman landed on the roof of a building, behind a large billboard. Then he released Bruce, letting him stand.

“I don’t understand. Why are we hiding?” Clark complained.

“Because I want to watch.” Batman peered around the billboard, watching the battle on the other roof.

“But shouldn’t we help them?”

“Shh. We’ll step in if we have to.” Bruce kept his gaze on the fight, focusing on every move.

SxB

Robin leapt through the air, swinging his bo staff. With a loud clang, Slade blocked the attack with his own metal staff, then he kicked Robin in the chest. As Robin fell back, the other titans rushed into the fight.
Starfire fired multiple green star bolts while Cyborg shot his sonic cannon. Slade expertly dodged the attacks, doing flips in the air as he threw grenades at the teens. Two explosives hit Starfire and Cyborg, blasting them back.

Next, Beast Boy transformed into a huge green bear and charged at the villain. Using his staff, Slade whacked Beast Boy in the head, hard. The teen cried out in pain as he collapsed, morphing back to his human state.

“Azarath Metrion Zinthos!” Raven levitated large steel bars from a nearby construction site, then she hurled them all at Slade.

The steel bars crashed onto the roof, leaving huge dents in the concrete. Dodging the attack, Slade leapt onto one of the steel bars, and jumped down toward Raven. Before she could fly away, Slade grabbed onto her cloak and pulled her back. He punched her in the gut with all his strength as she gasped. Then Raven fell, clutching her stomach in pain.

“Get away from her!” Robin charged at Slade from behind, swinging his bo staff. He struck Slade in the back, then the villain swiftly jumped away and turned to face him.


“Shut up!” Robin lunged at the villain, swinging his bo staff again.

Before the staff could hit him, Slade grabbed the weapon and ripped it from Robin’s grasp. Then he punched Robin in the face. The teen fell backwards, but he quickly summersaulted and regained his footing. Screaming angrily, Robin charged at Slade, unleashing a flurry of punches and kicks. Slade blocked most of the attacks while dishing out his own. They fought at an equal pace until Robin landed a spinning kick that cracked Slade’s mask. It was a small crack, but Slade still looked furious. Robin smirked.

Suddenly, the villain took out a small metallic device and threw it behind Robin. The device dispensed a huge amount of gas which spread across the roof. The other Teen Titans all collapsed, seemingly unable to move as they coughed in the haze of orange gas.

“R-Robin, help,” Starfire pleaded weakly.

“Titans!” Robin looked back at his team, then glared at Slade.

The villain had a mischievous glint in his eye. “They are merely distractions, Robin. Shall we continue? I know how you hate to lose.”

Robin growled as he angrily clenched fists. He was so tempted to attack Slade again, so desperate for revenge. But his friends were in danger. If he wasted too much time, they could die. He had to save them even if that meant letting Slade escape.

“You aren’t worth it.” Robin ran towards his team as he reached into his utility belt. He pulled out a small device, activated it, and threw it into the gaseous haze. The device acted like a vacuum, sucking in all the orange gas from the air.

Robin rushed over to Starfire and helped her sit up while looking at his other friends. “Is everyone okay?”

“Yeah, I think so. Ugh. My head is killing me.” Beast Boy groaned, clutching his head with both hands.
“Yeah, thanks, man.” Cyborg stood and checked the scanners on his arm. “What was up with that freaky gas?”

“It was a paralyzing agent. We would’ve stopped breathing if Robin hadn’t saved us,” Raven explained as she floated in the air.

Robin glanced over his shoulder, looking for Slade. But as he expected, the villain was already gone. Slade had escaped…again.

“Thank you, Robin.” Starfire held his hand, smiling gratefully.

“No problem, Star.” Robin smiled back at her.

At least his friends were okay.

SxB

On the adjacent rooftop, Batman stood behind the billboard, still watching the Teen Titans. The battle was over, and now Robin was checking on his teammates like a good leader. Bruce smiled to himself. He hadn’t seen the boy fight in a long time. Dick was definitely getting stronger. Out of all the titans, only Robin was able to fight Slade on equal footing. He even cracked the villain’s mask. That was no small feat. Deathstroke was a force to be reckoned with. It was impressive to see a 16-year-old fight the assassin so well. In a few more years, Dick wouldn’t even need a team for back up. He’d be strong enough to take on any threat by himself.

“I’ll go after Slade.” Superman hovered off the roof, about to fly away.

“Don’t.” Batman grabbed onto his cape, stopping him.

“But I can catch Slade right now. He hasn’t gone far.”

“Let’s leave him to the Teen Titans.”

Clark landed on the roof again, looking uneasy. “Are you sure?”

“Yes. Very sure.”

“But Slade is dangerous. Aren’t you worried?” Clark asked, full of concern.

With a sigh, he admitted, “Of course, I am. But I can’t protect Dick forever… He’s growing up. He has to fight his own battles. Lead his own team. Be his own man.” Bruce smiled proudly. “I know he can do it.”

Batman walked around the billboard, then fired his grappling gun. He swung over to the other rooftop and stood in front of the Teen Titans. All the teens looked surprised by his sudden appearance. Then Superman flew over and landed next to him.

“Whoa, you two popped out of nowhere!” Cyborg exclaimed loudly.

“So cool!” Beast Boy grinned, his eyes gleaming with excitement.

Starfire waved at them happily. “Greetings! SuperBat men!”

“Uh, Starfire, SuperBat means…” Raven sighed and shook her head. “Never mind.”

Robin shifted nervously on his feet. “H-Hey, Batman. How long have you been here?”
“Long enough to see the fight,” Bruce replied.

“Oh…” Dick lowered his head, looking ashamed of himself. “I’m sorry. I let Slade get away.”

Bruce felt a surge of sympathy for the teen. He wished Dick wasn’t so hard on himself, but Bruce knew where the boy learned that behavior from. Robin was becoming more like Batman every day. “You protected your team. That’s most important.”

“But Slade-”

Bruce stepped toward him and placed a hand on Dick’s shoulder. “Don’t beat yourself up. You’re a good leader, Robin. I…” He swallowed before finally admitting, “I’m proud of you.”

For a moment, Dick gaped at him, obviously stunned by those words. Then he suddenly threw his arms around Bruce, hugging him tightly. “I’m sorry! I shouldn’t have said that about Jason. I didn’t mean it. I’m so, so sorry!” His voice quivered like he was crying underneath his mask.

“It’s okay.” Bruce patted the teen’s head, ruffling his black hair.

Dick sobbed against his chest. “I-I really didn’t mean it. I just…I miss Jason.”

“I know. Me too.” Bruce wrapped an arm around Dick, letting the boy cry on him. He should have comforted his ward months ago, but Bruce had been too crippled with his own grief. He shouldn’t have left Dick alone for so long.

“Aww.” Starfire watched the hug with glee like she thought it was the cutest thing in the world. Next to her, Superman was grinning like he agreed with her.

“Seriously, though! Who is Jason?!” Beast Boy yelled obnoxiously, then Raven slapped him.

Stepping back, Robin pulled away from the hug, looking embarrassed. He adjusted the mask over his eyes while wiping the tears off his face.

“You know you are always welcome in Gotham,” Bruce reminded him.

“Yeah, I know.” Dick nodded.

Batman gazed up at the full moon. It’d probably be another busy night in Gotham. “Well, I have to go on patrol soon. My city needs me. It seems like you have the situation here under control.”

“I do. Thanks.” Robin smiled.

“See you later, Robin.” Batman turned to leave.

“I’ll try to visit sometime soon,” Dick said quickly.

“I’d like that.” Batman smiled back at him, then he tugged on Clark’s arm. “Come on, Superman. Let’s go.”

They walked to the edge of the roof. Then Bruce glanced at Clark expectantly, waiting for a ride home. Instead, Clark was just staring at him, smiling.

“What?” Bruce snapped impatiently.

“You’re such a good dad,” Clark praised him.
Bruce felt his heart flutter as he blushed underneath his cowl. “Whatever.”

“No, really. You are!” Clark cooed, “It’s so sweet!”

“Just take me home,” Bruce grumbled in embarrassment.

“Yeah, okay.” Clark laughed happily and grabbed onto Bruce as he flew away.

SxB

On the roof, the Teen Titans watched while Superman flew away, carrying Batman bridal style in his arms.

Cyborg pointed up at the sky. “Uh, why is Superman carrying Batman like that?”

“They’re…close,” Robin replied, smiling to himself. He was glad that those two were back together.

“You mean they’re banging?” Cyborg joked.

When Robin didn’t correct him, Cyborg gasped in shock. “Holy shit! They’re really banging each other?!”

Raven rolled her eyes. “Obviously. You couldn’t tell?”

“Dude! No way!” Beast Boy shouted in disbelief.

“I don’t understand. Can someone please explain the banging?” Starfire asked naively.

“Uh… Robin, you explain it.” Cyborg slapped Robin on the back, pushing him toward her.

“Why do I have to explain it?!” Robin bristled in discomfort.

“Because you’re the leader, duh.” Beast Boy crossed his arms as he smiled impishly.

Starfire flew towards Robin, eager to learn. “Robin, can you teach me in the banging?”

“What?!” Robin jumped back, blushing brightly.

Cyborg and Beast Boy cracked up, laughing. “Yeah, Robin, teach her how to bang!”

“You’re both idiots.” Raven sighed in exasperation.
In the Batcave, Bruce stood at a work bench, tinkering on his utility belt with a wrench. He was making a few adjusts to the belt, so it could hold more gadgets. While he worked, he heard the elevator door open and glanced over his shoulder.

Alfred stepped out of the elevator and headed across the cave, carrying a tray of food. “I brought your lunch, Master Wayne.”

“Thanks, Alfred.” Bruce gazed down at the utility belt again and continued working.

Alfred set the tray down on the workbench, pushing various tools out of the way. “It is 3:30 in the afternoon and you still haven’t eaten today,” the butler nagged him.

“I’m busy. I’ll eat when I’m done.” Bruce looked at the tray and noticed a piece of paper beside the plate of food. He picked up the paper, reading it quickly. It was another invitation to the gala tonight.

He huffed in irritation and flung the paper away. “I already told you, Alfred. I’m not going.”

Alfred caught the invitation before it hit the floor. “Your father organized the first charity dinner for Gotham General Hospital thirty years ago. Your attendance would be greatly appreciated.”

“I donate money to the hospital all the time.”

“If you attend, the hospital will receive more publicity and the charity dinner will be a success.” Alfred stubbornly shoved the invitation back into Bruce’s hand. “This charity was important to your father.”

Bruce scowled at the butler, annoyed with his persistence. “I’m sick of cocktail parties, Alfred. I’m not in the mood to prance around and act like an idiot.”

“Then be yourself. Perhaps it’s time to end the playboy facade.”

*I wish I could.* Bruce let out a long sigh. “I can’t… If my personality suddenly changed, it would pose too many questions.”
“You are mourning the loss of a child, Master Bruce. If that doesn’t change a person, I don’t know what will,” Alfred said wisely.

“Yeah, I suppose.” Bruce gazed down at the invitation, still unhappy with the prospect of attending. “You know the media is going to hound me if I go. I’ll be miserable the whole time.”

“Bring Mr. Kent with you. He’ll keep you happy.”

“What? I-” Bruce faltered for a moment, then he looked away, trying to hide the blush on his face. “I can’t bring Clark.”

“Why not?”

“You know why,” Bruce grumbled bitterly. “The media will start harassing him again if they think we’re together.”

“I have seen you trick the media on several occasions, Master Wayne. I’m sure you can think of something.” The butler smirked as he turned to walk away.

Looking at the invitation again, Bruce considered Alfred’s advice. The party would definitely be more tolerable if Clark could come…

SxB

After work, Clark changed into his Superman suit and flew back to Gotham. He headed straight to the Batcave and landed on the ground, expecting to find Bruce. But the vigilante was nowhere to be seen. That was strange. It was almost 7 PM. Usually, Batman would be in the cave by now, preparing to go on patrol. Confused, Clark listened for Bruce’s heartbeat and heard him upstairs.

Flying up to the manor, Clark entered through a window and walked into the study. Bruce was sitting in a chair by the fireplace, drinking a glass of scotch. Instead of his Bat suit, Bruce was wearing a classy black tuxedo. He always looked amazing in formal attire. The tux was obviously tailored to fit him perfectly. It was very flattering.

Clark stared at him appreciatively. “You look nice. Why are you all dressed up?”

Bruce took a sip of scotch before setting the glass down. “I’m going to a cocktail party tonight.”

“Oh…” Clark felt a stab of jealousy as he envisioned Bruce attending a gala with pretty girls hanging all over him. “So, I guess that means you’re going to act like a playboy again.”

Bruce raised an eyebrow. “You don’t want me to?”

Clark faked a smile, trying to hide his discomfort. “It’s okay. I know it’s just for show. I hope you have fun.”

“Will you come with me?”

Clark’s eyes widened in surprise. “To the party?”

Bruce nodded.

“Do you really think that’s a good idea? I thought you didn’t want the media to see us together.”

Bruce stood while reaching into his pocket. He took out a laminated card and handed it to Clark. “Here’s a press pass. If anyone asks, you can say you’re interviewing me.”
Clark studied the press pass for a second. It looked authentic. His name and photo were on the ID badge, along with the Daily Planet’s logo. “Yeah, I guess that could work...” He frowned as he remembered Bruce’s playboy antics. “Are you going to make a big scene or bring a bunch of models with you?”

“I won’t if you come.”

“Really?” Clark’s face brightened.

“I’ll be on my best behavior.” Bruce smiled charmingly.

“Somehow I doubt that.”

The charming smile disappeared as Bruce snapped, “Will you come or not?”

“What’ll happen if I say no?” Clark asked out of curiosity.

“I’ll make a total ass of myself and bring an entourage of drunken hookers.”

“Bruce!” Clark screeched, completely mortified.

“Will you come?”

“Of course, I will!” Clark yelled indignantly. “It’s not like you’re giving much of a choice!”

“Great. Wear this.” Bruce grabbed a black garment bag off the couch. Then he threw the bag at Clark before strolling away.

Clark caught the garment bag and unzipped it, revealing a black tuxedo. Obviously, Bruce had been well-prepared for his answer.

That manipulative…

Clark huffed in annoyance, realizing that he had been played.

SxB

Several lights flashed from cameras as the paparazzi swarmed the entrance. When Bruce stepped out of his limo, he rushed past the crowd, heading inside the tall building. Then he took the elevator up to the ballroom, where all the guests were. Inside the ballroom, the charity dinner had already started. Affluent members of Gotham’s high society were all gathered at various tables, drinking champagne and chatting. Across the room, he spotted Clark standing alone, wearing a tuxedo and his fake press pass. They had arrived separately to avoid any suspicion.

Bruce headed towards him, but then a couple of reporters blocked his path.

“Good evening, Mr. Wayne. Can I have a moment of your time?” Vicki Vale from the Gotham Gazette smiled sweetly at him.

“For you, anything.” Bruce smirked, easily slipping into his playboy persona.

She giggled. “How generous. Thank you. I just have a few questions.”

Another reporter rudely stepped in front of her. “Where is the autopsy report, Mr. Wayne?”

Bruce raised an eyebrow. “Autopsy report?”

“For Jason Todd.” The male reporter demanded, “Why is there no official record of an autopsy?
What are you hiding?"

Bruce glared at the rude man. “I’m not hiding anything. Jason’s death was a tragic accident.”

Vicki elbowed the other reporter out of the way. “Of course, Mr. Wayne. A tragic accident. Can you elaborate on what happened exactly? I’m still fuzzy on the details.”

“I have nothing else to say about it,” Bruce growled, barely containing his anger.

“But, Mr. Wayne-”

Clark suddenly appeared and hooked an arm around Bruce’s waist. “Sorry, guys. Mr. Wayne promised an exclusive interview with the Daily Planet tonight.”

“What? That’s not fair!” Vicki whined.

“Better luck next time.” Clark smiled apologetically as he ushered Bruce away.

They headed across the room to a small table in the corner and sat down. Still irritated, Bruce crossed his arms and seethed in silence. He clenched his jaw while trying to school his features. They may be sitting in the corner, but he was still in plain sight and he needed to appear calm. An outburst of anger would only get him more attention, which he really didn’t want.

“Thanks. They’re like fucking vultures,” Bruce said through gritted teeth.

“Now I see why you wanted me to come.” Clark stared at him with sympathy. “That was horrible. How could they ask about Jason like that? Don’t they have any sense of decency?”

“Reporters are never decent.”

When Clark looked offended, Bruce quickly added, “Except you, of course.”

“Hmph. Nice save.”

“Shut up.”

Clark sighed. “You obviously don’t want to be here, so let’s just leave. I don’t like fancy parties either.”

Bruce frowned and leaned back in his chair, sulking. “If Alfred finds out I left early, I’ll never hear the end of it.”

“Alfred wanted you to come? Why?”

“This charity… It was created by my father.”

“Oh. Okay.” Clark nodded, then he smiled understandingly. “In that case, we can stay as long as we need to. I’ll keep you company all night if you want.”

His breath caught in his throat as Bruce replied, “T-Thanks.”

“No problem. But next time you ask me out, don’t threaten to bring hookers instead.”

Bruce chuckled. “I didn’t want you to say no.”

“When do I ever say no to you?” Clark smirked at him fondly.
At a loss for words, Bruce shrugged and looked away. He could feel his heartbeat quicken, and he
was sure Clark was aware of it too. The Kryptonian was still smiling at him with a look of
adoration. Feeling self-conscious, Bruce squirmed in his seat and turned his face away, blushing.
His heart was pounding even faster now. Of course, Clark could hear it!

Thankfully, a waiter passed by their table and offered them both champagne. Clark politely
deprecated while Bruce snatched a glass of champagne and chugged it. The alcohol helped with his
internalized panic, calming his nerves. He could already feel his heart rate slowing down a bit.

“Pace yourself,” Clark warned him.

“It’s just champagne.” Bruce set down the empty glass. The whiskey he drank at home was much
stronger.

Wanting more champagne, Bruce gazed across the ballroom, looking for another waiter. Then he
noticed one of the male guests standing along the wall. He was tall blond man in his late forties.
Bruce recognized him from a medical magazine.

“That’s Dr. Krause,” he said excitedly.


Bruce pointed at the doctor. “Dr. Krause. He’s a neurologist. I read about his research. He’s
developing a new surgery to repair spinal cord damage.”

“Okay. That’s cool, I guess.” Clark shrugged, still not grasping the significance.

Bruce rolled his eyes while stating the obvious, “It could help Barbara walk again.”

“Oh! Really? That would great!” Clark grinned widely.

“I’m going to talk to him real quick.” Bruce stood and headed towards the doctor. He knew that
Dr. Krause’s research was still in its early stages. It was years away from human testing. But at the
moment, the experimental surgery was Barbara’s best chance of ever walking again.

Smiling politely, Bruce extended a hand. “Good evening, Dr. Krause. I’m-”

“Bruce Wayne.” The doctor shook his hand, eyeing him critically. “Your reputation precedes you.”

“In a good way, I hope.” Bruce laughed.

“Good is a relative term.”

“Yeah, I suppose so.” He quickly changed the subject, “Anyway, I’ve heard all about your
research. It’s very impressive.”

“Thank you. I’m surprised such intellectual pursuits would interest you.”

Bruce gave him a strained smile, ignoring the thinly veiled insult. “Yeah, well, it definitely
interests me. How long are you staying in Gotham?”

“Just a week. I’ll be returning to Germany soon. Heidelberg University has offered to fund the rest
of my research.”

“If you stay in Gotham, I’ll fund your research,” Bruce offered.
Dr. Krause turned up his nose with an air of contempt. “You cannot buy me, Mr. Wayne.”

“I wasn’t trying to. I was just—”

“I am also a rich man. Not as rich as you. But I don’t need your money,” Dr. Krause said snobbishly.

_What the hell is wrong with this guy?_ Bruce glared at the strange German doctor. “If I offended you, that wasn’t my intention. Honestly, I’m just interested in your research.”

“How interested?”

“I’d offer you more money, but I’m afraid you’d take it as an insult.”

“Hmph. Very well.” Dr. Krause smirked with a sly look in his beady eyes. “I’ll accept your funding and do my research in Gotham on one condition.”

“Name it.”

He leaned in and whispered, “You let me fuck you.”

Bruce recoiled in disgust, backing away from the creep. “Excuse me?”

“Let me fuck you,” the doctor repeated shamelessly. “With your reputation, I’m sure you get this request all the time.”

“Actually, I don’t,” Bruce snarled, barely containing his outrage.

“I find that hard to believe. Everyone knows how promiscuous you are.”

“I don’t trade sex.”

“Stop being so difficult.” Dr. Krause furiously reached out and grabbed his arm. “Just bend over and take it like the faggot you are.”

“Back off!” Bruce ripped his arm away from him.

“What’s the problem? You fuck random guys all the time, so why not me?!” Dr. Krause demanded like the rejection offended him.

“Because I’m not a whore, dipshit!” Bruce yelled angrily, clenching his fists.

“No, you’re worse,” the doctor sneered. “At least a whore completes a business transaction. Everyone can have your ass for free.”

The last of his self-control snapped as Bruce threw a punch. Before he could hit Dr. Krause, Clark suddenly appeared next to him and caught his wrist. Using his super strength, the Kryptonian forcefully lowered Bruce’s arm, holding the appendage at his side. Then Clark stepped in front of him, glaring hatefully at the doctor.

“Dr. Krause, I suggest you turn around and walk away right now.”

“Who the hell are you?” Dr. Krause gave Clark a nasty look. “Oh, I get it. You’re fucking him too, aren’t you?” The doctor lunged at Bruce, shouting crazily. “You stupid faggot! You think you’re too good for me?!”
“Stay away from him.” Clark protectively stood in the way, acting as a barrier between Bruce and the vile doctor.

“Or what?!” Dr. Krause tried to shove Clark, but the Kryptonian didn’t budge.

Infuriated, the doctor charged at Clark again, trying to push him out of the way. As expected, Clark was still unmoving, then Dr. Krause lost his balance and fell on the floor.

“What the-?” Dr. Krause gazed up at Clark in confusion.

Suddenly, a group of security guards rushed over, surrounding them. “What’s going on here?”

“He pushed me!” Dr. Krause pointed at Clark.

“No, I didn’t!” Clark immediately denied it.

A security guard helped Dr. Krause to his feet while another guard faced Clark, reading his name off the press pass. “I’m sorry, Mr. Kent. We’ll have to ask you to leave. Please go willingly or we’ll call the police.”

With a frustrated sigh, Clark started to walk away. Then Bruce quickly snatched his arm and pulled him back.

“He’s not going anywhere,” Bruce hissed angrily, glaring at the guards. “I saw everything. Dr. Krause pushed Clark, then the idiot fell because of his own clumsiness.”

“Lying whore!” The crazed doctor shouted at him.

“I’m sorry, Dr. Krause. You have to leave too,” a security guard said calmly.

“This is ridiculous!” Dr. Krause stormed away while two guards escorted him to the exit.

“We have a strict policy against violence,” the security guard explained. “Since we don’t know for sure who caused the confrontation, you can’t stay here either, Mr. Kent.”

Clark nodded. “All right. I understand.”

“I just told you. Dr. Krause caused the confrontation. Clark didn’t do anything wrong,” Bruce argued with the worthless guard.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Wayne. It’s our policy to-”

“Clark is staying here,” Bruce growled stubbornly.

“Bruce, it’s okay. I’ll just go.” Clark tried to defuse the situation.

“No!” Bruce lost his temper as he blurted out, “Clark is with me. If he goes, I go. Tell that to your boss!”

The guard looked surprised. “H-He’s with you?”

“Yes!”

“M-My apologizes, Mr. Wayne!” The guard instantly bowed, looking afraid for his job. “Please stay. And, of course, your date can stay too.”
“Good. Come on, Clark.” Bruce stomped away, dragging Clark along with him.

The ballroom was silent as they walked back to their table. Nearly all the guests were staring at them now, whispering among themselves.

“Uh… Bruce, what just happened?” Clark mumbled anxiously.

Bruce snorted. “Well, apparently, we’re on a date now.”

SxB

At the table, Clark shifted uncomfortably in his chair, trying to ignore all the prying eyes. The other guests were still watching them nosily. With his super hearing, Clark could hear all the rumors spreading like wildfire. He felt like he should try to fix the situation, but he didn’t know how. Meanwhile Bruce was sitting across from him, drinking champagne at an alarming rate. He had a whole bottle now, so he could refill his own glass.

Clark sighed. “Bruce, everyone is staring at us. What should we do?”

“Fuck’em.” Bruce downed another glass of champagne and grumbled, “I don’t care anymore. I knew I shouldn’t have come to this damn party.”

“People are going to think we’re a couple.”

“Does that bother you?”

“Well… No, not really.” Clark admitted, “I’d like to be your boyfriend, so I don’t mind if people think we’re together. But I thought it bothered you.”

Bruce shrugged. “It only bothers me because I don’t want people to harass you.”

“I can handle it.”

“You sure? My reputation is complete shit. People will give you a hard time.”

“I don’t care what they think.” Clark gave him a concerned look. “Are you doing okay?”

“Yeah, just peachy,” Bruce replied sarcastically and drank more champagne. “It’s my fault I’m even in this position. I let my reputation get so bad. Now people think I’ll fuck everything that moves. I acted like a stupid man-whore, so I shouldn’t be surprised when I’m treated like one.”

Clark frowned. “Dr. Krause is a creep. You didn’t deserve to be treated like that… I should’ve let you hit him.”

“Why didn’t you?”

“I didn’t want you to get in trouble. That jerk wasn’t worth it.” Clark said caringly, “Don’t let his insults get to you. He had no idea what he was talking about.”

“Yeah, I know.” Bruce scoffed, “He thinks I’m fucking guys all the time. Hmph. I wish.”

Clark chuckled while Bruce finished another glass of champagne. Afterwards, he slammed the empty glass on the table, swaying slightly in his chair. The billionaire was getting more than a little tipsy. At this rate, he would be shit-faced by the end of the night.

“The truth is I haven’t had sex in over a year,” Bruce said unexpectedly.
“Really?” Clark gaped at him in surprise.

“Yeah, while you were off dating Lois, I wasn’t getting any. The last time I had sex was with Catwoman.”

Clark looked away uncomfortably. “Oh, yeah, I remember you telling me about that.”

Bruce poured more champagne into his glass while he spoke openly. “Having sex with her was a mistake. I called you the next day to apologize, but Lois answered.”

“You were going to apologize?” Clark gave him a confused look. “Why? You didn’t do anything wrong-”

“I rubbed your face in it even though I knew how you felt. I was an asshole.” Bruce tilted his head back, gulping down more champagne.

“I had no idea that you called… Lois didn’t tell me.”

“Of course, she didn’t.” Bruce set the glass down, scowling grumpily. “Lois wanted you for herself. She sank her claws into you the first chance she got.”

“What? It wasn’t like that all,” Clark defended Lois, then his eyes widened in shock. “Wait, were you jealous of her?”

“No.”

He smirked. “You were, weren’t you?”

“Shut up.” Bruce refilled his glass and continued drinking.

Clark watched disapprovingly. “Don’t you think you’ve had enough?”

“I’ll drink however much I want,” Bruce snapped. “God, your face is so annoying!”

“What’s wrong with my face??”

“You’re too good-looking!” Bruce yelled as he slammed his hands on the table, wobbling back and forth in his chair. “And you’re too nice all the time! And you treat me too well!”

Clark stared at him in confusion. “Uh… Bruce, I think you’re drunk.”

“Why are you so fucking perfect?” Bruce complained wildly, “Do you think it’s easy to resist you?! Trust me, I’d love nothing more than to ride your cock all night long!”

Nearby guests and waiters gasped in shock while Clark blushed brightly. Filled with embarrassment and disbelief, he struggled to find his voice as he stammered, “Bruce… M-Maybe we should talk about this somewhere else.”

“Goddamn you, Clark! Always flaunting your body in front of me!”

“What?!”

“It’s not fair! You’re so hot and-”

Clark quickly reached across the table and slapped a hand over Bruce’s mouth, silencing him. Then Clark took a deep breath, trying to calm his nerves. Within seconds, his initial disbelief
turned into hope, and then desire. So much burning desire. His whole body was tense with it, like a wire about to snap.

“Bruce, please.” Clark pleaded with him, “I know you’re drunk, but don’t tempt me like this. I don’t know if I should take you seriously.”

Suddenly, Clark felt a wet tongue against the palm of his hand. He yelped in surprise, yanking his hand away. “You licked me!”

Bruce smirked wickedly. “I’ll lick you somewhere else if you let me.”

Dumbfounded, Clark’s eyes widened as more heat rushed to his face. Part of him still couldn’t believe this was happening. The situation felt surreal, but the sound of people whispering all around the room kept him grounded. He needed to take Bruce and leave.

“That’s it. We’re going home.” Clark stood and grabbed Bruce, flinging the drunk man over his shoulder.

He hurried to the exit while Bruce swayed limply, pawing at Clark’s back. Soon, his hands ventured lower until he reached Clark’s butt.

“They’re like bongos.” Bruce playfully smacked Clark’s ass like a set of drums.

“Bruce, quit playing with my butt.”

“I’ll let you play with mine.”

Clark groaned in frustration. “Oh my God. You’re so wasted right now.”

SxB

Still carrying Bruce over his shoulder, Clark left the building and headed to the street. Lights flashed as the paparazzi crowded around them, taking photos. This would definitely be in the tabloids tomorrow. Clark quickly hailed down a cab and jumped inside with Bruce. The taxi sped away while Clark let out a sigh of relief. Then he told the driver to head to Wayne Manor before shutting the divider for more privacy.

“Everything’s spinning,” Bruce whined as he stretched across the car seat, flopping down in Clark’s lap.

“That’s because you drank too much.” Clark clenched his fists at his sides, trying his best not to touch the man splayed across him. *Bruce is just drunk. He doesn’t know what he’s doing.*

Bruce gazed up at him, looking dejected. “Are you mad at me?”

“No.”

“Good. Because I like you.”

Clark felt his heart skip a beat as he swallowed nervously. “I…I don’t know if you really mean that.”

“Of course, I like you.” Bruce gave him lopsided grin. “You’re my favorite person ever. You’re so nice, and funny, and sexy, and strong, and brave, and-”

“Bruce, stop it.” Clark trembled, his chest aching with longing. “You don’t know what you’re
saying.”

“Why don’t you believe me?” Bruce pouted and sat up in his lap, straddling him. “You want me to prove it?”

Before Clark could protest, Bruce suddenly leaned forward and kissed him.

His eyes widened in shock as Bruce deepened the kiss, slipping his tongue past Clark’s lips. Bruce tasted sweet like expensive champagne. Clark’s doubts immediately disappeared as the feeling of Bruce filled his senses, driving him mad.

Growling hungrily, Clark returned the kiss, ravaging the other man’s mouth. Bruce shuddered and moaned against him, bucking his hips forward. Spurred on, Clark kissed him feverishly again and again. But it wasn’t enough. Desire pulsed through his veins like fire.

Desperate for more contact, Clark ripped off Bruce’s tuxedo jacket and tore his shirt open, popping off buttons. He greedily ran his hands down Bruce’s chest and back. Then he leaned forward, nipping and sucking on Bruce’s neck. Bruce gasped and panted next to Clark’s ear.

“You too.” Bruce desperately clutched Clark’s tuxedo with both hands. “Want to feel you too.”

Bruce’s needy voice sent blood rushing to his groin. Clark ached with lust as he fulfilled the request, removing his own tuxedo jacket and shirt. Bruce stared at him for a moment, his blue eyes dilated and shining with wanton desire. An expression like that couldn’t be fake. Bruce really wanted this, wanted him.

Touching Clark’s bare chest, Bruce slid a hand down his pectoral muscles towards his abdomen. Then he gripped Clark’s belt and snapped it open. Clark watched eagerly as Bruce reached a hand into his pants. When Bruce groped his erection, Clark jolted with pleasure and kissed him savagely like a man starved. Their teeth clinked together as they kissed, open-mouthed and messy.

Eventually, they arrived at Wayne Manor and Clark opened the car door while Bruce followed him out, still kissing him. They were both half-dressed now, and the taxi driver had his head turned away, trying not to look at them. Clark took out his wallet and gave the driver a wad of cash. Then the taxi rushed away.

Staggering on his feet, Bruce leaned against Clark and wrapped his arms around his neck. He kissed Clark again, then rested his forehead against his, panting huskily. “Bedroom. Now.”

In a blur of super speed, Clark picked Bruce up and zoomed into the manor. He flew up the stairs to the Bruce’s room and shut the door while Bruce hooked his legs around Clark’s waist, kissing him. Clark carried him to the bed as they continued to kiss incessantly. Then he dropped Bruce on the mattress and straddled him.

Bruce gazed up at him with half-lidded eyes, breathing heavily. He looked so beautifully undone with his flushed face and disheveled dark hair. The torn tuxedo shirt barely hung on his torso, framing his bare chest. On his neck, his skin was bruised with the love marks Clark had given him. And his sinful mouth was red and swollen from all the kissing.

Reaching for him, Bruce pulled Clark closer and arched against him, grinding their clothed erections together. Clark gasped in a burst of pleasure, achingly hard.

Bruce drew a deep, shuddering breath. “Fuck me.”

Clark went stiff, hesitating while his heart pounded wildly in his chest. He wanted to fuck Bruce.
God, he wanted it so badly. But not like this…

“No. You-You’re too drunk.” Clark reluctantly pulled away and sat up, still straddling Bruce on the bed. “It wouldn’t be right if I had sex with you right now.”

Bruce rolled his eyes. “Ugh. You’re such a boy scout. Just fuck me already.”

Clark shook his head, resisting with every ounce of self-control. “No. I’m sorry, but no. I can’t take advantage of you. I love you too much, and you’re really drunk. This is something we should do when you’re sober-”

Underneath him, Bruce snored lightly with his eyes shut.

“Are you asleep?!” Clark yelled in surprise.

Bruce continued to sleep soundly, completely dead to the world.

“Oh, come on! Seriously? How could you pass out that fast?” Clark complained as he climbed off the bed. He was still painfully hard and very unsatisfied.

Damn it, Bruce! Clark gritted his teeth angrily as he stomped away. He headed down the hallway towards his own room. He could take care of his erection there. Although masturbation seemed like a poor substitute. Thanks to Bruce, he was going to be sexually frustrated for the rest of the night.

It was so unfair! Clark felt sorry for himself. Why couldn’t Bruce hit on him when he was sober? If Bruce was sober, they could be having sex right now!

“Why?!” Clark whined dramatically and banged his head against a wall in the hallway.

Unfortunately, his indestructible skull caused the wall to crack open, leaving a large dent.

Oh, no! Alfred will kill me! Clark panicked and grabbed a nearby painting. Trying to hide the damage, he hung the artwork on the wall over the large dent. Maybe the butler wouldn’t notice.

With a sigh, Clark trudged into his room and flopped face-down on his bed. He laid there in silence, lamenting the unfairness of the world.
The Hangover

Chapter Summary

Bruce freaks out

Chapter Notes

As always, thank you for reading! Love you all!

2000 Kudos! Yay!!

After years of disrepair, Zod’s spaceship had become a dank, rusting husk of its former glory. Nearly, all of its technology was useless now, except for one device—the Genesis Chamber. It was a Kryptonian machine with the power to create life. Lex Luthor has had access to this machine for a while, but only now he was prepared to use it.

Walking through the dark remains of the ship, Lex Luthor stepped into the strange yellow fluid surrounding the Genesis Chamber. Then he approached the control panel and typed on the alien keys, which had the Kryptonian language engraved on them. He had been studying this ship for a long time. Waiting and planning for this exact moment.

Today, Superman would die. Luthor had discovered a way to create something stronger than the Kryptonian, a monster that would tear Superman to shreds.

Finally, Luthor would have his revenge. Even now, his right shoulder still ached where Superman had ripped off his arm. Luthor had replaced the missing limb with a robotic arm, but the pain remained, and the damage done to his pride was irreversible. When Superman attacked him, Luthor had begged for his life. He had begged. And that alien bastard still tortured him and maimed him for life.

As soon as Luthor recovered, he destroyed the rest of the red kryptonite and began plotting his revenge. His hatred for Superman had become all-consuming. He would kill the Kryptonian even if he had to destroy the world to do it.

Reaching into his pocket, Luthor took out a test tube filled with Kryptonian blood, then he poured it into an egg-like container beside the control panel. Next he took out a knife and slashed the palm of his left hand. Luthor held his palm over the container, dripping his own blood into the machine.

The Genesis Chamber glowed ominously as the blood mixed in the egg-like structure. Soon, a monster would be born with unimaginable power. It would possess the strength of a Kryptonian and Luthor’s murderous rage. Superman wouldn’t stand a chance against the vicious beast.

Luthor grinned maniacally.

Superman was doomed.
With a yawn, Clark headed downstairs to the kitchen. He barely slept at all last night. Bruce has been plaguing his thoughts for hours, and even invading his dreams... Ever since the cocktail party, Clark couldn’t think of anything else. He was fixated on the memory of Bruce pressed against him, willing and ready. They had been so close to having sex. So close. It was driving Clark mad. He was so eager to finish what they started. Part of him wanted to barge into Bruce’s bedroom right now and fuck the man senseless. But Bruce probably needed some time to recover... He’d definitely wake up with a hangover.

In the kitchen, Alfred was standing by the stove, cooking. “Good morning, Mr. Kent. Your breakfast is almost ready.”

“Thanks, Alfred,” Clark walked to the kitchen table and sat down. A cup of coffee was already on the table, waiting for him, along with a newspaper.

Clark took a sip of coffee while he unfolded the newspaper. Then he spluttered and coughed as he read the paper’s headline. The front page was titled ‘Bruce’s Wayne Hot New Boyfriend’ and there were photos of Bruce and Clark together at the party last night. One photo even showed Clark carrying Bruce away while the drunk billionaire was playfully smacking his butt.

Blushing in embarrassment, Clark skinned over the article, reading it quickly. The article was actually very supportive of Bruce and Clark’s supposed relationship, dubbing them Gotham’s sexiest new couple. There was a whole paragraph dedicated to Clark’s physique, gushing about his ability to carry Bruce so easily and manhandle him, calling it ‘hot’. The article even claimed that they must have the ‘steamiest sex ever’.

_Ha. Yeah, I wish_... Clark sighed, hiding his face in his hands. This was so embarrassing. Now the media was making assumptions about his fictitious sex life with Bruce.

Alfred set down a plate of food in front of him. “Eat some breakfast, Mr. Kent. You have a long day ahead of you.”

“No kidding,” Clark grumbled as he lowered his hands and started eating. The food was delicious as always, but he still had a sour expression on his face.

“Mr. Kent, what happened last night?”

“Bruce got drunk, and I had to take him home.” Clark complained, venting off his frustration. “I told him to stop drinking, but he wouldn’t listen to me. He’s so stubborn. I swear taking care of Bruce is like a full time job.”

“Indeed.” Alfred looked amused.

Clark snorted and continued eating. “Yeah, you would know.”

With a smile, Alfred sat next to him and folded his arms on the table. “Thank you for your patience, Mr. Kent. I am sure Master Bruce appreciates it too. I’ll have a chat with him when he wakes up.”

Clark paused, setting down his fork. “About what?”

“How Master Bruce will repay you. Your patience deserves a reward, don’t you agree?”

“W-What?” Clark blushed, his mind racing with all the sexually explicit _rewards_ that he wanted
from Bruce. Although he doubted that’s what the butler meant.

Alfred stood and carried Clark’s dirty dishes to the sink. “Have a good day at work, Mr. Kent. This weekend, we’ll repair the drywall together.”

Clark blinked in confusion. “The drywall?”

“Last night you damaged a wall in the hallway upstairs. Don’t think I wouldn’t notice.”

“Oh, right.” Clark smiled sheepishly. “Sorry about that.”

“It’s quite alright, Mr. Kent. I understand how frustrating Master Bruce can be.” Alfred gave him a knowing smirk before cleaning the dishes.

SxB

At the Daily Planet, Clark sat at his desk, trying to ignore all the whispers and stares. Of course, all of his coworkers had seen the tabloids about him and Bruce. And since Bruce owned the Daily Planet, everyone was being especially nice to him. It was a little uncomfortable. Clark wasn’t used to so many people sucking up to him.

“Kent, you’re here!” Perry suddenly barged out of his office and rushed toward Clark’s desk. “Is there anything I get for you, my boy? Would you like some coffee?”

Clark shrugged. “Uh, yeah, sure.”

“You!” Perry pointed at Jimmy Olsen and yelled, “Go get Kent some coffee!”

“Yes sir!” Jimmy scurried out of the room before Clark could protest.

Then Perry leaned against Clark’s desk, crossing his arms. “How do you like this desk, Kent? Do you want your own office?”

“No, this is fine.”

Perry gripped the back of his chair. “What about your chair? Do you want a new chair?”

“Uh…” Clark stared at his boss, feeling awkward.

“Perry, quit it. You’re scaring him.” Lois walked over to his desk, coming to the rescue. “Smallville, you just want to work in peace, am I right?”

“Yes, please,” he agreed gratefully.

“Hmph. Fine. Kent, let me know if you need anything. And I mean anything.” Perry slapped him on the back before strolling away. “Gotta keep Wayne’s boy happy.”

Wayne’s boy? Clark frowned, furrowing his brow in irritation.

Lois giggled. “He’s treating you like the boss’s mistress.”

Clark gave her an annoyed look while she laughed even more.

“It’s not funny,” he complained. “The tabloids are wrong. Bruce and I aren’t together.”

“Oh, come on.” Lois rolled her eyes. “I know our break-up wasn’t that long ago, but it’s fine. You
don’t have to lie to spare my feelings.”

“But I’m not-”

“I really am happy for you, Smallville.” She smiled and placed a hand on his shoulder. “You and Bruce are great together. I knew you were meant to be with him.”

“But we aren’t-” Clark tried to explain again, but then he stopped himself. Instead he merely smiled at her. “Thanks, Lois.”

SxB

His head was throbbing when Bruce finally opened his eyes. The curtains were drawn, blocking most of the sunlight from entering the room. Yet it still seemed too bright. Groaning in pain, Bruce flung a blanket over his head. He hid under the covers, trying to remember the events from last night. Obviously, he drank too much. He had a terrible hangover.

Bruce racked his brain for a while until a few memories slowly returned. He remembered going to the charity dinner and meeting Clark there, then he spoke to that asshole doctor. Dr. Krause would pay for his insults later. Bruce would find a way to ruin that creep, and he’d get access to the research somehow… Bruce would formulate a plan once his brain started working again. How much did I drink?

He remembered grabbing a bottle of champagne from a waiter and then… His face burned with a blush as more memories flooded his mind. Suddenly, he could remember all of it. He had made a fool of himself! Yelling at Clark and flirting with him at the same time.

“Do you think it’s easy to resist you?! Trust me, I’d love nothing more than to ride your cock all night long!”

Bruce cringed in embarrassment as more memories assaulted him.

“Goddamn you, Clark! Always flaunting your body in front of me!”

No… Oh, God, no. Bruce smashed his face into a pillow and screamed. He wanted to crawl under a rock and hide forever. He was so humiliated by his own behavior. How could he say all of that to Clark?! He felt like such an idiot! Normally, Bruce didn’t care what other people thought of him. But Clark actually mattered!

Suddenly, Bruce remembered kissing Clark in the back of the taxi, moaning and grinding against the other man. He had been so desperate for Clark’s touch. He remembered the feeling of Clark’s hands on him, ripping his clothes and caressing his skin. The memory sent a shiver down his spine while his cock hardened. He had wanted Clark so badly. Even now, Bruce was still aching with want.

The memory of Clark straddling him on the bed came to the forefront of his mind. When he closed his eyes, all he could see was Clark staring down at him, filled with lust. Bruce had arched against him, grinding their erections together. So desperate for contact. So desperate for Clark.

“Fuck me.”

Bruce immediately sat up, hyperventilating as he panicked. Did we-? He pulled off the blanket, looking for any evidence. There was no cum on the sheets and Bruce wasn’t sore…down there. We didn’t have sex. Bruce realized with a strange pang in his chest like he was caught between relief and disappointment. These conflicting emotions confused him.
Yanking on the blanket again, Bruce hid underneath the covers, curling up on his side. He had a pounding headache and his mind was racing at a breakneck speed. What did all of this mean? What would he do now? How could he face Clark after this? Oh, God. What will he say to Clark?

*Come back here and fuck me, dammit.*

No! He couldn’t say that! Bruce squirmed underneath the blanket, cursing his own perverted mind.

There was an abrupt knock on the door. “Master Bruce, are you awake?”

“Leave me alone, Alfred,” Bruce grumbled miserably, curling in a ball under the covers.

He heard the door open anyway as Alfred entered the room. “Is there a reason why you’re hiding in the fetal position?”

“Go away.”

Alfred pulled off the blanket and set down a tray of food on the mattress. “You need to eat, Master Bruce.”

“I’m not hungry,” Bruce said petulantly as he sat up.

“Are you unwell? Maybe I should call Mr. Kent. He’ll be so worried that he may rush straight home-”

Bruce bristled at the threat and quickly grabbed the tray of food. “Fine. I’ll eat.”

The butler smiled while Bruce ate a piece of toast. “I spoke to Mr. Kent this morning. Apparently, you were quite troublesome last night.”

Bruce swallowed a mouthful of toast, shifting nervously. “Is he mad?”

“A little frustrated, but not angry. He has been very patient with you.”

“Yeah, I know…” Bruce sighed, hanging his head in shame.

“Tonight I’m going to prepare a candlelight dinner for you two,” Alfred announced unexpectedly. “Take the opportunity to talk to Mr. Kent and explain yourself.”

“What?” Bruce gaped at the butler in surprise.

“After all the trouble you’ve caused last night, I believe Mr. Kent deserves an explanation.”

“An explanation? Of what?”

“Your intentions.” Alfred crossed his arms and huffed, “Mr. Kent is not a fling. If you keep toying with that man’s heart, I will not forgive you.”

“I’m not toying with him!”

“Then tell him how you feel. No more excuses. Mr. Kent deserves the truth.”

Bruce looked away, shrinking in discomfort. “I-I don’t know what you mean…”

“You know exactly what I mean, Master Bruce,” Alfred replied sternly. “Stop being so stubborn and confess your feelings.”
The butler stormed away, leaving Bruce alone with his thoughts. For a while, he stared down at his half-eaten breakfast, feeling confused. Then he slid the tray out of his lap and laid down again. Bruce gazed up at the ceiling and let out a long sigh.

Confess my feelings? Right now, Bruce honestly wasn’t sure what he was feeling. His mind was a jumbled up mess, and it was difficult to think at all with this pounding headache. He knew that he owed Clark an apology, but he didn’t have anything to confess. Yes, he was physically attracted to Clark. That much was obvious. Especially after his behavior last night… Bruce had gotten drunk and acted like a horny idiot. But, today he would apologize and Clark would forgive him. Nothing needed to change.

Unless…he wanted things to change.

His heart skipped a beat as he remembered the smoldering look in Clark’s eyes. When the Kryptonian straddled him on the bed, Bruce had wanted Clark to take over, to hold him down and fuck him, long and hard. He would’ve let Clark do anything and everything to him, and he would’ve asked for more. Why did Clark stop?

“I can’t take advantage of you. I love you too much, and you’re really drunk.”

That was the last thing Bruce could remember Clark saying before passing out… Of course, the Big Blue Boy Scout was afraid to take advantage of him. Clark would never do anything to hurt Bruce if it could be prevented.

A warm feeling washed over him while his mouth curled into a smile. Sometimes, Bruce took Clark for granted, but he really did appreciate the Kryptonian. No one could ask for a better friend. Clark was such a great guy. He was so trustworthy, sweet, and kind. Anyone in their right mind would love him.

Wait… Bruce blinked as he pondered that choice of words. What the hell was he thinking? Was Clark really that loveable?

Shaking that thought from his mind, Bruce jumped out of bed and headed towards the bathroom. He needed to take a shower. Maybe that would help with the hangover. Clearly, he wasn’t thinking straight.

Sure, Clark is wonderful, and I want to fuck him. But that doesn’t mean anything, right?

“Oh, God.” Bruce smacked his forehead with the palm of his hand. He was doing a poor job of convincing himself. Clark was just his friend. His incredibly awesome sexy friend, who has perfect hair, amazing abs, and a gorgeous smile.

Damn it! What the fuck is wrong with me?! Bruce angrily slammed the door as he stomped into the bathroom.

SXB

Sitting at his desk, Clark worked on his computer in silence. He could still hear a few of his coworkers gossiping about him. But it was mostly business as usual at the Daily Planet. An important deadline was approaching, and Clark needed to finish his new article before the day was over.

He focused on his work, typing quickly, until he heard several screams of terror coming from the outskirts of town.
“What the hell is that thing!?”

“Run!”

“It’s a monster!”

A monster? Was Metropolis under attack? Clark immediately stood and hurried across the office. He rushed into the bathroom and yanked off his business clothes, revealing his Superman suit underneath. Then he zoomed out of the window, flying towards the terrified civilians.

After taking a shower, Bruce wrapped a towel around his waist and stormed back to his bedroom. His mind was still tormenting him, cataloging everything great about Clark. From his personality to his looks and his sense of duty, it seemed like Clark truly was perfect. But Bruce knew that wasn’t true. He tried to remind himself of Clark’s flaws, but then his brain would betray him and conjure an image of Clark’s smiling face. The man looked so damn cute when he smiled like an over-sized puppy wagging its tail.

Bruce felt his heart fluttering again. Then he placed a hand over his chest while taking a deep breath.

“It’s not love. It’s not love. It’s not love.” He repeated that mantra in his head over and over, trying to convince himself.

“This is ridiculous.” His voice wavered as he spoke to himself. “I don’t have feelings for Clark. And I don’t have anything to confess!”

He glanced at his reflection in the full-length mirror and spotted a telltale purple mark on his neck. That bastard gave me a hickey! Bruce blushed as he slapped a hand over the bruise. Memories from last night replayed in his head again, reminding him how good it felt when Clark nipped and sucked on his neck.

“Dammit. Get a hold of yourself,” Bruce hissed under his breath. It didn’t matter if he had feelings for Clark or not. Batman didn’t do relationships. He couldn’t act on these feelings. These feelings…that he didn’t have.

The door suddenly swung open as Alfred barged into the room. “Master Bruce.”

“What now?!” Bruce snapped angrily.

“You need to see this.” Alfred grabbed a remote off a dresser and turned on the large flat screen TV hanging on the wall.

As soon as the TV turned on, Alfred changed the channel to a news station. On the screen, a male reporter was sitting in a helicopter with a terrified look on his face as he spoke into a microphone.

“This is Keith Rodgers reporting live from Metropolis. Superman is still fighting the Doomsday monster with no end in sight.”

The cameraman zoomed in on the empty street below, showing Superman fighting with the monster. Clark took a hit and skidded across the ground, tearing apart concrete. The hero staggered to his feet and flew at the monster again, launching another attack. Superman punched the monster several times, but it didn’t seem to cause any damage at all. Then the monster shot a laser beam at the hero and Superman crashed into the street once again.

“As you can see, Superman appears to be outmatched,” the reporter announced fearfully. “I urge everyone to evacuate from Metropolis immediately. If Superman can’t win this fight, it could mean
the end for us all. This is a true emergency, a real-life doomsday scenario!”

_Shit._ Bruce anxiously clenched his fists while watching the TV. Was Clark really outmatched?

Suddenly, his Justice League communicator buzzed nearby on the nightstand. Bruce quickly grabbed the communicator, answering the call.

“No, it’s a situation—” Martian Manhunter said seriously.

“I know. I’m on the way.” Bruce hung up as he rushed out of the room, heading to the Batcave.
Doomsday

Chapter Summary

Superman saves the world

Chapter Notes

I'm still crying...

After another attack, Superman crashed into the pavement, creating a large crater in the street. Thankfully, this area of Metropolis was empty now. Most people have evacuated from the city. Even the news media have fled. There was a helicopter here earlier, and Clark had heard a reporter describing the fight. Apparently, the media was calling the monster ‘Doomsday’. That was a fitting name. Clark didn’t know where this monster came from, but it was strong. Too strong... Usually, Clark felt more confident in battle. But now he had a sense of impending doom.

Groaning in pain, Superman pulled himself up while the concrete crumbled around him. His whole body ached, which was a foreign feeling without kryptonite. A few of his ribs were broken, and it hurt every time he breathed. He hasn’t fought an opponent this strong since his battle with Zod. And at least Zod would take some damage. No matter how much Clark attacked Doomsday, the monster seemed unaffected. It was very concerning.

For a couple more minutes, Clark tried to rest while the battle continued. Recently, other members of the Justice League had come to join the fight. Now Flash, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and Martian Manhunter were here. The only one still missing was Batman.

Doomsday roared as it flung Flash aside and smashed Green Lantern’s tank with its fist. Next, Wonder Woman and Aquaman charged at the beast. Diana sliced the monster with her sword while Aquaman electrocuted it with his trident. Unfortunately, these attacks only seemed to antagonize Doomsday. The monster growled furiously as it attacked the heroes, knocking them both aside with one blow. Then Martian Manhunter flew at the beast and punched it with super strength. The force of the attack pushed Doomsday backwards, but then the monster fired a red laser beam, blasting J’onn away.

Despite the pain, Superman staggered to his feet, forcing himself to stand. His friends were getting hurt. He couldn’t sit on the sidelines anymore. Even if he was overpowered, he had to keep fighting until the very end.

In a blur of super speed, Clark zoomed toward Doomsday and screamed as he hit the monster over and over. Doomsday stumbled back while Superman pushed forward, still attacking. For a moment, Clark felt hopeful, then Doomsday suddenly punched him in the abdomen. All of the air was knocked out of his lungs as Clark doubled over with pain. He couldn’t breathe and his vision was starting to blur.

Doomsday grabbed onto Clark’s head, holding his limp body in the air. Then the monster’s eyes
glowed red, preparing another blast. Clark didn’t know if he could withstand the lasers at this close range.

Suddenly, a barrage of bullets rained down on the monster. Doomsday growled as it stared up at the sky. Above them, the Batplane was soaring towards the battlefield, shooting a thousand rounds of ammunition. As the plane approached, Batman leapt out, wearing a parachute.

During his descent, Batman hurled a green batarang at Doomsday. The batarang exploded as soon as it hit the monster, releasing kryptonite shrapnel. Doomsday howled in agony while letting go of Clark.

Bruce quickly landed on the ground, then he ran towards Clark and grabbed his arm. “Come on!”

While they hurried away, Batman reached into his utility belt and threw a smoke bomb, which unleashed a cloud of kryptonite dust. Doomsday let out a horrible wail, obviously in pain.

After they distanced themselves from the monster, Clark collapsed and sat on the ground, too exhausted to stand. Soon, the other Justice League members gathered around them, watching Doomsday from afar.

“So, kryptonite hurts it?” Flash looked surprised.

“That thing is Kryptonian?!” Hal yelled in disbelief.

“Of course, it is. What else could explain its strength?” Batman reached into his utility belt again and took out several green batarangs, passing them out. “Here. Take these weapons. Diana, do you still have the kryptonite sword?”

“Yes, it’s in my jet. I’ll go retrieve it.” Wonder Woman dashed away.

“I’ll take care of Superman.” Batman seriously addressed the others, “All of you, attack Doomsday with everything you’ve got. Take him down!”

“Yes sir!” Flash grinned and zoomed away.

“Hell yeah! Let’s kill that fucker!” Green Lantern eagerly flew off.

Then Aquaman and Martian Manhunter also rushed back to the battle, leaving Batman and Superman behind.

“I have to help them.” Clark grimaced as he tried to stand.

Bruce kneeled beside him. “No, stay down. You’re hurt.”

“I can still fight.”

“Stay down.” Bruce grabbed his shoulder, glaring at him. “You need to rest. Let me look at your injuries.”

When Bruce pressed down on his chest, Clark flinched in pain. Bruce hesitated for a moment before he continued assessing with a gentler touch. He carefully felt around Clark’s ribcage, searching for any fractures.

“Three of your ribs are broken,” Bruce muttered softly like he was surprised.

“Bruce…” Clark gazed at him wistfully. “About last night-”
“Do you really think *now* is the right time to talk about that?” Bruce snapped in irritation.

“This could be my last chance.”

Bruce froze, looking disturbed. “What? Don’t say that. This isn’t the end.”

“What if it is?”

“It’s not! You have the rest of your life to annoy me.”

Clark gave him a small smile. “Heh, you think we’ll grow old together?”

“Sure. Why not?”

“I’d like that.” Tears sprang to his eyes as Clark spoke candidly, “You know how much I love you, right? I really, truly love you. And I’m grateful for all the time we’ve spent together.”

Bruce trembled as he shouted, “Shut up! This isn’t goodbye!”

Clark merely smiled, his eyes shining with unshed tears.

*I hope you’re right, Bruce.* Clark wanted to have more faith, but he had a bad feeling about this battle. A feeling that he couldn’t ignore… Like he could sense the end coming.

When he heard a loud scream, Clark glanced over at the battle. Green Lantern and Aquaman both crashed into the street while Flash zoomed over to Hal. Barry was the one screaming as he kneeled beside his wounded lover, panicking. Martian Manhunter and Wonder Woman were still attacking Doomsday. J’onn whacked the monster with a green batarang and punched the kryptonite into its skin. Meanwhile Diana attacked with the kryptonite sword, slashing Doomsday repeatedly.

Suddenly, Doomsday tilted its head back and roared. The ground shook as a red laser shot out of the monster, blasting J’onn and Diana away. The ear-piercing howl continued while a red glow surrounded the monster, melting nearby rubble and catching debris on fire.

The heroes quickly retreated from the deadly red glow, and regrouped next to Batman and Superman, watching Doomsday at a safe distance. They all looked worn-out and exhausted. Wonder Woman and Aquaman were both panting, trying to catch their breath. Green Lantern was leaning heavily against Flash with an arm over his shoulders. Even Martian Manhunter seemed fatigued as he watched the burning debris, obviously troubled by the flames.

“We can’t get any closer. We’ll burn up,” Flash said anxiously.

“Doomsday is emitting some kind of radiation,” Martian Manhunter explained.

Aquaman growled angrily, “How are we supposed to attack if we can’t get near him?”

The ground shook again as Doomsday’s roar amplified. Then a red beam of light shot into the sky and began expanding.

“What the hell is it doing now?!” Hal yelled.

“That blast…” J’onn looked horrified. “It has enough power to destroy the entire planet.”

“We must stop it!” Diana shouted frantically.

“How?!” Arthur snapped. “We can’t withstand the radiation!”
“I can.” Superman stood, stumbling slightly on his feet. “I’m the only one who can get close enough to attack. Give me the sword.” He faced Diana and stretched out his hand.

Wonder Woman sheathed the kryptonite blade, hesitating. “But this sword… It’ll weaken you too. This is suicide.”

“You heard J’onn!” Clark yelled desperately, “The whole world is at stake! This is the only way.”

“No, it’s not!” Bruce shouted at him. “We can think of something else!”

“There’s no time!” Clark insisted, “Diana, give me the sword.”

She sadly gazed down at the weapon. “Is there truly no other way?”

“No, I won’t let you do this!” Batman reached into his utility belt, then Aquaman suddenly grabbed him, pinning both of his arms behind his back.

“Get off of me!” Bruce screamed and kicked while Arthur held him back with his superior strength.

“We’re counting on you, Superman. Save the world,” Aquaman said seriously.

Clark took the sword from Diana.

“No! Don’t do this! Don’t go!” Bruce yelled, his voice piercing with fear.

“I’m sorry, Bruce.” Clark gave him one last smile. “I love you.”

With a sonic boom, Superman launched himself into the sky, zooming towards Doomsday. As he flew, he could hear Bruce’s voice screaming, “CLARK!”

Ahead of him, the red beam of light was still expanding dangerously while Doomsday roared. Superman had to stop this monster. That blast could destroy the Earth. It could kill everyone, including his friends and family, including Bruce…

Drawing the kryptonite sword, Clark yelled as he plunged the blade into Doomsday. The red beam of light instantly disappeared while the monster gasped for air. For a split-second, Clark felt relieved. Then he felt something sharp stab him in the chest. His eyes widened as he stared down at the monster’s spike impaling him.

Clark drew a final breath before shutting his eyes.

SxB

As soon as the red beam of light vanished from the sky, Bruce knew that it was too late. Superman had reached his target. In the distance, Bruce could see the outline of Clark’s body hanging limply in the air, pierced with a spike. When Doomsday fell, Superman fell as well, sliding off the spike and collapsing on the ground.

“Let go…” Bruce shook as he ripped his arms away from Arthur. “Damn it! Let go of me!”

He dashed across the destroyed street, zigzagging around all the rubble and debris. His heart was pounding so fast that Bruce felt light-headed and weightless. He couldn’t even feel his legs as he ran.

When he reached Clark, Bruce skidded across the ground, kneeling next to him. Clark’s body was
still and lifeless. His eyes were shut and he had a gaping hole in his chest, right over the Superman symbol. That red S, which stood for hope…

Terrified, Bruce grabbed onto Clark and shook him. “Clark! Clark, can you hear me?!”

When Clark didn’t respond, Bruce leaned down, resting the top of his cowl against Clark’s shoulder. His whole body trembled as he clutched the fabric of the tattered Superman suit. Tears welled in his eyes, blurring his vision and threatening to spill down his face.

Soon, the other members of Justice League rushed over, surrounding them. Diana kneeled on the ground beside Clark and placed her hand on his neck.

“There’s no pulse,” she said while sobbing.

“Oh, God!” Barry cried as he hugged Hal, hiding his face in the other man’s chest.

Bruce raised his head, gazing down at Clark’s pale, expressionless face. This was wrong. This was so wrong. Bruce clenched his fists as he growled, “No. He’s not dead.”

Arthur placed a hand on his shoulder. “I’m sorry, Batman. He’s gone.”

Bruce instantly jumped to his feet and punched Aquaman in the face. “Fuck off! You piece of shit! I could’ve stopped this!”

Arthur stumbled back and yelled, “And let Doomsday destroy the world?! Superman did what was necessary. His sacrifice—”

“He’s not dead!” Bruce shouted, trembling with anger.

Barry sobbed loudly while Hal pleaded, “Bruce, just stop.”

“I can’t sense him telepathically. I’m sorry, but Superman is dead,” J’onn said solemnly.

“No, he’s not!” Bruce screamed at the top of his lungs, “He’s not dead until I say he’s dead!”

J’onn backed away from him, looking alarmed. Meanwhile Arthur watched him warily like he thought Bruce was dangerous and unstable. Behind him, Bruce could hear Hal, Barry, and Diana all crying hysterically.

Bruce turned around, gazing down at Clark again. “He’s not…”

Tears finally streamed down his face as he fell to his knees. “He’s not,” Bruce whimpered while leaning down, resting his forehead against Clark’s. “He’s not.”

SxB

At the Watchtower, Aquaman, Wonder Woman, Martian Manhunter, Green Lantern, and Flash all sat in the conference room. Only Batman and Superman were missing from the round table. The fight with Doomsday had ended hours ago, and now the Justice League was having a meeting to decide what to do. Usually Batman and Superman would lead the team. But neither of them were available… At the moment, Clark’s body was laying in the infirmary. And, Bruce refused to leave the dead man’s side.

That was probably for the best. Batman seemed too volatile to attend the meeting anyway. He had already attacked Aquaman once. Arthur really didn’t want to fight him. Bruce was grieving and Arthur understood that. But at the same time, the Atlantean king would still defend himself if
necessary.

The heroes all sat in silence, looking miserable. Then Aquaman finally started the meeting, “As painful as this is, we have to move forward. Superman fought valiantly and he saved us all. His sacrifice will always be remembered. But now, the Justice League needs a new leader. What shall we do?”

“Batman should lead. That is what Clark would’ve wanted,” Diana said sadly.

J’onn nodded. “I agree. Batman is an excellent leader.”

“Yeah, Bruce should lead,” Hal said approvingly.

“Yeah, definitely,” Barry agreed while rubbing at his tearful eyes.

Arthur frowned. “I’m not sure that is a good idea. Batman is too unstable to lead right now. He still won’t admit that Superman is dead.”

“Denial is the first stage of grief,” J’onn said with a sigh. “Perhaps, we should give Bruce more time before giving him so much responsibility.”

“Very well.” Wonder Woman announced, “I shall lead until Batman is ready.”

“Sure. Sounds good.” Hal slumped in his chair, looking depressed.

“Yeah, Bruce could use a break.” Barry gave her a small smile. “We all know you’re a good leader too, Diana.”

“We’re all in agreement, then?” Aquaman clarified, “Wonder Woman will lead the Justice League until Batman is more emotionally stable.”

The other heroes all nodded.

SxB

In the infirmary, Clark was laying motionlessly on a bed. He looked so pale, and he wasn’t breathing at all. He didn’t have a pulse either. He seemed dead. Logically, Bruce knew that. But he still couldn’t believe it… He must be missing something. Kryptonians were different from humans. Somehow, Clark must’ve survived. Bruce needed to believe that Clark had survived.

With a sigh, Bruce yanked off his cowl and flung it aside. He had been sitting on the floor for an hour, watching Clark. Waiting for something, anything to change. Bruce leaned back against the wall while hugging his knees to his chest. As more time passed, the more he started to fear that Clark was actually dead. The fear twisted in his gut like a knife, crippling him.

If Clark was truly gone… Bruce would never recover from this. The grief would stay with him forever, every day for the rest of his life. Tears welled in his eyes as he felt a crushing pain in his chest. This pain would destroy him. He couldn’t go on like this. Bruce had already lost too many loved ones. He couldn’t bear to lose Clark too.

Tears streamed down his face as he gazed up at Clark. The man’s last words replayed in his head.

“I’m sorry, Bruce. I love you.”

Bruce sobbed, hiding his face in his hands. He tried to stop crying, but the tears kept coming. Losing Clark hurt more than anything he had experienced before. It was so painful that he couldn’t
face it. Even now, he was still clinging to the hope that Clark was still alive somehow. But Bruce knew that he couldn’t live in denial forever…

With a shaky breath, Bruce forced himself to stand and walk towards the bed. Clark was still laying there, motionless like a marble statue. He looked beautiful… Clark was truly one of a kind. There was no one else like him. He was Superman. He was a beacon of hope, a symbol for good. And most importantly, he was Clark Kent. The goofy, overly affectionate man who was too nice for his own good. The man who sacrificed himself for the world. The man who loved Bruce…

More tears fell as Bruce leaned against the bed. Sobs wracked through him, shaking his whole body. He could barely stand as his heart clenched in his chest. This pain was too much. It was coursing through him, ripping him apart from the inside out.

He bowed his head, gazing down at Clark through the tears. Bruce placed a hand on Clark’s chest, next to the stab wound. The fabric was torn, where the red S was supposed to be. Instead of the Superman symbol, there was only a gaping hole and exposed skin. Skin that wasn’t there before…

Bruce’s eyes widened as he grabbed the fabric, ripping it farther apart. The wound in Clark’s chest was smaller. The Kryptonian was healing.

“You’re not dead,” Bruce whispered in shock. Then he smiled as he flung his arms around Clark, hugging him. “You’re not dead!”

A huge sense of relief washed over him as he cried on the unconscious Kryptonian. He had to tell the others. Bruce stepped back and pressed a button on the wall, turning on the intercom.

“Get in here!” Bruce’s voice echoed throughout the Watchtower. “Clark isn’t dead! He’s healing!”

Bruce shut off the intercom. Then he quickly snatched his cowl off the floor and pulled it back on, hiding his tear-streaked face. Within seconds, the other members of the Justice League rushed into the infirmary.

“What do you mean he’s healing?” Aquaman demanded.

Bruce pointed at Clark. “Look at his chest. The stab wound is closing up.”

Flash and Green Lantern both hurried to Clark’s bedside, inspecting the injury. The wound was obviously smaller than it was before.

“Holy shit!” Hal exclaimed in surprise

“Oh, my God! He’s alive!” Barry screamed, crying tears of joy.

Diana walked towards the bed, staring at Clark with wide eyes. “How… How is this possible? I couldn’t feel his pulse.”

“This could be some kind of hibernation,” J’onn surmised. “But I am not an expert on Kryptonian biology.”

“I know someone who is.” Bruce marched toward the exit.

“Wait. Where are you going?” Diana asked.

“Don’t move Clark. Don’t do anything to him. I’ll come back with answers,” Batman ordered as he left the infirmary.
The wind was blowing fiercely in the Arctic. It was bitterly cold and snowflakes were falling from the night sky. After Batman landed his jet, he jumped outside and ran through the snow, heading to the Fortress of Solitude. He entered the icy structure and walked down a dark corridor until he reached a familiar room. He approached the control panel and hit a couple keys, then there was a flash of light.

The hologram of Jor-El appeared, standing directly in front him. The A.I. obviously recognized Bruce as he smiled.

“Bruce, it is a pleasure to see you again.”

“I need to ask you something.” Bruce explained quickly, “Your son was hurt in battle. He was stabbed in the chest, and the wound is healing. But he won’t talk or move. He’s completely unresponsive. He isn’t breathing and he doesn’t have a pulse either. How is he still alive?”

Jor-El was silent for a moment with a serious expression on his face. “You are certain the wound is healing?”

“Yes. I know he’s still alive,” Bruce said with conviction.

“Then Kal-El must be in a regenerative state. When Kryptonians are gravely injured, they can enter a healing coma in order to survive.”

Bruce let out a sigh of relief. He had hoped for an explanation like that. “Okay. So, how long will the coma last?”

“It is difficult to say.” Jor-El replied solemnly. “The healing process could take a few months or several years, maybe even decades.”

Decades? Bruce blinked in surprise. He had a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach as he asked, “What’s the longest amount of time that this could take?”

“At most…I’d say fifty years.”

“F-Fifty?” Bruce stuttered as he stumbled on his feet. He felt unsteady like the earth was caving in around him. Fifty years... In fifty years, Bruce would be an old man, or most likely dead. Fighting crime as Batman was so hard on his body. Bruce seriously doubted that he would live that long.

“So, I could die from old age before Clark ever wakes up?”

Jor-El gave him a sympathetic look. “Unfortunately, that is possible.”

Tears welled in his eyes as Bruce covered his mouth, muffling a sob.

“Bruce?” The hologram sounded worried.

“Sorry, I...I have to go.” Bruce rushed out of the room.

He hurried down the long corridor until he reached the exit. A gust of wind hit him as he opened the doors, stepping outside. Bruce staggered through the snow. Then he fell to his knees, crying. He let out a piercing scream as he hit the ground with his fists. All of the relief he felt earlier was now replaced with frustration and fear.

Because even though Clark was alive, Bruce may never talk to him again. Depending on how long
the coma lasts, Bruce could die before Clark finally wakes up.

He may have truly lost Clark forever.
At Wayne manor, Bruce sat in a chair next to Clark’s bed. After he spoke to Jor-El, Bruce had returned to the Watchtower, then he brought Clark home to the manor. That was three days ago. Clark was still in the same comatose state, laying motionlessly in bed. The window was open, so the sunlight would shine on him. Bruce hoped the sunshine would help. He was willing to try anything that could speed up the healing process. If he was lucky, maybe Clark would wake up soon. Maybe…

Bruce let out a sigh while watching the unconscious hero. The whole world thought Superman was dead, except for Clark’s closest friends. A couple days ago, Bruce had called Lois and told her about the coma. Now everyone at the Daily Planet probably knew, which was fine. His coworkers would know that Clark Kent was in a coma, but they’d think Superman was dead just like everyone else.

It was safer for the general public to believe that Superman died. Bruce didn’t want the Kryptonian’s enemies searching for him. Obviously, Clark wouldn’t be able to defend himself right now. Bruce needed to protect him until he woke up. No matter how long it takes…

The door creaked open, then Dick entered the room, carrying a tea tray.

“Hey, Alfred made you some tea.” He carefully set the tray down on the nightstand, next to Bruce.

“Thanks,” Bruce muttered as he grabbed the cup of tea.

While he drank the tea, Dick watched him with a worried frown. “Did you sleep at all last night?”

“I got a couple hours.”

Dick huffed in frustration. “You mean you passed out in the chair again? You need a good night’s sleep in your own bed. I know you’re worried about Clark, but you have to take care of yourself.”

“Don’t lecture me.” Bruce glared at the teen.

“I’m not. I’m just-” Dick stopped talking when his T-phone rang. He took out his communicator and sighed. “Sorry, I have to take this.”

Dick rushed out of the room while Bruce gazed down at Clark again. The sunlight was shining down on his face, giving his skin a healthy glow. The Kryptonian looked paler a couple days ago.
He was definitely healing. Even though he didn’t have a palpable pulse, he was very much alive. The coma must’ve slowed his heart rate drastically.

Bruce set down the cup of tea, then he reached a hand towards Clark. He touched the Kryptonian’s cheek, skimming his fingers down the expressionless face. Bruce could feel the roughness, where stubble was starting to grow. In a few weeks or so, Clark would have a beard. Bruce was curious to see how that would look. Clark had always kept himself clean-shaven. Although Bruce didn’t know how… A regular razor wasn’t strong enough to cut the Kryptonian’s hair.

Crossing his arms, Bruce considered the predicament for a moment. He had invented needles strong enough to penetrate Clark’s skin. He could probably invent a razor for the Kryptonian too.

“Dude, we’re getting our butts kicked! When are you coming back?!” A familiar voice screeched in the hallway. It sounded like Beast Boy.

Bruce stood and walked to the door, peering outside the room.

In the hallway, Dick was wearing his Robin mask while he talked on the communicator. “I’m sorry, guys. I think I should stay in Gotham a bit longer… Batman is having a hard time, and I don’t want to leave him right now.”

“We understand, Robin,” Starfire said kindly.

“Take all the time you need,” Raven added.

“Yeah, take your time. Superman was like part of your family.” Cyborg paused before muttering sadly, “I still can’t believe he’s dead.”


He shut the T-phone and shoved it in his pocket. Then he pulled off his mask and let out a long sigh. Obviously, his friends didn’t know the truth about Superman. Dick probably felt uncomfortable, having to lie to them.

When Bruce stepped into the hall, Dick finally noticed him and flinched in surprise. “Oh, uh, hey.”

“How’s Jump City?” Bruce asked.

“Fine. Just busy as usual.”

“Is Slade causing trouble again?”

“No, this time it’s the H.I.V.E. Academy,” he explained, frowning. “Brother Blood is up to something, but I don’t know what.”

“Go back to the titans.”

“No, you shouldn’t be alone right now.” Dick argued stubbornly, “I’m not going anywhere until I know you’re going to be okay. And don’t tell me that you’re fine. Because we both know that’s a lie.”

“You want honesty?” Bruce scowled at the teen, losing his patience. “Fine. I’m not okay. Of course, I’m not. My best friend is in a coma. I won’t be okay until he wakes up.”

“Bruce…” Dick stared at him, his eyes full of concern.
“And honestly, there’s nothing that either of us can do to change the situation. Clark will wake up when he’s ready. There’s no telling how long it’ll take…” Bruce sighed as his anger deflated. “I’ll wait for him. But you don’t have to. Go live your life, Dick. Waiting with me won’t make Clark wake up any faster.”

“I know that. I’m just worried about you.” Dick bowed his head, looking upset.

“Alfred is watching me like a hawk. If you’re that worried, ask him for updates. He’ll tell you how I’m doing…and he’ll be more honest than me.”

“You’re being pretty honest right now.”

“I’m just sick of lying.” Bruce said seriously, “Staying here won’t change anything. Go back to your team, Dick. It seems like they need you.”

“Okay,” he agreed reluctantly. “But I will ask Alfred for updates. I’m gonna keep tabs on you.”

“That’s fine.” Bruce shrugged.

When he heard footsteps creaking up the staircase, Bruce glanced down the hall. Soon, he saw Alfred walking towards them, carrying a phone in his hand.

“Master Wayne, you have a call.” The butler held up the phone.

“Tell them I’m busy.” Bruce turned away, refusing to take the call.

“It is Martha Kent.”

“What?” His eyes widened in surprise, then he quickly snatched the phone. “Hi, Mrs. Kent.”

“H-Hi, Bruce.” Martha Kent’s voice wavered like she was on the verge of tears. “I heard what happened. Lois called me. Is Clark really in a coma?”

Bruce felt his heart sink as he answered, “Yes… It’s true. I’m sorry.”

“Oh, good heavens!” She cried on the phone. “My poor baby. I-I have to see him. Where is he?”

“He’s with me. At Wayne manor.”

“O-Okay.” Her voice became muffled as she spoke to her husband, “Jonathan, we need to get tickets to Gotham.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Bruce insisted. “I’ll send a private jet to pick you up at the farm. Be ready to leave in an hour.”

Mrs. Kent sniffled, obviously still crying. “Okay. Thank you, Bruce. God bless you.”

“I’ll make the arrangements. See you soon.” Bruce abruptly hung up, ending the call.

Dick stared at him with interest. “So, Clark’s parents are coming?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I want to meet them.” Dick smiled. “I can go back to Jump City tomorrow.”

“Fine.” Bruce walked away, busy dialing a number on the phone. He needed to send a company jet
over to Smallville as soon as possible.

SxB

Around 4:30 PM, the private jet finally landed in the field next to Wayne manor. Bruce, Dick, and Alfred all stepped outside to greet their guests. They watched while Clark’s adoptive parents exited the plane and hurried towards them. The elderly couple looked frazzled like they weren’t accustomed to this much travel.

Alfred bowed politely. “Good afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Kent. Welcome to Wayne Manor. I wish we were meeting under better circumstances. My name is Alfred Pennyworth. I am the family butler. If you need anything, please let me know.”

“Thank you, dear.” Mrs. Kent smiled. Her eyes were still red and puffy from crying.

“I just want to see our boy,” Mr. Kent said impatiently.

“He’s upstairs. I’ll bring you to him.” Bruce turned and walked away.

Everyone followed him as he entered the manor. Jonathan Kent paced closely behind him while Martha strolled beside Dick.

“You’re Bruce’s son, aren’t you?” she asked.

“Yeah, he adopted me. I’m Dick.” The teen smiled at her. “It’s nice to meet you. Like Alfred said, I wish the circumstances were better.”

“Me too, Sweetie.” Mrs. Kent smiled back. “You’re so well-mannered. I can tell Bruce raised you right.”

Dick chuckled. “Thanks. I can tell where Clark got all of his kind-heartedness from.”

“Aww.” Martha wiped at her eyes as she started tearing up again. “Bruce, your son is an angel. I may have to steal him.”

“He’s all yours,” Bruce said dryly.

Dick gave him an annoyed look while Bruce turned and headed up the stairs. He led the way to Clark’s room, then stopped at the door. For a moment, he hesitated, steeling his nerves. It took him days to stop crying after he learned about the coma. Bruce was barely recovering, and having Clark’s parents here felt like salt in his wounds. Part of Bruce wanted to hide Clark away from the rest of the world. But he knew the Kents had the right to see their son.

Bruce opened the door and stepped aside. Then the old married couple rushed into the room, desperate to see their son. Mrs. Kent sobbed as she sat on the bed and flung her arms around Clark. Meanwhile Mr. Kent rested a hand on his wife’s shoulder, trying to comfort her. It was difficult to watch. Dick and Alfred both left. Only Bruce remained, standing in the corner awkwardly.

“D-Do you know when he might wake up?” Jonathan asked, his voice cracking with emotion.

“I’m sorry. It’s impossible to know,” Bruce answered grimly. “The coma can last a few months, or it can last up to fifty years.”

“Fifty years?!” Martha wailed with tears streaming down her face.

“I’m sorry,” Bruce apologized again, bowing his head.
His heart clenched painfully in his chest as he listened to the elderly couple cry.

SxB

For dinner, Alfred had prepared a feast for their guests. When it was time to eat, Bruce and Dick sat at the dining room table with Mr. and Mrs. Kent. Alfred had really outdone himself. The whole table was covered with plates of food. Now everyone was eating, except for Bruce. He could only stomach a few bites before he had to stop. He felt so tense. If he ate anymore, he’d probably throw up. The day had been so nerve-wracking. Bruce just wanted it to end.

They all sat in silence while Alfred walked around the table, refilling their glasses.

With a loud clang, Mr. Kent set down his silverware. Then he cleared his throat like he was nervous. “Bruce, thank you. Thank you for everything. We really appreciate it. You’ve done a great job, looking after Clark. But, Martha and I have been talking and, well…”

“We want to take Clark home with us,” Mrs. Kent announced.

Bruce gaped at her in surprise. He hadn’t expected this. He should’ve seen this coming, but he didn’t. His breath caught in his throat as his heart raced anxiously. He couldn’t let them take Clark away. He couldn’t let it happen! His hands shook slightly until he clenched them into fists.

“W-Why?” Bruce struggled to find his voice. “You know that I’m capable of taking care of Clark. You can visit him as much as you want. I’ll handle all the travel arrangements, and-”

“I know you could handle it, dear,” Martha said gently. “But Clark is our responsibility, not yours. We’re his family. We should be taking care of him.”

Bruce huffed in frustration. “With all due respect, I can protect Clark in ways you can’t. He has many enemies as Superman. I can fight Luthor or anyone else who may try to harm him.”

“Martha, maybe he has a point.” Mr. Kent whispered to his wife.

“Is Clark in danger right now?” Martha asked.

“Well, no,” Bruce conceded. “But it’s possible that-”

“Then we can take him home for now,” she said decisively. “If his enemies come looking for him, of course, we’ll call the Justice League.”

“That’s too risky. Clark will be safer with me. He should stay here,” Bruce argued, gritting his teeth in anger.

Martha Kent and Bruce glared at each other while Mr. Kent and Dick both squirmed uncomfortably in their seats. Even Alfred backed away from the table like he wanted to escape the room.

“You said the coma could last for fifty years.” Martha crossed his arms as she asked, “Are you willing to take care of Clark for the rest of your life?”

“Yes,” Bruce answered without hesitation.

She sighed. “That is very noble, but it’s not your burden to bear. You aren’t Clark’s family. You’re just his friend. It’s not like you’re married to him.”

“We’re engaged.” The words came out before Bruce could stop himself.
Dick choked on some water and coughed loudly while Alfred stared at Bruce with wide eyes. Mr. and Mrs. Kent both looked surprised as well.

“W-What?” Mr. Kent stuttered in shock.

“Clark and I are engaged,” Bruce repeated the lie with an inward smirk. He knew he had won the argument.

“Oh, my goodness!” Mrs. Kent exclaimed. “I had no idea you two were even dating. The last time I spoke to Clark he said he was single.”

“We haven’t announced it yet, but we were planning to get married. I consider Clark my family. Please don’t separate me from my fiancée,” Bruce said pitifully, pulling at their heartstrings.

“Aw, Sweetie.” Martha cooed as tears formed in her eyes. “Of course, he can stay with you.”

SxB

By 8 PM, Mr. and Mrs. Kent were ready to return to Smallville. Bruce told them that they could spend the night at the manor, but they politely refused the offer. Apparently, they wanted to sleep at home, so they could wake up early and tend to the farm.

A private jet had landed in the field next to Wayne manor again. Now they were all standing outside, saying their goodbyes. After Bruce lied about the engagement, the Kents have been much happier…and affectionate.

“I’m so glad you’re part of the family.” Martha Kent pulled Bruce into a tight hug, then she released him and smiled at Dick. “Both of you.” She hugged the teen too, holding him close.

Next, Jonathan Kent grabbed onto Bruce, hugging him. “We may have one son in a coma, but today we’ve gained another son. And a grandson too.” The old man finally let go of him, then he hugged Dick as well.

“On a day like today, we really needed some good news.” Martha wiped the moisture from her eyes, smiling gratefully.

“You’re always welcome here.” Bruce smiled at the old couple.

Alfred bowed formally. “It has been a pleasure, Mr. and Mrs. Kent. Please visit again soon.”

“Oh, you’re too cute. Come here!” Martha surprised the butler when she yanked him into a hug too. “I love all of you.”

After they exchanged a few more heartfelt goodbyes, Mr. and Mrs. Kent finally boarded the jet and left. Bruce gazed up at the night sky and watched as the jet soared away. Now he definitely understood why Clark liked hugging so much. He had learned that behavior from his parents.

Without warning, Dick suddenly punched Bruce in the arm. “I thought you were sick of lying! What the hell were you thinking?!” The teen yelled angrily.

Bruce shrugged while rubbing his sore arm. “I needed to keep Clark here.”

“You shouldn’t have lied to them!”

“Clark’s parents are happy about the engagement. It’s a harmless lie.”
“That lie is going to bite you in the ass later.” Dick huffed as he stomped away.

Bruce glanced at Alfred and sighed. “Are you going to yell at me too?”

“Of course not, Master Bruce.” Alfred smirked, looking amused. “Although it’s a shame your fiancée doesn’t know about the engagement yet. He would be delighted.”

Bruce groaned and walked away while the butler chuckled.

SxB

Late at night, Bruce laid in bed, alone in his room. He had decided to follow Dick’s advice and try to get more sleep. Although that was easier said than done. Bruce had been tossing and turning for hours, trying to fall asleep. His thoughts kept racing, replaying the battle with Doomsday over and over. There must’ve been something that Bruce could’ve done differently, a way to defeat Doomsday without Clark’s sacrifice…

If only Bruce had stopped Clark when he had the chance. If only…

“I’m sorry, Bruce. I love you.”

Clark’s voice echoed in his mind as Bruce choked back a sob. Tears welled in his eyes, spilling down his face, onto his pillow.

Giving up on sleep, Bruce sat up and rubbed at his eyes. He was such an emotional wreck. In the past few days, he had cried more than he ever has in his entire life. Sometimes he thought his emotions were under control, but then something would set him off and he’d become a weeping mess again. At least he didn’t cry in front of Clark’s parents. He had been fighting back the tears all day. Now he felt drained like all of his strength was gone.

More tears streamed down his face as Bruce stood and left his room. He trudged down the dark hallway until he reached Clark’s room and slid the door open. Clark was still laying in his bed like a statue frozen in time. Moonlight glistened through the window, bathing the room in a pale glow.

Bruce stepped towards the bed and sat down on the mattress next to the unconscious hero. After a moment of hesitation, he laid down on his side and scooted closer to Clark. Then he grabbed Clark’s arm and draped it over him as he leaned against Clark’s chest. When Bruce closed his eyes, it felt like Clark was hugging him. Sadly, this was the only thing that could comfort him now.

“Wake up soon, Clark. Please,” Bruce whispered as he snuggled closer to the Kryptonian.

In a few minutes, he fell asleep in Clark’s arms.
In the Batcave, Barbara sat in her wheelchair, in front of the Batcomputer. Ever since she became paralyzed, she has been practicing her hacking skills. She couldn’t fight as Batgirl anymore, but she wanted to remain useful. Now she had a new name—Oracle.

At first, Bruce was reluctant to let her get involved in crime fighting again, but eventually he caved in. A few days ago, he gave Barbara full access to the Batcomputer, so she could help him while he was on patrol. According to Bruce, she was only allowed to be Oracle inside the Batcave. He didn’t want her going anywhere dangerous. Barbara had agreed to his terms because she didn’t see the point in arguing. Obviously, she couldn’t fight on the front lines anymore. She could only help behind the scenes.

Light from the computer screen reflected off her glasses as Barbara typed quickly, hacking into the security cameras at Gotham’s grand central station. Inside the subway station, the Joker was firing a machine gun at the ceiling while a crowd of people screamed and ran away. Around the Joker, there was a group of men wearing clown masks. The villain’s goons were busy terrorizing citizens, stealing purses and attacking people.

“I found the Joker. He’s at grand central station,” Barbara spoke into her headset.

“I’m on the way,” Bruce growled in the earpiece.

Soon, she spotted Batman on the security footage, swinging down from the ceiling. He kicked one of the clown’s goons as he landed inside the station. Then the other henchmen charged at him while he expertly dodged their attacks. One by one, Batman immobilized the thugs, punching and kicking them until they fell to the floor.

While Batman fought the henchmen, the Joker ran to the other side of the subway station, laughing crazily.

“The Joker is getting away!” Barbara yelled, “Hurry! Go after him!”

Batman immediately chased after the Joker, sprinting across the station. Switching to another camera view, Barbara watched as the villain jumped into a subway train and aimed his weapon at terrified civilians. The subway doors slid shut, trapping the passengers with the madman.

“He’s on the L train. He has hostages,” Barbara said anxiously.
The train took off, speeding down the railway. Running across the platform, Batman quickly fired his grappling hook at the back of the train. He zoomed through the air as he retracted the wire, propelling himself toward the train’s backdoor. As he disappeared down the dark tunnel, Barbara lost sight of him.

Since she couldn’t rely on security footage anymore, Barbara activated the hidden camera on Batman’s cowl, so she could see what he was doing. Batman was still standing on the back of the train, speeding through the subway tunnel. Through the backdoor window, Barbara could see the Joker pacing back and forth inside the train, waving his machine gun wildly.

“Babs, I need you to get control of the train,” Bruce said in a low voice. “Hack into the subway computer system.”

“What?” She gaped at the computer screen. “But I’ve never done that before!”

“Figure it out.”

Batman kicked down the door and threw a batarang at the Joker. The gadget hit the villain’s hand, knocking the gun from his grasp. Nearby passengers screamed and fled to the other side of the train as Batman charged at the Joker, punching the clown in the face. Then the Joker took out a knife and slashed at the kevlar Batsuit. Luckily, Bruce’s armor protected him.

While Batman fought the villain, Barbara focused on the subway computer system, hacking through complicated security measures. It was difficult, but all of her practice was paying off. Furrowing her brow in concentration, Barbara sneaked into the subway’s control system, then gained access to the L train.

“Okay, I’m in!” She grinned triumphantly.

Batman dodged the Joker’s knife as he ordered, “Stop the train.”

Typing quickly, Barbara entered the command, then the train screeched to a halt. As soon as the train stopped, Batman kicked the Joker in the chest, causing the villain to fall through the opening at the back of the train. The Joker crashed on the railway tracks, then Batman leapt down, marching towards him.

“Now move the train. Get those people out of here,” Bruce said under his breath.

“Right.” Barbara nodded as she typed on the computer, restarting the train.

In a few seconds, the train zoomed down the tracks, heading to safety. Now Batman was alone in the dark tunnel with the Joker.

“Oh, Batsy.” The Joker jumped to his feet, smiling widely. “If you wanted to be alone with me, all you had to do was ask. You know how much I value our quality time together.”

“Shut up,” Batman snarled.

The Joker let out an ear-piercing laugh. “Ha, ha, ha! Someone’s cranky.” He grinned as he taunted the hero, “Poor little Brucie. Are you still crying over Supes? Do you need a hug?”

“Shut the hell up!” Bruce furiously lunged at the Joker and punched him.

The clown stumbled back, then Batman tackled him to the ground, hitting him over and over. While Bruce savagely beat the Joker, Barbara noticed a beam of light at the end of the tunnel.
“Shit! Another train is coming. You need to move,” she warned him.

Ignoring her, Batman continued punching his enemy in the face. He was so angry that he wasn’t listening!

“Bruce, you need to move! Bruce!” She yelled frantically, but he wouldn’t stop hitting the Joker.

Panicking, Barbara quickly accessed the subway schedule, looking for which train she needed to stop. According to a map, it was the E train on the tracks. Typing quickly, she hacked into the E train as it zoomed down the railway, speeding towards Bruce and the Joker.

The beam of light grew closer and closer until it finally screeched to a halt right in front of the two men. Barbara had barely stopped the train in time. With a sigh of relief, she leaned back in her chair. That was such a close call.

On the computer screen, Batman stood and kicked the Joker in the face, knocking him unconscious.

SxB

After dropping the Joker back at the asylum, Bruce returned to the Batcave. He parked the Batmobile in its usual spot and stepped out. Then he noticed Barbara scowling at him. The red-haired girl was sitting in her wheelchair with her arms crossed, frowning angrily. She was going to start nagging him soon. Bruce could tell.

With a sigh, he removed his cowl and strolled away from her.

“What the hell, Bruce?!” Barbara shouted at him, “I told you to move! Why didn’t you listen to me?!! You could’ve died! If I didn’t stop that train—”

“Well, you did.” Bruce cut her off. “You stopped the train, and I’m fine. So don’t worry about it.”

“You need to be more careful.” She huffed in frustration.

He shrugged dismissively and kept walking away.

She called out, “Don’t you want to be alive when Clark wakes up?!”

Bruce froze for a moment, tensing in pain. His heart clenched in his chest as he took a shaky breath. It still hurt whenever someone mentioned Clark.

“Point taken,” Bruce grumbled bitterly and continued towards the exit.

SxB

In Clark’s room, Bruce sat in a chair, drinking coffee. Next to him, Clark was still laying in bed, completely motionless. A couple weeks have passed since the fight with Doomsday, and the Kryptonian was still in the same comatose state. Bruce felt restless, waiting for him to wake up. Lately, he had started going on patrol more often. Every night, Batman prowled the streets of Gotham, trying to stay busy. Trying to keep his mind off of Clark...

But it wasn’t working. No matter how many criminals he beat up, Bruce always returned here. He always returned home to Clark, who was still beyond his reach. Even though Bruce was close enough to touch him, the other man felt so far away. Bruce missed him... He missed the sound of Clark’s voice and his kind smile. He especially missed the way Clark would comfort him and hold
him at night, although he’d never admit it. Bruce still had a difficult time falling asleep without the Kryptonian.

More than anything, he wanted Clark to wake up. And every day, Bruce became more and more afraid that it wouldn’t happen anytime soon. What if the coma really lasted for fifty years? Would Bruce die before he had the chance to reunite with Clark? What if they never speak to each other again?

His hand trembled as he set down the cup of coffee. Then Bruce leaned forward, hiding his face in his hands. These miserable thoughts tormented him every day. He was so sick of it.

Please wake up, Clark. Please. Bruce blinked the tears from his eyes, struggling to regain his composure. Crying wouldn’t solve anything. He couldn’t be so weak. He needed to soldier through this and hope for the best.

Suddenly, he heard a knock on the door. “Master Bruce, you have a guest.”

Bruce wiped at his eyes, then he stood and walked across the room. “Who is it?”

When he opened the door, he immediately recognized the blonde teenage girl standing in the hallway next to Alfred.

“Kara…” Bruce stared at her in surprise.

“H-Hi, Mr. Wayne,” Kara stuttered as she shifted nervously on her feet. “Lois said I could find my cousin here. C-Can I see him?”

“Yeah. Of course.” Bruce stepped aside. “He’s right in here.”

“Thanks.” She walked past him, entering the room.

Bruce watched as she approached the bed. Kara gazed down at Clark with a forlorn expression on her face.

“He’s in a regenerative state,” she muttered sadly.

Bruce gave her a curious look. “How much do you know about Kryptonian healing comas?”

“Not that much. Sorry…”

“It’s okay.” Bruce walked toward the bed and stood beside her. “I should have contacted you earlier, so you could see him.”

Kara sighed as she admitted, “Even though we’re family, Kal-El and I aren’t very close. I wish I knew him better. I think he pushed me away because he wanted me to be safe. He told me to have a normal childhood.”

She paused for a moment, still staring at Clark wistfully. “Kal-El loves Earth so much. He’s willing to die for this world. And I can see why. The Danvers have been so kind to me…” Kara raised her head, gazing up at Bruce, her light-blue eyes shining with determination. “I want to protect this planet too. I want to be a hero like Superman.”

Bruce could see her resemblance to Clark, and it filled him with hope. His mouth tugged into a smile as he advised, “Protecting the whole world is a tall order. You should start smaller. Protect Metropolis first. Superman’s city will need a new guardian.”
“Alright. I’ll protect Metropolis first.” She agreed before asking, “You’re Batman, right?”

“Who told you?”

Kara smiled sheepishly. “I just kinda figured it out on my own. Also your heartbeat…”

Bruce snorted. “Yeah, you’re definitely his cousin.”

“I have all the same powers as Kal-El, but I haven’t used many of them. And I’ve never been in a fight before,” she said nervously. “Can you teach me how to be a hero?”

“I could… But the training won’t be easy,” he warned her.

“I can handle it!” Kara clasped her hands together and gave him a pleading look “Please teach me, Batman, sir. I’ll accept all the help I can get.”

Bruce gazed into those blue eyes which reminded him so much of Clark and knew that he couldn’t say no. With a sigh, he walked out of the room. “Follow me.”

SxB

Sliding down a pole, Bruce entered the Batcave while Kara flew down and landed next to him. She gasped in awe as soon as she saw the cave.

“Wow! Is this your secret lair?” She wandered around the cave, staring at everything with wide, curious eyes.

“It’s called the Batcave,” he informed her.

“You have so much stuff.” Kara walked toward a display cabinet full of hi-tech gadgets and placed her hand on the glass.

“Don’t touch that.”

“Sorry!” She quickly pulled her hand away.

Shaking his head, Bruce headed across the cave towards his desk. Then he opened a drawer and took out a spare utility belt. He snapped the utility belt around his waist and turned to face Kara.

“First, we’re going to spar.”

She looked confused. “Spar? But you don’t have any powers, right?”

Bruce huffed in annoyance and crossed his arms. “Don’t worry about me. Just attack.”

“Uh… Okay.” Kara hesitated, then she zoomed toward him in a flash of super speed.

Before she could reach him, Bruce quickly pulled a piece of kryptonite out of his utility belt.

With a loud thud, Kara instantly collapsed on the floor, too weak to stand. She groaned in pain as she gazed up at the glowing green rock.

“G-Get that away from me!” Kara fearfully dragged herself across the floor, trying to escape. “You can’t use kryptonite! That’s not fair!”

“Do you think criminals are fair?” Bruce scoffed. “If you’re going to protect Metropolis, you’ll
have to fight Luthor and he always uses kryptonite."

“How does Kal-El fight him?”

“He deals with the pain. Now get up.”

Kara trembled as she whimpered pitifully, “I can’t. It hurts too much.”

“Get up!” Bruce grabbed a handful of her hair, pulling her up to her knees.

“Ow! Stop it!” she whined.

“I told you the training would be hard,” he growled harshly. “Are you giving up already?”

“N-No.” Her legs shook as she struggled to stand. She glared at him, her eyes reflecting the green glow from the kryptonite. “No, I won’t give up.”

“Good.” Bruce kicked her, then she fell on the floor again.

She moaned in agony while he stood over her and barked, “Come on! Get back up. We’re just getting started.”

SxB

In the early evening, Barbara arrived at Wayne manor. Alfred let her inside, then she took the secret elevator down to the Batcave. When the elevator door opened, she wheeled herself into the cave and froze in surprise.

A blonde girl was laying on the floor, and Bruce was standing next to her, holding a piece of kryptonite in his hand.

“Please, no more,” the girl pleaded weakly.

“I suppose that’s enough for today.” Bruce put the kryptonite away, inside his utility belt.

“Bruce, what the hell is going on?” Barbara demanded, wheeling towards him. “Who is she?”

He explained, “This is Clark’s cousin, Kara. I’m training her to fight as Supergirl.”

“H-Hi.” Kara staggered to her feet, then she gagged and covered her mouth with her hand. “I think I’m going to be sick.”

Bruce pointed across the cave. “The bathroom is down to the left.”

The poor girl stumbled away towards the bathroom while Barbara glared at him. “What did you do to her?”

“Basic training.” Bruce shrugged. “She needed to gain some resistance to kryptonite.”

“So, you tortured her?”

“I toughened her up,” he argued. “It’s for her own good. She’ll thank me later.”

Across the cave, they could hear Kara in the bathroom, retching loudly.

“Yeah, she sounds so thankful,” Barbara said sarcastically.
Bruce gave her an annoyed look. “Drop the attitude. I want you to handle the rest of her training anyway.”

“Me?” She gaped at him in disbelief. “I’m in a wheelchair! How could I possibly train a Kryptonian?”

“Kara may have super powers, but she has no experience. She’ll need someone to watch her back. Someone smart, who has eyes everywhere. You can be the brains behind the brawn.”

“I don’t know…” Barbara sighed, feeling insecure. “Do you really think I can help her?”

“She can learn a lot from you, Barbara.” Bruce smiled reassuringly.

Barbara returned the smile with a little more confidence. Even though Bruce was rough around the edges, sometimes he knew exactly what to say. If he really wanted her to help Clark’s cousin, Barbara would do it.

After flushing the toilet, Kara staggered out of the bathroom and headed towards them. “Ugh. I think my stomach has settled down.”

“Kara, this is Barbara,” Bruce introduced her. “She’s in charge of your training from now on. You will work with her as a team.”

The girl stared at Barbara suspiciously. “You don’t have any kryptonite, do you?”

“No. Don’t worry about that.” Barbara laughed and extended a hand. “It’s nice to meet you, Kara.”

Kara smiled back and shook her hand. “It’s nice to meet you too.”
In downtown Metropolis, Kara soared across the sky and landed on top of a tall building. She stood on the edge of the roof, overlooking the busy city. The streets were packed with cars and there were crowds of people on the sidewalk. It was a typical afternoon of rush hour traffic. The sun would be setting soon, and most people were in a hurry to get home.

On the roof, a strong wind blew past her, flapping her red cape to the side. Kara was dressed in her Supergirl outfit, which was very similar to Superman’s. The only difference was the red skirt she wore. Back when they designed her suit, Batman said that she should wear pants. But Barbara thought the skirt looked better and Kara agreed with her. Together, the girls had outvoted him.

For the past couple months, Kara has been protecting Metropolis as Supergirl. When she first arrived, crime had been running rampant in the city since Superman was gone. But Supergirl managed to clean the place up, and now most of the criminals were behind bars. Kara had become a pretty successful hero, with Barbara’s help, of course. She always wore an earpiece, so Oracle could communicate with her at all times. Also her Supergirl suit had tiny hidden cameras, so the hacker could see everything she was doing.

She liked working with Barbara. Whenever Kara was unsure about something, Oracle was always quick to give her advice and lead her down the right path. Thanks to Oracle, Supergirl was able to avoid several mistakes. Sometimes, Kara used too much strength in battle. But Barbara would notice it every time and warn Kara to stop before she could accidently kill someone. Just like the other heroes, Supergirl was expected to follow Batman’s number one rule—no killing.

Honestly, Kara was glad that Barbara was training her instead of Bruce. Batman could be intimidating at times… He even gave Kara a speech, threatening to neutralize her if she ever became a murderer. It was scary. Barbara said not to worry though. Apparently, Bruce gave that same speech to everyone.

With a yawn, Kara sat down on the roof, dangling her feet off the ledge. Between high school and guarding Metropolis, she didn’t have much time to rest. At least the city seemed calm for now. All the citizens were probably behaving because they knew Supergirl was watching.

“Another day with no crime,” Kara said proudly. “It looks like my work here is done.”
“Don’t get too cocky,” Barbara warned through the earpiece. “You never know what will happen.”

“If you say so.” Kara sighed. To her, this seemed like a waste of time. She didn’t need to patrol Metropolis if it was going to be this peaceful.

Suddenly, she heard a female voice screaming in the distance. “Help! Supergirl, please help me!”

In a flash, Kara immediately shot into the sky, flying towards the woman in distress.

“What’s up? Did you hear something?” Barbara asked perceptively.

“Yeah. A lady’s in trouble.”

Supergirl soared over the city until she reached an abandoned warehouse by the docks. With her super hearing, she could still hear the cries for help coming from inside the warehouse. It seemed strange though. She could hear the screams and a heartbeat, but nothing else. Kara landed on the ground and kicked the door open. Then she hurried inside the warehouse, searching for the woman. In the center of the warehouse, there was a sheet draped over a figure sitting in a chair.

In a blur of super speed, Supergirl quickly yanked off the sheet. Then her eyes widened in surprise. There was a mannequin sitting in the chair with an artificial heart beating in its chest. On its face, the dummy had a speaker instead of a mouth.

“Help, Supergirl!” The scream came from the speaker.

“It’s a trap! Get out of there!” Oracle yelled in the earpiece.

Terrified, Supergirl turned towards the exit. Then she saw a green mist shooting through the doorway, blowing into the warehouse.

“What the-?” She stared at the mist in confusion.

“Hold your breath! Blast your way out!” Barbara ordered frantically.

Kara held her breath right before the green mist surrounded her. The mist was full of tiny green crystals, which stung like needles against her skin. Grimacing in pain, Kara flew towards the ceiling and shot lasers from her eyes. She blasted a hole in the roof and zoomed into the sky, escaping the mist.

Hovering high above the warehouse, Kara took a deep breath and coughed. “What was that?”

“Kryptonite dust,” Barbara replied. “Luthor is coming. Are you ready to fight?”

“Yeah… How do you know it’s Luthor?” Supergirl listened to her surroundings, but she couldn’t hear anyone approaching.

“Trust me, it’s Luthor.” Oracle yelled suddenly, “Watch out!”

Kara turned to the side as a fist collided with her face. The sheer force of the blow sent her hurtling towards the ground. With a loud crash, she skidded into a parking lot, tearing apart concrete. Wincing in pain, Kara stood and looked up at the sky.

Lex Luthor was hovering in the air, wearing his mechanized Warsuit. During her training, Barbara had told Kara all about the suit of powered armor. The Warsuit was dangerous. It gave Luthor the strength of a Kryptonian, and it also masked the sound of his heartbeat.
“Who are you?” Luthor demanded angrily. “Superman’s sister? His daughter?”

“That’s none of your business!” Kara shouted at him.

The villain scoffed in disgust. “I swear you Kryptonians are like cockroaches. I finally kill one of you, and another one crawls out of the woodwork.”

Supergirl frowned. “What do you mean? Doomsday killed—”

“Who do you think created Doomsday?”

“You…” Her whole body shook with rage as she growled, “You made that monster?”

The villain smirked nastily. “Of course, I did. I have to admit I wish I could’ve stabbed Superman myself. But it was still very satisfying to watch.” He let out a sadistic laugh.

“You bastard!” She zoomed into the air, charging at the evil man.

As she flew upwards, Luthor took out a gun, but that didn’t scare Kara at all. Bullets couldn’t hurt her.

When he pulled the trigger, Barbara screamed in terror, “Dodge!”

Surprised by the order, Kara swerved to the side as the bullet sped towards her. She cried out in pain when the bullet grazed her arm, barely hitting her. Blood flowed down her arm as she flew backwards, distancing herself from Luthor.

Kara grimaced while pressing a hand over the bloody wound. “I don’t understand.”

“Those are kryptonite bullets,” Oracle explained. “Be careful. They can kill you.”

“Rao damn it!” Supergirl cursed under her breath.

Luthor started shooting at her again while Kara zoomed across the sky, dodging all the bullets. She zigzagged and flew in circles around the villain, waiting for the right moment to strike. When he had to reload, she quickly fired her heat vision at the gun and melted it. Then she charged at Luthor and kicked him in the chest. Her attack sent him hurtling towards the ground.

After he crashed into the street, she flew down and punched his mechanized armor over and over. Her hands hurt from hitting the villain’s armor. The entire Warsuit must be lined with kryptonite. How was she going to beat him? Was it even possible?

“Give up. You’re out of your league, little girl,” Luthor taunted her as he pulled out a second gun.

When he started shooting, Kara immediately zigzagged in the air, evading the kryptonite bullets. This situation was bad. For now, she could only dodge. She needed a plan. Why wasn’t Barbara saying anything?
“What should I do? How can I beat him?” Kara asked anxiously.

“Gimme a second,” Barbara said in the earpiece. “I’m hacking into LexCorp.”

“Oracle, I need an answer now!” She yelled frantically as she dodged more bullets.

The more she zipped around the sky, the more exhausted she felt. Kara was starting to feel worn out and short of breath. She was afraid that the kryptonite dust may have affected her more than she originally thought. Even though she held her breath in the warehouse, she had been surrounded by that mist of kryptonite. She could feel her strength draining. She didn’t know how much longer she could fight.

At the moment, it seemed impossible to beat Luthor. She had no idea how Kal-El managed to fight the villain for so many years. At this rate, she was going to die.

“Aim for his right shoulder,” Oracle ordered unexpectedly.


“Just do it!”

Still dodging bullets, Kara flew towards Luthor and shot lasers from her eyes. The villain instantly turned to the side, shielding his weapon. But this time the gun wasn’t her target. Supergirl blasted Luthor’s right shoulder with heat vision until his metallic armor turned red around the joint. Then she lunged at Luthor, swinging her fist. As she approached, he fired his gun again at close range. Within a fraction of a second, she turned her head and barely dodged the bullet. The green projectile sped past her, only a few centimeters away from her face.

Using all her strength, Kara screamed as she punched Luthor in his right shoulder. Her fist smashed into the Warsuit, cracking the armor apart. Then she quickly reached inside the armor and ripped off a huge piece of the chest plate. She yanked Luthor out of the Warsuit and flung him to the ground.

Before he could sit up, Kara stomped on his chest, pinning the evil bastard to the ground.

She grinned triumphantly. “It’s over, Luthor.”

SxB

After Luthor was locked away in jail, Supergirl flew over to Gotham and entered the Batcave through a secret outside entrance. In the dimly lit cave, Oracle was sitting in her wheelchair in front of the Batcomputer as usual. When Barbara noticed her, she turned her chair towards Kara and smiled.

“Great job, Kara. That was amazing,” she praised her.

In a blur of super speed, Kara rushed toward Barbara and hugged her tightly. “Thank you! I only won because of you! I owe you so much!”

“You did all the fighting.”

“Yeah, but you told me what to do.” Kara finally released the hacker and stepped back, smiling gratefully. “I couldn’t have beaten Luthor without you. How did you know that I needed to hit his right shoulder?”
“I looked at the blueprints for the Warsuit. Since Luthor’s right arm is robotic, he had to make alterations to the suit, and now the armor is weakest around his right shoulder,” Barbara explained.

“Okay, cool.” Kara grinned excitedly. “So, now we’ll be ready for next time.”

Barbara smirked as she claimed, “Luthor won’t be getting out of jail anytime soon. I just sent a video file to the Metropolis police department. Now they have a taped confession of Luthor admitting that he created Doomsday.”

“That’s awesome!” She squealed happily and hugged Barbara again. “You’re the best, Babs!”

Barbara laughed and patted her on the back. “We did it together.”

When Kara heard footsteps, she glanced to the side and spotted Bruce walking across the cave. He was dressed completely in his Batsuit, except for his cowl.

“I knew you two would make a good team.” He congratulated the girls, “Good work. Both of you.”

Overjoyed, Kara flung her arms around Batman, hugging him. “Thank you!”

In the embrace, Bruce stiffened like he was uncomfortable.

“Oh, sorry!” She pulled away from him. “You don’t like hugs, right?”

“It’s okay.” He patted Kara on the head and gave her a small smile. “You’re so much like him.”

“Like Kal-El?” Her expression brightened hopefully.

Bruce nodded, then he gazed down at her wounded arm. “What happened?”

“Oh, I got hit by a kryptonite bullet.”

When his eyes widened in alarm, she quickly insisted, “It’s just a graze! I’m okay, really.”

“Come on, this needs to be bandaged.” He grabbed her arm and led her towards a table.

Kara sat down in a chair while Bruce took out a first aid kit and set it down on the table. Then he kneeled beside her and carefully cleaned the gash on her arm. Once the laceration was clean, he started bandaging the wound. Kara watched him as he handled her arm gently. He was obviously trying to do this as painlessly as possible.

With a smile, Kara realized that Bruce wasn’t as intimidating as she first thought. He was actually kinda sweet.

SxB

It was just another night in the Batcave. Barbara had been sitting in front of the Batcomputer for hours, hacking and gathering intel. While Supergirl took a few days off to rest, Oracle didn’t have much to do. She was starting to get bored. Her skills as a hacker have improved a lot lately, but now it all seemed too easy. She liked having a challenge.

Maybe she could offer to help the Teen Titans. She heard that they’ve been fighting Deathstroke. That definitely sounded like a challenge. Also, it would be nice to talk to Dick. She hadn’t seen him in a long time. Ever since she was paralyzed, he had barely spoken to her. Part of her was afraid that Dick was avoiding her.
Using the Batcomputer, Barbara contacted Dick’s T-phone, requesting to video chat. The request was accepted, then a red-haired girl appeared on the computer screen. The girl had large green eyes and a friendly smile. She looked very familiar. She must be a Teen Titan. Barbara recognized her face from the news.

“Greetings! This is Robin’s phone,” the girl announced.

“Yes, I know.” Barbara crossed her arms impatiently. “Is Robin there? I want to talk to him.”

“He is training with Cyborg at the moment.” The girl gave her a curious look. “How do you know Robin?”

“He’s a friend.”

The girl grinned excitedly. “Oh, wonderful! I am also Robin’s friend! My name is Starfire. What is your name?”

“You can call me Oracle.” Barbara smiled at the cheerful girl. “So, how are the Teen Titans? Is Robin doing well?”

“Yes, everything is most joyful. Robin and I are banging.”

Barbara gaped at her in shock. “E-Excuse me?”

“You… what?” Barbara blanched, feeling sick to her stomach. Was this the reason why Dick hardly spoke to her anymore? When she was Batgirl, they had never dated, but she thought Dick had liked her… Since she was crippled now, was he no longer interested? Did he replace her with this new girl?

“Starfire, what did I tell you about touching my stuff?” Dick suddenly grabbed the T-phone, then his face appeared on the computer screen. His eyes were covered by the Robin mask, but he still looked surprised to see her. “Oh, hey. What’s up?”

“You asshole,” Barbara growled furiously.

“Huh? What’s wrong?” Dick seemed confused, then he glanced at Starfire. “Starfire, what did you say to her?”

“That we are most definitely banging,” she replied cheerfully.

“Oh, no…” He groaned, hiding his face in the palm of his hand. Then he sighed and looked up at the screen. “Listen, she’s an alien. She doesn’t understand our slang.”

“Just shut up! I don’t wanna hear it!” Barbara snapped at him.

“No, seriously!” He tried to explain, “She thinks banging means something else.”

Starfire gave him a betrayed look. “You taught me incorrectly? Why would you lie?”

“Yeah, Robin. Why are you lying?” Barbara glared at him, shaking with anger. “Piss off and leave me alone.”

“Wait, Babs, please-!” Dick pleaded as she hung up.
Late at night, Kara and Barbara sat in the Batcave together, drinking coffee. Tonight Kara had resumed her duties as Supergirl. But instead of patrolling Metropolis, she was hanging out with Oracle in the Batcave. Apparently, Barbara was having boy trouble and needed someone to vent off to.

“It’s so stupid! What was he thinking?!” Barbara complained angrily.

Kara shrugged, at a loss for words.

Then Barbara’s cell phone buzzed. She quickly took out her phone and growled, “It’s him again. Dick won’t stop calling me. He left me like twenty messages!”

Barbara shut off her phone and flung it aside. “According to Dick, Starfire thinks that banging means having a close special friendship with someone. Why would he even tell her that? If he told her the truth, this whole misunderstanding could’ve been avoided!” She yelled in frustration. “Ugh. Why are guys so weird?!”

“I don’t know,” Kara replied, feeling clueless. She wished that she had more answers, but she didn’t have a lot of experience with boys.

Suddenly, the Batmobile raced into the cave and screeched to a halt. Then Batman stepped out of the vehicle.

“Oh, hi, Bruce!” Kara greeted him happily. “We are having the ‘girl talk’. Would you like to join us?”

“No thanks,” Bruce grumbled as he headed towards the elevator.

The girls watched while he left the cave in a hurry. Then Barbara let out a long sigh.

“He’s going to check on Clark again,” she said sadly.

“He seems very...attached to my cousin.” Kara asked, “Are they really just friends?”

Barbara huffed and crossed her arms. “It’s complicated. Dick says that they love each other, but Bruce won’t admit his feelings.”

“I see…” Kara nodded thoughtfully. “Human males are definitely strange.”

“I know, right?!”
After another night on patrol, Bruce drove back to the Batcave and parked the Batmobile. When he stepped out of the vehicle, he could see Barbara and Kara sitting together by the Batcomputer, drinking coffee as usual. The girls were always hanging out here. Lately, they spent more time in the cave than Bruce did. The last time he used the bathroom down here, he had found a box of tampons. The girls have definitely made themselves at home. They practically invaded the Batcave.

“Hey, Bruce!” Kara waved at him and held up a cup of coffee. “Come sit with us. We have coffee for you.”

“Fine,” he grumbled as he walked toward them. He took the cup of coffee and sat down in a chair next to them. Then the girls continued to chat happily while he drank his coffee. For the past few months, he has been dragged into *girl talk* more often than he liked to admit.

Barbara smiled at him. “What do you think, Bruce? Do you have any dating advice?”

“Men are dogs. Watch their hands,” he said gruffly.

Both girls laughed, then Barbara replied, “Not all men are dogs. How do you know if a guy is right for you?”

“Seriously?” Bruce huffed in annoyance. “Can’t you ask someone else?”

“Come on, I just want your opinion,” Barbara whined.

“I’d like to hear it too.” Kara grinned eagerly.

“Oh, well…” Bruce shifted uncomfortably in his chair. “Obviously, he would treat you well.”

“Uh-huh. And?” Barbara prompted him.

“And…you would enjoy his company.”

The girls stared at him until Bruce continued reluctantly, “Just being with him would make your day better… And help you forget how fucked up your life is.” Bruce sighed and averted his gaze as the words poured out. “He’d be there for you no matter how bad things get. And even when you two fight, you always forgive each other.”
His heart clenched in his chest as he muttered, “Because you know he will always love you. And you will always love him… No matter how long he’s gone.”

“Are you okay?” Barbara asked with a worried expression.

“Y-Yeah, I’m fine. I have to go.” He stood and hurried away.

“Bruce, wait!” The girls called out as he stepped into the elevator.

After the elevator door closed, Bruce yanked off his cowl and leaned his back against a wall, feeling unsteady on his feet. Tears sprang to his eyes as he rubbed them away.

“Dammit.” He choked back a sob.

In the morning, Bruce sat in Clark’s room, gazing down at the unconscious man. Clark was still laying in bed. It has been six months since the fight with Doomsday. Six months since Clark had become comatose… Half a year has gone by and his condition hasn’t changed at all. The Kryptonian looked exactly the same, except for the beard. Bruce had decided to shave it off today. If Clark was awake, he would be clean-shaven. That’s what he preferred.

After preparing the supplies, Bruce draped a towel around Clark’s shoulders then he lathered Clark’s face with shaving cream. Since the Kryptonian’s hair was so strong, Bruce had invented a special razor blade. The blade contained just enough kryptonite to cut Clark’s facial hair without causing any damage.

Using the razor, Bruce carefully shaved the beard off Clark’s face. As he removed the facial hair, Clark was starting to look more and more like himself. Bruce spaced out for a moment, staring at the handsome face. Then he accidentally nicked Clark’s chin with the razor.

“Shit, shit, shit,” Bruce cursed as he quickly grabbed the towel and pressed it against the small cut.

Soon, the bleeding stopped and Bruce removed the towel. Now there was a tiny red line on Clark’s chin, marring his perfect face. The cut would heal rapidly, but Bruce was still mad at himself. He had screwed up such a simple task.

“Damn it, Clark. You should be doing this yourself.” Bruce wiped the Kryptonian’s face with the towel, revealing clean-shaven skin.

Then he wrapped the towel around the razor and flung it on the floor. His frustration and anger boiled over as Bruce clenched his fists and paced around the room.

“When will you wake up? How long are you going to make me wait?!” Bruce furiously kicked the bed frame. “I’m sick of waiting! Wake up, Clark! Just fucking wake up!”

The door creaked open, then Alfred peered inside the room. The old man looked concerned.

“Master Bruce, would you like to talk?”

“No,” Bruce snarled as he stormed out of the room, heading past the butler.

At the Watchtower, Batman sat in the control room, staring at a large computer screen. He was performing surveillance duty and watching over the Earth. It was a boring job since nothing major
was happening today. Usually, the Justice League trusted Superman to listen for anything critical. But now they couldn’t rely on Clark, so the league members had to take turns with surveillance.

With a sigh, Bruce crossed his arms, still staring at the screen. When his Bat-Comm rang, he quickly answered the call.

“What is it?”

“Hey, Bruce,” Dick greeted him sheepishly. “Can you help me out? I think Barbara is still mad at me.”

Bruce snorted. “I know all about your love triangle with the two redheads. I’m not getting involved.”

“Oh, come on! Please,” Dick whined. “Can’t you give me some fatherly advice?”

Bruce rolled his eyes underneath his cowl. Why did all the teenagers come to him for advice?

“Sure. Get your shit together, boy,” he snapped before hanging up.

Then he put the Bat-Comm away and continued watching the computer screen.

Around noon, Bruce walked to the conference room and sat down at the round table. The Justice League had a meeting scheduled for today. Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and Martian Manhunter were already seated at the table.

Within a few minutes, Green Lantern and Flash rushed into the conference room and sat down. They had barely arrived on time. It was obvious what the couple had been doing. They both smelled like sex, and Flash’s red mask was crooked like he had dressed in a hurry.

“Let’s begin the meeting.” Batman announced, “So far today, I haven’t detected any major threats with my surveillance. And, thanks to Oracle and Supergirl, Luthor is still in jail. The Joker is also locked away in Arkham Asylum.”

“Well, that’s good. I fucking hate those guys,” Hal interjected loudly, then Barry elbowed him so he’d stay quiet.

Bruce glanced at Arthur. “Aquaman, I heard there was some trouble in Atlantis. Do you need any help finding Black Manta?”

“No, I will find the bastard and destroy him myself,” Aquaman said darkly.

“Wonder Woman, do you have anything to report?” Batman asked.

“No. Themyscira has been quite peaceful.” Diana smiled as she offered, “If Supergirl is interested in combat training, let her know that she is welcome to visit.”

“I’ll do that.” He looked at J’onn next. “Martian Manhunter, have our long range scanners found anything new in deep space?”

The Martian began a long-winded, detailed report. Bruce listened for a while until his gaze lingered on the empty chair beside him. Superman’s chair... Even though six months have passed, no one dared to remove the chair from the round table. All this time, the empty chair stayed as a reminder. It made Superman’s absence even more glaring. Batman was trying his best to lead the team on his own. But it was a lot to deal with. He missed sharing the responsibility. He missed
Clark…

“Hey, Earth to Spooky!” Hal suddenly yelled at him.

“What?” Bruce snapped out his thoughts.

At the table, all the other heroes were staring at him.

“Are you even paying attention?” Green Lantern huffed and crossed his arms. “We all gave our reports. Are we done here?”

“Oh… Yeah, meeting’s over.” Batman stood and hurried out of the room.

He walked down the hall until a red blur sped past him.

Flash stopped in front of him, looking worried. “Hey, Bruce. Are you feeling okay?”

“I’m fine.” He glared at the speedster.

“Is Clark still-?”

“If he woke up, don’t you think I would’ve told you?!” Bruce snapped angrily.

Barry flinched and cowered away from him. “S-Sorry.”

Bruce let out a long sigh, feeling guilty for his outburst. “It’s fine, Barry. Just…leave me alone.”

He continued down the hall.

SxB

Late at night, Bruce flew to Metropolis and landed the Batplane in a field in the city park. Then he stepped out of the plane and walked down the sidewalk. The path led to the center of the park, where a statue of Superman stood tall at the heart of the city. Bruce had heard about the memorial’s construction, but he wanted to see it for himself, in person.

He gazed up at the tall figure, which resembled Clark so much. The white marble statue portrayed Superman standing heroically with his hands on hips and his cape rippling behind him. Whoever sculpted this understood what Superman represented. The memorial was a testament to the hero’s bravery and honor. To defeat Doomsday, Superman had sacrificed himself for the world. He was Earth’s valiant protector. A guardian of the people…

Bruce stared at the statue for a long time, admiring it. Soon, snowflakes began to fall from the night sky. Even though he was wearing his Bat suit, Bruce still shivered from the cold. It was early December, and it was very chilly outside. Every time he exhaled, Bruce could see his own breath. Despite the freezing temperature, he remained at the memorial. He wasn’t ready to leave yet. He had so many thoughts racing in his mind.

When he heard footsteps, Bruce glanced over his shoulder and spotted Supergirl walking towards him. The girl stood beside him and gazed up at the statue.

“They just finished the memorial last week.” She sighed. “I can’t believe that it’s been six months. It doesn’t feel like he’s been gone that long.”

“Feels like it to me,” Bruce muttered sadly.

Kara gave him a sympathetic look. “I’m sorry.”
“Clark did what he had to do…” His chest tightened painfully as he gazed at the statue. “You should be proud of your cousin, Kara. He is the best hero I know. Despite our differences, I have nothing but respect for him. He showed me that justice doesn’t always have to come from the darkness.” Bruce paused before he finally admitted, “I really…miss him.”

“I know.” Kara placed a hand on his shoulder, trying to comfort him.

“Can you do me a favor?” he asked.

“Sure. I’ll do anything.”

“I don’t know when Clark will wake up. The coma could last for fifty years, and I may not live that long.” Bruce shuddered and clenched his fists, feeling hopeless. “If I die before he wakes, can you give him a message for me?”

“Yes. Of course, I will.” Her blue eyes shined with compassion. “What’s the message?”

“Tell him I’m sorry for making him wait. If I could do it all over again, I…I would’ve done things differently.”

“Done what differently?”

“He’ll know what I mean.” Bruce turned and started walking away.

“Bruce,” Kara called out, then he stopped and glanced at her.

“Maybe he’ll wake up sooner than you think.” She tried to encourage him, “Don’t give up hope.”

Bruce simply nodded and kept walking.

SxB

After he flew back to the Batcave, Bruce headed up to the manor. Then he took a shower and pulled on a long-sleeve shirt and some pajama pants. It was almost 2 AM, but he knew that he wouldn’t be able to fall asleep. He felt too restless.

Wandering around the manor, Bruce found a bottle of scotch in the study. Then he poured himself a glass and trudged back upstairs. He entered Clark’s room and sat down in the chair next to the bed. Clark was still laying there, as motionless as ever.

Through the window, Bruce could see the snow falling from the sky. It would be Christmas soon, and the Kents would definitely want to spend the holiday with their son. Bruce would have to invite them over…

With a sigh, Bruce drank some of the scotch and set down the glass. He stared at Clark’s face for a while, feeling depressed.

For the past six months, Bruce has had a lot of time to think. And more often than not, his thoughts were always focused on Clark. He’d think about everything they’ve gone through together. All the enemies they’ve fought… And all the times they’ve saved each other… Clark had become such a huge part of Bruce’s life. Now he felt the man’s absence every day. Nothing could ever fill the void that Clark left. Bruce missed him so much it hurt.

He sincerely cherished all the time they’ve spent together. And he would always remember Clark fondly. But Bruce had one regret…
There was one thing he wanted Clark to hear. One thing that Clark deserved to hear… But Bruce had been so stubborn, so foolish. And he had waited too long to say it.

In this comatose state, Bruce didn’t know if Clark could hear him. But it needed to be said.

“Clark…” Bruce reached toward the unconscious man and held his hand. “There’s something I need to tell you. I know I’ve been denying it for a long time, but the truth is I…I love you.”

Tears welled in his eyes as he confessed, “I love you, Clark. I’m sorry. I should’ve said it sooner. I wasted so much time.” Bruce bowed his head and cried. His whole body trembled as he squeezed Clark’s hand.

“Please wake up,” he begged desperately. “I can’t wait fifty years. I don’t even know if I’ll live that long. So, please… You have to wake up!”

Bruce leaned forward and rested his head against Clark’s chest. “I swear I’ll never take you for granted again. I-I’ll be nicer. I’ll treat you better. I’ll give you everything you want. Just wake up. Please!”

He clung to Clark, pleading between sobs, “Please wake up. I love you. Please wake up.”
A Dream Come True

Chapter Summary

The power of love...

Chapter Notes

Let there be joy <3

“The truth is I…I love you. I love you, Clark.”

In the darkness, Clark could hear a voice calling out to him. It was Bruce’s voice. What kind of dream was this?

“Please wake up. Please…” Bruce was crying. He sounded so upset. Clark wanted to comfort him, but he couldn’t move. It felt like his body was paralyzed. He could feel himself sinking further and further into the darkness.

“You have to wake up!” Bruce yelled frantically. “Please!”

Clark struggled against the dark abyss, trying to focus on the sound of Bruce’s voice. Why did he sound so far away?

“Please wake up. I love you. Please wake up.” Bruce was still sobbing. It was so heartbreaking to listen to. Clark wanted it to stop. He wanted to hold Bruce in his arms and take away all of his pain. He needed to reach Bruce, but the darkness had such a strong grip on him.

“I love you.” Those three words echoed in his mind over and over, calling out to him like a beacon in the dark. He could feel himself being pulled from the shadows.

“I love you, Clark.”

With a gasp, Clark opened his eyes. Then he quickly sat up, scanning his surroundings. He was in bed, alone inside his room at Wayne Manor. Had he really been dreaming just now? Bruce’s voice had sounded so real.

Clark gazed out the window, then his eyes widened in shock. The sun was shining brightly in the sky, reflecting off the snowy white ground. Snow? How could there be snow? It was the middle of summer, wasn’t it?

Confused, Clark hurried out of bed and jumped to his feet. Suddenly, a wave of dizziness hit him as he stumbled. He leaned against the wall for support and took deep breaths, trying to calm down. How long has he slept? Why did he feel so weak?

For a moment, Clark wracked his brain, trying to jog his memory. The last thing he remembered was fighting Doomsday. He had stabbed the monster with the kryptonite sword, and then… Clark
placed a hand over his chest, where Doomsday had impaled him on a spike. The wound was gone now. *How am I still alive?* Clark had so many questions.

Stumbling on his feet, Clark left the room and headed down the staircase. On the stairs, he held onto the railing, so he wouldn’t lose his balance. He felt so disoriented like he had been shaken from a deep sleep.

After he reached the bottom of the stairs, he stood in the main corridor for awhile, trying to gather his bearings. Everything seemed so surreal. Part of him wondered if he was dreaming right now.

The front door suddenly swung open, blowing in a cold breeze. Then Bruce and Alfred entered the manor together, wearing winter coats.

The butler shut the door as he spoke, “Master Bruce, perhaps you should consider—”

They both froze when they noticed Clark standing in the corridor. Bruce dropped a briefcase on the floor as his eyes widened. He looked completely shocked like he had seen a ghost.

Clark smiled at him. “Hey…”

“Clark!” Bruce immediately ran towards him. He flung his arms around Clark, pulling him into a tight embrace. Caught by surprise, Clark lost his footing and fell backwards onto the floor. Bruce fell with him, still holding him tightly. He sobbed as he hid his face in the crook of Clark’s neck.

Now Clark felt even more confused while he laid on the floor with Bruce crying on top of him.

“W-What is it? What’s wrong?” Clark wrapped his arms around Bruce, hugging him. “Bruce, why are you crying?”

“I thought you may never wake up,” Bruce whimpered.

“How?!” Clark still didn’t understand the situation.

Alfred stood over them, smiling happily. “Mr. Kent, you have been in a coma for six months.”

“What?! Seriously?!” Clark gaped at the butler in surprise.

Bruce clutched him tightly as he trembled, sobs wracking through his whole body. It was so distressing to see him weep like this. He hasn’t seen Bruce cry this much since Jason died. Concerned, Clark quickly sat up and held Bruce in his lap, cradling him in his arms.

“Shh. It’s okay.” Clark tried to comfort him. “I’m awake now. Please stop crying.”

Bruce clung to him, still sobbing uncontrollably.

It took a long time, but eventually Bruce stopped crying. Now Clark was sitting with him at the kitchen table while Alfred was busy cooking. The butler had insisted that Clark needed to eat something. And he was probably right since Clark hasn’t eaten at all in six months… Clark was still trying to wrap his mind around it. He couldn’t believe that he slept that long.

While Alfred cooked, Bruce briefly explained what had happened after the battle with Doomsday. Right now the whole world thought Superman was dead, and only a small group of people knew about the coma. Bruce had visited Jor-El for answers, and apparently Kryptonians could enter healing comas when they’re badly injured. That explained how Clark was still alive. When
Doomsday had stabbed him, Clark really thought he was done for. He didn’t expect to survive that fight.

Bruce also gave a report on the Justice League’s status. During Superman’s absence, Batman had led the team, so everything was running smoothly. The Joker and Lex Luthor were both locked up at the moment, which was always good to hear.

The most surprising news was about Kara. Bruce told him all about Supergirl and how she defeated Luthor in battle. That was really impressive. Clark had wanted to shield her from the dangers of crime fighting, but it seemed like she could handle herself. Maybe Clark had underestimated her.

Besides Supergirl becoming Metropolis’s new hero, it sounded like everything had mostly stayed the same. The next time Clark saw Kara, he needed to thank her.

When Alfred finished cooking, he set down a huge plate of food in front of Clark.

“Wow. This looks great. Thanks, Alfred.” Clark smiled and started eating. The butler’s cooking tasted amazing as always.

While he ate, Clark noticed Bruce staring at him closely. His eyes were still red and puffy from crying, and he looked anxious.

After swallowing a mouthful of food, Clark set down his fork and focused on Bruce. “What’s wrong?”

Bruce sighed. “I need to contact your friends and family. They’ll want to know that you’re awake.”

“Oh.”

“Everyone will probably rush over here to see you…” Bruce asked nervously, “Do you feel well enough to handle that?”

“Sure, I feel fine.” Clark smiled.

“Then why did you fall earlier?”

He tilted his head to the side. “What?”

Bruce shifted uncomfortably in his chair. “When I…hugged you earlier, you fell. Normally, you can support my weight easily, but I knocked you down.”

“Oh. Uh, I was just surprised.”

Bruce gave him a skeptical look, obviously still worried.

“I’m fine, really.” Clark reached over and held Bruce’s hand, trying to calm him down.

In response, Bruce tightly squeezed his hand like he was scared.

“Don’t worry, okay? I’m fine,” Clark assured him.

Bruce still looked unsure, but he nodded anyway. “Alright… I’ll go call everyone.”

He stood and walked away. Clark watched him leave, then he gazed down at his hand thoughtfully. Bruce had held his hand so tightly. And that hug earlier… Bruce had run into his
arms and literally knocked him off his feet. He has never hugged Clark that strongly before. The embrace had been so passionate and emotional.

Clark remembered Bruce’s voice from the darkness.

“Please wake up. I love you. Please wake up.”

Was that really just a dream or…?

SxB

The members of the Justice League were the first ones to arrive. One by one, they all rushed to the manor to see Clark. It felt like a family reunion. They were all hugging Clark and patting him on the back. Diana and Barry both started crying while Hal was a little teary-eyed. Even Arthur and J’onn seemed emotional as they welcomed Clark back happily. It was really touching. Clark didn’t know the team would miss him this much. The Justice League had truly become like a second family.

For a couple hours, they all sat in the living room, talking. Clark listened while everyone told him what was new and what he had missed. The whole time Bruce sat silently by his side, watching him attentively.

Then Barbara rolled into the room, in her wheelchair, followed by Kara. Clark immediately stood and walked over to the girls.

“H-Hi, Kal-El,” Kara greeted him awkwardly before Clark pulled her into a crushing hug.

“Thank you, Kara. I heard that you protected Metropolis for me. I’m proud of you.” He released his cousin and smiled at Barbara. “And, thank you for training her, Barbara.”

“No problem.” Barbara grinned. “I’m just glad that you’re finally awake.”

Tears sprang to her eyes as Kara flung her arms around Clark, hugging him back. She hid her face in his chest and cried while he patted her on the head. She sobbed for a couple minutes before finally letting go.

“S-Sorry.” Kara stepped back and sniffled, wiping at her eyes.

“It’s okay. I’m happy to see you too,” Clark said fondly.

Across the manor, he could hear the front door open, followed by Alfred’s voice.

“Welcome home, Master Dick.”

Next, Clark heard the sound of the footsteps as Dick ran inside.

“Where is he?! Where-” Dick rushed into the living room, still wearing his Robin outfit. The teen gasped in surprise when he spotted Clark.

“Oh, my God! Clark!” Dick ran towards Clark and hugged him.

“Hey, Dick.” He hugged the boy back.

Dick released him, smiling excitedly. “I’m so happy you’re awake. Bruce was a mess without you!”
Bruce glared at the teen while Hal snorted, laughing loudly.

“Aw, poor Spooky. Do you want a hug too?” Hal stepped toward him with outstretched arms.

“Back off,” Bruce growled, shoving Hal away.

The other league members all laughed in amusement. Meanwhile Bruce crossed his arms and looked away, obviously embarrassed. Clark couldn’t stop himself from grinning.

In the corner of the room, Dick nervously approached Barbara. “H-Hey, Babs. Long time no see.”

“Hmph.” She ignored him and wheeled herself away.

“Wait up. Babs, talk to me.” Dick chased after the red-haired girl, following her down the hall.

After Dick and Barbara left, Clark heard the sound of a plane. Through the window, he saw a black jet landing in the field next to Wayne Manor. He instantly recognized two heartbeats on the plane. His parents were here! Clark excitedly rushed out the room and headed outside.

In the field, his Ma and Pa both stepped off the jet. Then they hurried towards Clark and wrapped their arms around him, hugging him at the same time.

His Ma cried as she held him. “Oh, Sweetie. I was so worried!”

“I’m okay, Ma.” Clark smiled, trying to reassure her.

His Pa smacked him on the head. “Don’t you ever pull a stunt like that again!”

“Yes, sir. Sorry,” Clark said sheepishly.

When his Ma finally stopped crying, Clark led them inside the manor. In the living room, his parents cheerfully greeted all the Justice League members, shaking their hands and hugging them. His parents were especially affectionate toward Bruce.

When his Ma hugged Bruce, she held him in her arms for a long time and stroked his hair like she was comforting a child. “You must be so relieved, dear.”

“When is the wedding, son?” His Pa asked.

Clark gave his father a confused look. “What wedding?”

“Yours, of course.” His Ma finally let go of Bruce as she nagged, “Don’t waste any time. You should marry Bruce as soon as possible. Your poor fiancée has waited long enough.”

Fiancée? Clark gaped at her. “Wait. Who told you I was engaged?”

“Well, Bruce did.” She huffed and crossed her arms.

“Really?” Clark glanced at Bruce, who was fearfully backing away like he was trying to escape.

“You are engaged to Bruce, aren’t you?” His Pa asked suspiciously.

Before Bruce could flee, Clark quickly grabbed his hand and pulled him close. Clark grinned while wrapping an arm around Bruce.

“Yeah, that’s right.” Clark easily adopted the lie. “I was just surprised that he told you.”
Bruce stiffened as his eyes widened in shock. With his super hearing, Clark could hear Bruce’s heart hammering in his chest like he was terrified. When Bruce trembled slightly, Clark tightened his grip on him protectively.

“You two are engaged?!” Hal yelled in disbelief.

“I can’t believe that you hid this from us!” Barry complained.

“Yes, we are your friends. You should have told us.” Diana looked hurt by their alleged secrecy.

“I’m sorry.” Clark smiled guiltily. “We just, uh, didn’t have the chance to announce it yet. We wanted to tell everyone together. Right, Bruce?”

“R-Right,” Bruce muttered in a daze.

“Congratulations,” Arthur said happily. “I’m glad that it’s official now.”

“Yes. What a joyous occasion.” J’onn gave them both a knowing look, yet he didn’t expose the lie.

“Yeah, congratulations!” Barry chimed in, “You guys are such a cute couple!”

“So, who proposed?” Diana asked curiously.

“Oh! Yes, Sweetie, tell us how it happened!” Clark’s mother insisted, smiling excitedly.

They all stared at Clark while he hesitated. “Uh…” He glanced at Bruce, who was cringing like he wanted to hide.

“Actually, Bruce kinda sprung it on me.” Clark laughed nervously. “He really caught me by surprise.”

“Wow! So, Bruce proposed?” Barry exclaimed while others looked surprised too.

“Aww. Spooky, that’s adorable,” Hal cooed with a shit-eating grin.

Bruce gritted his teeth angrily, then he grabbed Clark’s arm and hurried away. “I need a moment alone with my fiancée.”

He dragged Clark down the hall and into the kitchen before releasing him. There was no one else in the kitchen, except for Alfred who was busy cooking. But after they arrived, the butler quickly left, giving them privacy.

“Why did you do that?” Bruce hissed under his breath.

“Do what?” Clark asked.

“You know what. Why did you go along with the lie?”

Clark shrugged nonchalantly. “Well, I figured that you must’ve had a good reason for lying, so I just went with it.”

“What? We need to fix this!” Bruce screeched, panicking.

“I’m having fun. You can tell everyone that you lied if you want.”

Bruce opened and closed his mouth a few times like he didn’t know how to respond. “D-Damn
it…” He stomped away, looking flustered.

Clark giggled to himself. Bruce was so cute. If he didn’t want people to think they were engaged, then he shouldn’t have lied about it. Clark only continued the lie because he wanted to protect Bruce. Also, the situation was pretty funny.

He left the kitchen and walked down the hall, heading back towards the living room. Suddenly, another wave of dizziness hit him and Clark tripped. He leaned against the wall, so he wouldn’t fall.

After a few seconds, the dizziness subsided. Then he entered a nearby bathroom and turned on the sink. Clark splashed some water on his face and gazed at his reflection in the mirror. Even though he wasn’t dizzy anymore, he still felt weaker than normal. What is wrong with me? Maybe he was still recovering from the coma, but he was probably fine. He didn’t want to worry everyone.

Clark wiped his face with a towel, then he stepped out of the bathroom.

To his surprise, Hal was waiting for him in the hallway. Even though the hero wasn’t dressed in his Green Lantern suit, he was still in the same color, wearing a green t-shirt.

“Hey, Supes. Can you settle a bet between me and Barry?” Hal smirked mischievously.

“Uh, sure. I guess.” Clark shrugged.

Hal leaned toward him and whispered, “What is Bruce like in bed?”

Clark glared at him angrily. “That’s none of your business.”

“Oh, come on,” Hal whined. “I’m just curious. I bet he’s a power bottom.”

“I don’t even know what that means.”

“So, does he top then? Barry thought Bruce would top, but I always pegged the guy as a bottom. Or do you guys switch places a lot? It’s good to be flexible.”

“Huh? What?” Clark stared at him in confusion.

“Well, you know…” Hal raised an eyebrow as he asked, “Wait, you have had sex with Bruce, right?”

Clark cleared his throat awkwardly while avoiding the other man’s gaze.

“What? Seriously?! But you two are engaged! Why haven’t you…?” Hal paused, then he snapped his fingers like he just had an epiphany. “Oh, I get it! You’ve only been with women, right? Are you nervous because you’ve never fucked a dude before? I can give you some pointers.”

“No thanks.” Clark tried to walk away.

Hal stood in the way, blocking his path. “Come on, let’s have bro talk. Really gay bro talk.”

“I don’t want to have gay bro talk.”

“Sure, you do! When you finally have sex with Bruce, you want to seem like you know what you’re doing, right?”

“Well…yeah.”
“So, let me help you,” Hal offered. “I’m basically an expert on gay sex. Barry and me fuck like all the time. I can tell you everything that you need to know.”

“I guess some advice wouldn’t hurt,” Clark conceded reluctantly.


SxB

Upstairs, in his room, Clark sat on the end of his bed while Hal paced back and forth, talking animatedly and gesturing with his hands. Hal wasn’t joking when he said he knew a lot about gay sex. He talked for ten minutes about preparation alone. Apparently, it was very important to use lube. Fucking a guy dry was a big no-no.

“Remember to use your fingers at first and open him up slowly. You don’t want to hurt him, so be careful. You can’t just stick it in,” Hal instructed.

Clark nodded like a good student.

Next, Hal talked all about stimulating the prostate during sex and how good it felt. All of this sounded important, so Clark listened attentively, soaking up the information.

Then Hal took out his cell phone and sat down next to Clark. “The best way to learn is to watch. Here. Look at this.” He played a video on his phone.

Clark stared at the phone and grimaced when he saw two naked guys fucking on the small screen. He never watched porn. He knew that Hal was only trying to help, but Clark didn’t feel comfortable watching this. Also, the naked guys in the video looked gross, and they were too shiny like they were covered in oil. Bruce was a thousand times more attractive than them.

“Ugh.” Clark shuddered in disgust and looked away. “Why are those guys so oily?”

“Guys always look oily in gay porn. And they all have bleached assholes.”

“B-Bleached?” Clark stuttered in confusion.

Hal laughed. “Am I corrupting you? Come on, pay attention to this part.” He pointed at the screen when one of the guys started moaning loudly. “See. He’s hitting the other guy’s prostate.”

Clark peeked at the porn again and nodded. For a while, Hal showed him some other dirty videos. And Clark forced himself to watch, feeling more and more disturbed.

It was a relief when the door swung open and Barry barged into the room.

“What are you guys doing in here?” In a flash, Barry sped towards them and glanced at the phone. “Are you watching porn?!”

Hal put his phone away as he announced proudly, “Yeah, that’s right. I’m educating the Boy Scout on gay sex. Spooky can thank me later.”

Barry snorted. “I think Bruce would kick your ass if he knew about this.”

“But I’ve been so helpful!” Hal argued.

“He looks traumatized!” Barry pointed at Clark, who was sitting silently and bowing his head in shame.
“I have seen things that I can’t unsee,” Clark muttered guiltily.

“Pfft. Oh, he’s fine.” Hal waved a hand dismissively.

Barry smacked him on the head, then Hal winced. “Ow!”

“Idiot. If Bruce wants to beat you up later, I’ll let him.” Barry glared at his boyfriend and he grabbed Clark’s arm, pulling him away. “Come on, Supes. Everyone’s waiting for you downstairs.”

Clark followed Barry out of the room and down the stairs. As they walked, Clark could feel another wave of dizziness coming, but he tried to ignore it. When they reached the living room, Clark was greeted by several smiling faces.

He smiled back, then he stumbled on his feet. All the friendly faces suddenly blurred before they faded into the darkness. Clark fell backwards as he heard Bruce scream.

“Clark!”

When Clark opened his eyes again, the first thing he saw was Bruce’s face. Those grayish blue eyes were filled with tears. Bruce looked so worried. He was kneeling on the floor next to Clark while everyone else watched anxiously. His parents, Kara, and the Justice League were all still in the living room. Clark must’ve blacked out for a few seconds.

He sat up while Bruce demanded, “How are you feeling? Are you okay?”

“Y-Yeah, I’m fine,” Clark mumbled softly. “Just tired.”

Bruce shot up and barked at the guests, “All of you, get out! Clark needs to rest!”

With a sigh, Clark pushed himself off the floor, staggering to his feet. “Bruce, don’t yell at them.”

“Right, sorry.” Bruce immediately apologized as he latched onto Clark, helping him stand.

Then Alfred walked into the room and calmly addressed their guests, “Master Bruce would like to thank you all for coming, but unfortunately I must ask you all to leave. It seems that this visit has been too much excitement for Master Clark, and he must retire for the evening. If you wish, I will contact you all later with updates on Master Clark’s condition. But for now, it is imperative to let him rest.”

Clark gaped at the butler for a moment. Master Clark? Since when did he become Master Clark?

“Oh, of course.” His Ma rushed over to Clark and hugged him. “Get some rest, Sweetie. I hope you feel better soon.”

One by one, all the guests quickly said goodbye to Clark. Then Bruce led him out of the room and up the stairs. On the staircase, Clark stumbled slightly as he leaned on Bruce for support. When they reached the second floor, they headed to Bruce’s bedroom instead of Clark’s, which seemed a little odd. But Clark was too exhausted to question it.

He flopped down on Bruce’s bed and laid down on his side. Then he felt Bruce pulling a blanket over him. When Clark shut his eyes again, he instantly fell asleep.

SxB

“Help! Someone! Please help me!” Several people were crying out for help in Metropolis. There
was a building on fire, and some civilians were trapped inside. Clark could hear all of it with his super hearing. The roaring flames and the screams of terror…

Groaning, Clark sat up and glanced at the clock on the nightstand. It was almost 11 PM. He had slept for hours, but he still felt tired. That didn’t matter though… Right now, he needed to save those people in the burning building.

In a blur of super speed, he jumped out of bed and rushed to his room. He quickly found a spare Superman suit in a drawer and changed clothes, then he zoomed out of the manor. Soaring across the sky, Superman hurried over to Metropolis and located the fire.

A large apartment complex was engulfed in flames and dozens of people were still inside. In a flash, Superman flew into the building over and over, carrying people outside to safety. There was a huge crowd on the sidewalk nearby, watching him in awe.

“Look! It’s Superman! He’s alive!” The spectators began to clap and cheer for him. Some people were even crying tears of joy.

Clark smiled at them and headed back toward the burning building to save another group of people. Then Kara suddenly zoomed past him, flying into the building. She grabbed the last few people and carried them to safety. Now the citizens were cheering for her too. Kara looked very similar to Superman in her Supergirl outfit.

“Nice suit.” Clark grinned at her, beaming with pride.

She smiled back at him while the crowd continued to celebrate loudly. “Let’s talk somewhere more private.”

“Sure.” He flew away from the crowd, waving at them.

A few miles away, Clark and Kara flew over the city and landed on top of a skyscraper. The wind blew fiercely as they stood on the ledge of the tall building together.

“Thanks again for protecting Metropolis while I was gone.” Clark praised her, “You’ve done a really good job, Kara.”

His cousin gave him a serious look. “Do you think it’s a good idea for you to be here?”

“What do you mean?”

“Shouldn’t you be resting?” she asked.

“I feel fine,” Clark claimed before he suddenly doubled over with a fit of coughing.

“Are you okay?!?” Kara frantically patted him on the back.

“Yeah, it’s nothing.” He coughed a few more times and cleared his throat. “I guess I breathed in some smoke from the fire.”

She looked concerned. “I breathed in the smoke too, but it didn’t affect me.”

“Don’t worry. I’m fine.”

“If you need more time to rest, I can keep protecting Metropolis for you.”

“Thanks, but this is my city. I got this covered,” he assured her.
“Does Bruce know you’re here?”

“No…” Clark frowned slightly. “I don’t need his permission to be here.”

Kara crossed her arms with a stern expression on her face. “You should go home to Bruce. You know he’ll worry.”

He sighed. “Yeah, I know. See you later, Kara.”

Hovering into the air, Clark flew away. He soared high above the clouds, heading back to Gotham. As he approached the manor, he was starting to feel a little breathless. Maybe resting a bit more wasn’t such a bad idea… Normally, a short flight like this never tired him out.

At Wayne manor, he landed on the balcony outside Bruce’s room. The curtains were drawn, so he couldn’t see inside, but he could hear the TV and Bruce’s heartbeat. Clark had hoped that he could sneak home without Bruce ever noticing that he left, but it seemed too late for that.

With a sigh, Clark opened the balcony door and stepped inside. The news was playing on the TV, showing images of Superman in Metropolis. On the other side of the room, Bruce was sitting in a chair, glaring at him. He looked furious as he gripped the TV remote in his hand.

Clark gulped nervously. “Hey, Bruce.”

Bruce shot up and hurled the remote at the TV, breaking the expensive flat screen. “What the hell were you thinking?!”

Clark flinched in surprise while Bruce continued to shout angrily, “You aren’t well enough to fight and you just announced to the whole world that you’re alive! You fucking moron!”

“It’s okay.” Clark held up his hands in a placating gesture. “I’m well enough to fight if I have to.”

“No, you’re not! You just woke up from a coma! And you passed out in front of everyone!”

“I feel fine.”

“Stop it! Stop lying to me!” Bruce screamed at the top of his lungs.

“I’m not lying!” Clark tried to explain, “I-I just don’t want you to worry. I’m a little tired, but it’s not a big deal.”

“Yes, it is! You shouldn’t have left the manor!”

“But people were in danger! I had to save them!” Clark argued.

“No, you didn’t! Kara would’ve saved them! You idiot!” Bruce shook with unbridled rage. “Do you ever think before you act?! How could you do something so goddamn stupid?!”

Clark scowled resentfully as he turned to leave. “I don’t have to listen to this.”

He stormed onto the balcony, about to fly away.

Before he could take off, Bruce chased after him and grabbed his hand. “Wait!”

“What? You’re not done with the insults?” Clark growled and glanced over his shoulder. Then he blinked in surprise.
“Don’t go…” Tears spilled down Bruce’s face as he pleaded, “I’m sorry. Please don’t go.”

Clark felt his heart clench in his chest. Just the sight of Bruce crying washed away all of his anger. Now he was filled with a powerful urge to protect the man he loved. Clark pulled Bruce into his arms, holding him closely. “Shh. It’s okay. I’m not going anywhere.”

Bruce hid his face in Clark’s shoulder as he cried. “I can’t lose you again.”

“You won’t. I’m here now. It’s okay,” Clark said soothingly.

Returning the affection, Bruce wrapped his arms around Clark and snuggled closer to him.

“Please wake up. I love you.”

At that moment, Clark remembered Bruce’s voice from the dream… Was it really just a dream? Or did Bruce actually say those things? Clark needed to know the truth.

“Bruce, do you love me?”

After he asked the question, Bruce tensed and pulled away from the embrace. Shit. Did Clark upset him even more?

“I’m sorry,” he quickly apologized. “I was just-”

“Yes.”

“What?” Clark gaped at him in shock.

With teary eyes, Bruce seriously met his gaze as he confessed, “Yes, I love you.”
“Y-You love me?” Clark stuttered as he stared at Bruce with wide, disbelieving eyes. Was this really happening? It seemed too good to be true. He had waited so long for this moment. Now he was having trouble accepting it. Part of him was actually afraid that this was a trick somehow.

“Yes.” Bruce nodded while wiping the tears off his face.

“Like romantically?” Clark clarified. “Like you’re in love with me?”

“Yes.”

“Are you sure?” Clark asked doubtfully.

Bruce rolled his eyes as he repeated himself, “Yes.”

“You really love me?”

“Yes.” He huffed in annoyance. “How many times do I have to say-?”

Clark leaned forward and kissed him, muffling his voice. Obviously caught by surprise, Bruce froze for a second before kissing back. He opened his mouth wider, which Clark immediately took advantage of. Slipping his tongue inside, Clark deepened the kiss as he cupped Bruce’s face with both hands and ravaged his mouth. Bruce shivered against him, stumbling slightly.

When Clark pulled away from the kiss, Bruce was blushing and breathless.

“So, we’re dating now, right?” Clark asked, “I’m your boyfriend?”

“Yes. Now shut up.” Bruce yanked him into another kiss.

They clung to each other as they kissed feverishly over and over. Desperate for more, Clark nipped and sucked on Bruce’s neck while groping his ass. Bruce let out a short gasp, then he clenched his jaw shut like he was trying to silence himself. Why was he holding back? It only spurred Clark on.
Now he was determined to make Bruce lose control.

Lifting Bruce off the ground, Clark carried him inside and dropped him on the bed. Laying flat on his back, Bruce panted as he gazed up at Clark with half-lidded eyes. God, he was so beautiful. Just the sight of him was enough to leave Clark painfully hard. Straddling Bruce on the bed, Clark kissed him hungrily while grinding against him. Their erections rubbed together through their clothes as Bruce arched his hips upwards. Bruce writhed underneath him, moaning in pleasure.

Clark smirked at the sound. He wanted to hear more. He wanted to see Bruce come completely undone.

Reaching down, Clark unbuttoned Bruce’s pants, about to slide his hand underneath the clothing.

“Wait.” Bruce quickly grabbed his hand, stopping him. “You have to promise me something first.”

“What?”

“Don’t leave the manor as Superman until I say you’re ready.”

Clark sighed in frustration, then he climbed off of Bruce and sat beside him. “If innocent people are in danger, I can’t stand by and do nothing.”

Bruce sat up as he insisted, “But you aren’t well enough to fight. You need to rest.”

“Can’t we argue later?” Clark whined. He’d much rather have sex right now.

“No, Clark. I’m serious. I don’t think you’re completely healed yet. You shouldn’t be so reckless.”

“Heh. You’re lecturing me about being reckless?” He scoffed at the absurdity of it. “You take risks all the time, but I don’t tell you how to be Batman.”

“Will you please just listen to me? I…” Bruce hesitated for a moment before he finally forced the words out, “I’m scared.”

“W-What?” Clark gaped at him in surprise, unsure if he heard that right.

“I’m scared.” Bruce trembled as he admitted desperately, “If something bad happens to you, I… I won’t be able to cope. It’ll ruin me.” Tears welled in his eyes. “It’s your fault that I’m like this. I can’t live without you.”

When a single tear streaked down his face, Clark quickly grabbed onto Bruce, pulling him into his arms.

“Please don’t cry.” He held Bruce close as he swore, “Nothing will ever separate us again. I’m yours forever, and I’ll never leave your side. I can’t hide in the manor, but I’ll be careful. I’ll be very, very careful.”

“No fighting?” Bruce sniffled like he was holding back tears.

“I won’t fight until I’m completely healed.”

“You promise?”

“Yes, I promise.” Clark stroked a hand through Bruce’s hair, trying to soothe him. “So, please calm down. I don’t want you to be scared.”
Bruce nuzzled his face against Clark’s chest as he whispered, “I love you.”

Clark felt his heart skip a beat. Then he swallowed a lump in his throat, feeling himself become teary-eyed. “I-I love you too.”

They held each other for a long time, unable to let go. Eventually, Bruce fell asleep in Clark’s arms. Then Clark laid back down on the mattress while easing Bruce down with him. He spooned Bruce from behind, curling around him protectively. This whole situation was beyond his wildest dreams. Ever since Clark woke up, Bruce has been so…vulnerable.

The normally stoic Batman was an emotional mess right now. It was concerning, but also refreshing in a way. It was nice to know that Bruce cared so much. Although it was upsetting to see him cry… The situation was definitely serious when Batman could admit to being scared. Usually, Clark would expect the end of the world or something. But instead Bruce was scared because of him. Bruce was scared of losing Clark.

A feeling of warmth washed over him as he held Bruce closer in his arms. He loved Bruce so much. Clark would never let go. When he was comforting Bruce earlier, he had meant every word he said.

*I’m yours forever.*

SxB

In the morning, Bruce opened his eyes and found a pair of muscular arms wrapped around him. There was a large warm body pressed snuggly against his back. Bruce sat up and gazed down at Clark, who was still fast asleep. The Kryptonian looked so peaceful while his chest rose and fell slightly with every breath.

With a small smile, Bruce combed a hand through Clark’s soft hair. “Hey.”

When Clark didn’t stir, Bruce nudged his shoulder. “Hey, Clark.”

The Kryptonian continued to sleep deeply, completely dead to the world.

“Clark?” Bruce paled with fear. He panicked as his mind raced. Was it another coma? Did he lose Clark again?! “Clark, wake up!” Bruce shook him frantically.

“Huh?” Clark jolted awake, looking confused. “What’s wrong?”

As soon as Clark opened his eyes, Bruce let out a sigh of relief. Now he felt ridiculous for overreacting.

“N-Nothing,” he muttered awkwardly. “Sorry. Go back to sleep.”

Bruce tried to scoot away, then Clark snatched his arm.

“C’mere.” Clark yanked him closer.

Losing his balance, Bruce toppled over and fell into the other man’s arms. His eyes widened in surprise as Clark grabbed onto his chin and tilted his head back. Before he could react, Clark was kissing him strongly, nibbling on his bottom lip and sucking on his tongue. Bruce shuddered as he tilted his head further back, accepting the affection.
When Clark finally pulled away from the kiss, he smirked. “If you get scared again, wake me up.”

Bruce blushed hotly. “I-I’m not-”

Clark laughed and kissed him again. “You’re too cute, Bruce.” He yawned sleepily before laying back down, resting his head on a pillow.

While Clark shut his eyes, Bruce jumped out of bed and stomped away. His face was still flushed with embarrassment. He had made a fool of himself. He must’ve seemed so needy, waking Clark up because he freaked out for no reason. Bruce angrily clenched his fists as he stormed out of the room.

SxB

In the Batcave, Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, gathering intel on the Penguin’s latest scheme. He knew that the fat villain was planning something sinister. Bruce needed to focus and figure it out, but he was too distracted. While he worked, he kept checking the security footage of his own bedroom. It was almost 6 PM and Clark was still asleep in bed. Why was Clark sleeping so much? Was something seriously wrong with him?

When he heard footsteps, Bruce glanced over his shoulder at Alfred. The butler strolled towards him and set down a cup of coffee.

“Here is your coffee, Master Bruce.” Alfred gazed at the security footage of Clark sleeping and frowned with a worried expression. “I understand the importance of rest, but Master Clark has been asleep for a very long time. He hasn’t eaten at all today. Would you like me to wake him?”

“No, I’ll do it.” Bruce stood and walked away, taking the coffee with him.

He took the elevator up to the manor, then he headed upstairs to his bedroom. Clark was still laying in bed, fast asleep. With a sigh, Bruce walked over to the bed and set the cup of coffee on the nightstand.

“Hey, Clark.” Bruce sat down beside the sleeping Kryptonian and forcefully nudged his shoulder. “Clark, wake up.”

“Hmm? What?” Clark barely opened his eyes.

“It’s almost time for dinner.”

“Really?” Clark yawned as he sat up, then he glanced at the clock on the nightstand. “Oh, man. I didn’t mean to sleep that long.”

“Here, drink this.” Bruce handed him the cup of coffee.

“Thanks.” Clark drank all the coffee while Bruce watched him closely, studying him.

“How are you feeling?” Bruce asked.

“I’m okay.”

Unconvinced, he placed a hand on Clark’s forehead, checking his temperature. “Do you feel sick at all? Do you feel weak or dizzy? Are you hurting anywhere?”

Clark smiled at him. “I’m fine, really.”
“Don’t lie to me,” Bruce growled.

“I’m not. I feel fine.” Clark set down the empty cup, then he stood and suddenly grabbed onto Bruce, flinging him over his shoulder. “You’re still light as a feather.”

“Put me down!” Bruce snapped as he struggled against the Kryptonian’s hold.

“I’m starving. I wonder what Alfred is cooking for dinner.” Clark casually walked away while Bruce squirmed helplessly on his shoulder.

“Damn it, Clark! You’ve made your point!”

In the dining room, Clark and Bruce sat at the table together, eating. For dinner, Alfred had cooked lobster thermidor again—Bruce’s favorite. It tasted great as usual. Clark quickly wolfed down the food, clearing his plate. Then Alfred provided him with a second helping, and Clark ate all of that too. He was so hungry after sleeping all day.

Beside him, Bruce was picking at his own food while he watched Clark with concern. He was obviously still worried. And the fact Clark had slept for 18 hours straight probably didn’t help.

“Just so you know…I’m going to fly to Metropolis tomorrow,” Clark said carefully.

“Why?” Bruce demanded.

With a sigh, Clark explained, “Everyone at the Daily Planet is probably worried about me. Also, I should go back to work.”

Bruce frowned while crossing his arms. “That’s a bad idea. If Clark Kent returned at the same time as Superman, wouldn’t that seem suspicious?”

“Oh…” Clark blinked as he realized the mistake. Then he chuckled sheepishly. “Yeah, I guess I should wait awhile before going back to work. But I have to visit Lois at least. I don’t want her to worry.”

“She knows you’re awake. I called her yesterday. She wanted to come to Gotham, but she was too busy with work.”

“I’ll visit her tonight,” Clark decided.

“Just call her instead. Here.” Bruce took out his personal cell phone and gave it to Clark.

“Thanks.” On the phone, Clark scrolled through the contact list until he found Lois’s number. He’d prefer seeing her in person, but this was good enough. At least this way, he didn’t have to argue with Bruce again.

After dinner, Bruce headed down to the Batcave while Clark sat in the living room and called Lois on the cell phone. She was really happy to hear from him. When she first heard his voice, she started crying. They talked for a couple hours, gossiping about work and laughing. Apparently, not much has changed at the Daily Planet. Lois kept asking him when he planned to return to work. Then she said that she missed her best friend, which warmed his heart.

He was so lucky to have such good friends.
Bruce sat in front of the Batcomputer, hacking into the Penguin’s secret account on the dark web. Normally, he’d give this task to Oracle, but she was taking the night off. Batman, on the other hand, didn’t have that luxury. As always, he had plenty of work to do. Once he shut down the Penguin’s account, he needed to go on patrol. It was already 9 PM and all the common criminals would come out soon.

While he worked, Bruce’s mind kept wandering back to Clark. Was he still on the phone with Lois? Clark had been talking to her for hours. How could two people talk for that long? Bruce couldn’t understand it. On the phone, people should just say what needed to be said and hang up…

Bruce scowled at the computer screen, trying to focus on his work and failing miserably. The same thoughts continued to plague his mind, tormenting him. Did Clark really enjoy talking to Lois that much? Those two have dated for a long time… Before they broke up, Clark had been Lois’s boyfriend for over a year.

Irritated, Bruce ripped off his cowl and flung it aside. Then he ran a hand through his hair and let out a sigh of frustration. He hated how much this bothered him. The more he tried to ignore his feelings, the more annoyed he became. Clark was his now. Damn it.

Eventually, Clark entered the Batcave, carrying the phone in his hand.

With a smile, he handed the phone back to Bruce. “Here’s your phone. Thanks again.”

“You must’ve had a lot to say to her,” Bruce grumbled bitterly as he put the phone away.

Clark chuckled. “Are you jealous?”

“No. You can talk to your ex-girlfriend all day if you want. I don’t give a shit.”

“Oh my God.” Clark’s eyes widened in surprise. “You are jealous!”

“Shut up,” Bruce snapped at him.

Clark laughed and leaned over, wrapping his arms around the grumpy man. “Come on, don’t be mad. You know Lois is just a friend.”

“Hmph. Whatever. I don’t care.”

“You’re so cute when you’re jealous,” Clark teased him.

“I’m not jealous!” Bruce yelled angrily. Then he froze when Clark suddenly pressed his mouth against his. Bruce was stunned for a moment, quelled by the affection.

Clark pulled away from the kiss with a predatory gleam in his eyes. “Come here.” He grabbed onto Bruce, lifting him out of the chair.

“W-What’re you doing?!” Bruce squirmed in the Kryptonian’s grasp.

Clark sat down in the chair while holding Bruce in his lap. Then he rested his chin on Bruce’s shoulder and enclosed his arms around Bruce’s waist, pressing closely against his back. When Bruce wiggled slightly in the Clark’s lap, he could feel an erection poking at his backside.

Bruce swallowed nervously, struggling to maintain his composure. “I…I’m trying to work, Clark.”

“Don’t mind me. Keep working,” Clark purred next to his ear.
A shiver ran down Bruce’s spine as his heart pounded excitedly in his chest. “I can’t work like this.”

“Why not?”

“Get out of my chair,” Bruce ordered.

“Aw, you’re no fun.” Clark lowered his hands, grasping Bruce’s utility belt. “Before I go, let me cheer you up a bit.” He easily snapped the belt off and tossed it aside.

Bruce gasped in surprise when he felt a hand slide down his pants. Clark reached for Bruce’s cock, stroking him lewdly. Pleasure coursed through him as his cock hardened instantly in Clark’s hand. With a shudder, Bruce leaned back while Clark continued to fondle him.

“Going commando, huh?” Clark sounded pleased, his voice deep with lustful desire.

He caressed Bruce’s manhood, massaging his thumb against the tip of his penis and rubbing his shaft. The strokes were long and tortuous, giving just enough pressure to keep him on edge. Bruce threw his head back as he gasped and shuddered. Embarrassing sounds escaped his lips until he covered his mouth, trying to muffle himself.

“No, I want to hear your voice.” With his other hand, Clark grabbed Bruce’s wrist and pulled the hand away from his mouth.

No longer muffled, Bruce moaned loudly as his breath hitched.

“Just like that,” Clark praised him.

Teetering on the edge of orgasm, Bruce could feel a knot tighten in his stomach. He trembled while spreading his legs apart, giving Clark easier access. He was at the Kryptonian’s mercy now. The overwhelming desire to cum had clouded his mind.

“F-Fuck.” Bruce whimpered, aching with need.

“You have so much pre-cum.” Clark took away his hand, admiring the slickness of his palm.

“Don’t stop!” Bruce barked impatiently.

With a chuckle, Clark reached down and grasped Bruce’s erection again, stroking him. “You like that?”

“Yes, you bastard. Quit toying with me and just- Ah!” Bruce gasped when Clark applied more pressure, quickening the pace of his strokes.

The knot in his stomach tightened again while Bruce trembled in anticipation. He was so close. His heart pounded in his chest as he breathed in short gasps.

“Say my name,” Clark whispered in his ear.

“C-Clark.” Bruce arched his back, chanting the name, “Clark. Clark. Clark!” In a burst of ecstasy, he cried out as he finally climaxed.

Cum spurted all over the front of his Bat suit while Clark continued pumping his cock. Bruce moaned, writhing through the aftershocks of his orgasm. Waves of pleasure crashed through him, leaving him limp and dazed. Bruce hasn’t cum that hard in years…
Breathing heavily, he leaned back against Clark’s chest. Then Bruce shut his eyes, resting for a moment. He opened his eyes when Clark stood abruptly, cradling him in his arms. The Kryptonian stepped to the side, then he set Bruce down, back in the chair.

“Okay, I’ll let you work now.” Clark smirked proudly before walking away.

While Clark left in the elevator, Bruce gazed down at his ruined Bat suit and frowned. Now he was all sticky and covered in cum. How the hell was he supposed to work like this? He was a complete mess.

“B-Bastard.” Bruce blushed as he recalled the way Clark had toyed with him.

SxB

After he left the Batcave, Clark headed upstairs to the master bathroom, which was right next to Bruce’s bedroom. He had decided to take a shower before going to bed. He needed to get cleaned up. Also, he really needed to masturbate. He was still painfully hard after all the fun he had with Bruce. Clark smiled to himself as he remembered the sound of Bruce moaning in pleasure. That had been so hot. He loved how vocal Bruce became when he was close to cumming.

More images replayed in his mind while Clark undressed and stepped into the shower. Hot water sprayed down on him, filling the air with steam. Clark continued thinking of Bruce as he pumped his own erection. He shut his eyes and imagined Bruce naked underneath him, moaning and calling out his name.

Suddenly, he heard the bathroom door open. Then he opened his eyes and glanced to the side, through the glass shower stall door. Bruce was standing in the bathroom, dressed only in the black Kevlar pants of his Bat suit. He was shirtless with his beautifully toned chest exposed.

Unexpectedly, Bruce marched over to the shower stall and opened the glass door.

“B-Bruce?” Clark gaped at him in surprise and instinctively covered his erection with a hand.

“What’re you doing here?”

“Pay back.” Bruce barged into the shower stall and shoved Clark against the wall.

Stumbling back, Clark braced his arms against the wall for support. Then his eyes widened in shock when he saw Bruce go down on his knees.

Bruce grabbed the base of his cock as he slid Clark’s erection into his mouth. Clark shuddered in pleasure, leaning against the wall. The wet heat of Bruce’s mouth felt amazing. Bruce readily sucked on his cock, swirling his tongue over the tip. Clark let out a gasp when Bruce deep-throated him.

Part of Clark couldn’t believe that this was happening. He stared down at Bruce, watching the beautiful man suck on his cock with abandon. Water sprayed down on them both as steam rose in the air. Clark combed a hand through Bruce’s wet hair, enjoying the sensation of that perfect mouth. He could feel his orgasm approaching fast. He wouldn’t last much longer. Clark shut his eyes, lost in the pleasure.

When Bruce stopped suddenly, Clark wanted to scream. He gazed down at Bruce and saw the man smirking at him.

“Say my name,” Bruce demanded vengefully.
Clark blinked in surprise. “You…You are so petty,” he complained.

“I could stop.”

“No, don’t stop!” Clark begged desperately, “Don’t stop. Please, Bruce. Please.”

“That’s better.” Satisfied, Bruce slid the erect cock in his mouth again, licking and sucking with fervor.

“Mmm. Bruce. Bruce.” Clark moaned as he climaxed, shooting his semen into Bruce’s mouth.

Through the haze of pleasure, Clark winced guiltily. Perhaps he should’ve given Bruce more warning. Now he was worried that Bruce might be mad. But to his surprise, Bruce didn’t seem to mind as he swallowed the semen.

Standing up from his knees, Bruce leaned towards Clark and kissed him on the mouth. Clark’s eyes widened as he tasted himself on Bruce’s lips. It turned him on, in a possessive way, knowing that Bruce tasted like him.

“I’ll let you shower now.” Bruce gave him a smug look and walked away, stepping out of the shower stall.

While Bruce left, Clark let out a shaky breath, leaning against the wall for support. His heart was pounding fast. And he almost felt dizzy, surrounded by all the steam. Oh, my God. That was so hot.

Soon, he could already feel himself becoming hard again.
Wake-up Call

Chapter Summary

Clark and Bruce visit Jor-El for answers

The alarm beeped continuously for several minutes until Clark finally opened his eyes. The noise was so annoying. He couldn’t ignore it anymore. Sitting up in bed, Clark reached toward the clock on the nightstand and shut off the alarm. It was already noon. Last night, Clark had set the alarm so he wouldn’t sleep all day again.

With a yawn, Clark sleepily glanced at the other side of the bed, which was empty now. Bruce had already left without Clark even noticing. Usually, he wasn’t such a deep sleeper. But lately, it has been really difficult for Clark to wake up, and he always felt tired… Maybe there was something really wrong with him.

Clark frowned, feeling slightly worried. He was sure that he’d feel better after resting for a few days. So, why did he feel the same? He shouldn’t be this exhausted.

Rushing out of bed, Clark headed to the bathroom and prepared for the day. After brushing his teeth and shaving, he quickly got dressed and walked downstairs. In the kitchen, he found Alfred cleaning the dishes.

The butler greeted him with a smile. “Good afternoon, Master Clark. Do you feel well-rested?”

“Uh, sure.” Clark lied as he smiled back. He didn’t want anyone to worry.

“Master Bruce is attending a board meeting at the moment, but he should return home shortly,” Alfred explained. “In the meantime, would you like to eat some lunch, Master Clark? Or I could prepare breakfast for you if you prefer?”

“Lunch sounds good, Alfred. Thanks.” Clark sat down at the kitchen table. “And you know you can just call me Clark, right? We’re friends. I feel weird being called Master.”

“I serve the Wayne Family. As a butler, it is proper etiquette to address family members as Master.”

Clark’s eyes widened at the implication. “You…You really think I’m family?”

“Of course, you are, Master Clark.” Alfred said fondly. “What would you like for lunch?”

“A-Anything’s good.” Clark swallowed a lump in his throat, deeply touched by the butler’s words. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Master Clark.”

SxB

After lunch, Clark wandered around the manor for a while, then he headed down to the Batcave. Since Bruce wasn’t home yet, Clark was feeling bored. He didn’t have much to do, besides eating
and sleeping and hanging out with Bruce… Usually, his job at the Daily Planet and his duty as Superman always kept him busy. But right now, Clark was supposed to take a break from both. He knew that Bruce wanted him to rest, but it was so boring to do nothing all day.

Clark walked around the Batcave, staring at all of Bruce’s different gadgets. He was still curious about the Shark Repellant Bat Spray. Clark laughed as he gazed at the ordinary-looking spray can, resting on a podium. Some of the devices had pretty funny names.

Strolling to the other side of the cave, Clark admired Batman’s numerous vehicles. It would be fun to drive the Batmobile for once, or even the Batblade. Then he gazed up at the Batplane, which was sleek like a fighter jet. The black plane must weigh several tons at least…

Clark stared at the plane thoughtfully. He wanted to test his strength. Normally, Superman could lift a plane easily, but he still felt weaker than usual. He needed to see what he was capable of right now.

With both hands, Clark grabbed the Batplane and carefully lifted it off the ground. He held the plane high above his head for a few seconds until his arms began to shake with exertion. Clark grimaced as his muscles strained to carry the heavy load. Before his strength gave out, he quickly released the Batplane, dropping it on the ground with loud thud.

Clark panted as he leaned over and rested his hands on his knees. His arms were still shaking and he felt light-headed like he was about pass out.

“This is bad,” he muttered to himself fearfully.

Something was definitely wrong with him. He should only be this weak when he’s close to kryptonite. This wasn’t normal at all. He needed to figure out how to fix this. Maybe Jor-El would have some answers.

After catching his breath, Clark left the Batcave and walked up to his room. He found his Superman suit in a drawer and quickly changed clothes. Then he flew out a window, heading north towards the Fortress of Solitude.

His cape rippled behind him as he soared high above the clouds. He tried to stay hidden while he zoomed across the sky. Like Bruce said, Superman wasn’t strong enough to fight right now, so he needed to be careful. He planned to fly to the fortress real quick, then fly home without making any detours.

As he approached the Arctic Circle, Clark could feel the temperature dropping steadily. Normally, the freezing weather didn’t bother him at all, but now he was actually shivering. His teeth chattered as he crossed his arms over his chest, trying to conserve heat. Why was he so cold? Was he even weaker than he originally thought?

The blistering wind blew past him, chilling him to the bone. His vision began to blur while he shook uncontrollably. He felt so tired like all of his strength had been drained from his body. Before he knew it, he was falling.

Plummeting from the sky, Clark crashed into the snowy ground. For a moment, he laid there, half buried in the snow, too exhausted to move. He could feel his consciousness slipping. Clark needed to act now before it was too late. He groaned in pain as he rolled onto his side and reached for the Bat-Comm in his belt.

“B-Bruce…” Clark called for help before he passed out.
“Clark! Clark, can you hear me!!”

Bruce was screaming frantically… His voice rang out like a beacon, illuminating the darkness.

Clark winced as he barely opened his eyes. The first thing he saw was Bruce’s face. Even though he was wearing the Batman cowl, all of his panic and fear were plainly visible. He was trembling like he was about to cry.

“You idiot! What the hell were you thinking?!” Bruce yelled at him.

“I’m sorry,” Clark muttered with raspy voice.

Bruce pulled him into his lap, holding him closely. Clark leaned against Bruce as he scanned his surroundings. They were on the floor, inside the Batplane. The heater was turned on, and Clark had several blankets wrapped around his body. Apparently, Bruce had found him in the snow and treated his hypothermia.

“You could’ve died!” Bruce sobbed as he cradled Clark in his arms.

“I’m sorry.” Clark felt a pang of guilt. He reached toward Bruce’s face and pulled off the cowl, revealing the man’s tears. “I’m so sorry.” Clark wiped away the tears as he leaned forward, kissing Bruce’s face. “I’m sorry.”

Still crying, Bruce bowed his head, hiding his face in Clark’s shoulder. Sobs wracked through his body while he clutched Clark tightly. It was so heart-wrenching to listen to.

Desperate to comfort his boyfriend, Clark cupped Bruce’s face with both hands, lifting his head up. Then he kissed all the tears away, showering Bruce with affection. “I love you. I’m sorry. I’m so sorry for scaring you.”

In response, Bruce leaned forward and kissed him back on the lips. Then he rested his forehead against Clark’s and complained, “If you’re really sorry, stop making me cry. I’m sick of it.”

Clark gave him a small smile. “I’m sorry.”

“Come on, let’s go home.” Bruce stood and offered Clark a hand.

Clark took his hand, then Bruce pulled him up to his feet. A wave of dizziness hit him as Clark stumbled slightly, dropping the blankets.

“Are you okay?” Bruce quickly latched onto him, helping him stand.

“Yea-” Clark stopped himself, then he answered honestly. “Actually… I don’t know. I need to see my father at the fortress. I think he may know what’s wrong with me.”

“Okay.” Bruce nodded. “Let’s go see Jor-El.”

By the Fortress of Solitude, Bruce landed the Batplane in the snow, then he exited the aircraft with Clark. The weakened Kryptonian leaned against him for support as they walked into the large icy structure. They headed down a long corridor until they reached the fortress’s computer.

Stumbling slightly, Clark stepped towards the control panel and typed on the alien equipment.
With a flash of light, the hologram of Jor-El appeared in front of them.

The A.I. program smiled as he greeted them both happily. “Kal-El, you are awake. What a pleasant surprise. And I see you brought your beloved with you.”

Clark returned the smile. “Yeah. It’s good to see you too, Father.”

“How are you doing, my son?”

“Pretty good,” Clark replied, then Bruce elbowed him angrily.

“How are you doing?!?” Bruce snapped. “I just found you passed out in the snow!”

The hologram looked worried. “You fainted, Kal-El?”

“Uh… Yeah, I’ve been feeling kinda weak lately,” Clark confessed reluctantly.

“Weak how? Explain the situation to me,” Jor-El insisted.

With a sigh, Clark explained, “Well, I get dizzy sometimes and I’m always tired. When I go to sleep, I stay asleep for a long time and it’s hard to wake up. Also, I’m physically weaker… I tested my strength by lifting the Batplane and my arms got tired.”

“When did you lift the Batplane? I told you to rest,” Bruce nagged him.

Clark smiled sheepishly. “Sorry. I just wanted to see what I was capable of.”

“Kal-El, have you felt this way ever since you woke up from your regenerative state?” Jor-El asked.

“My what?” Clark raised an eyebrow in confusion.

“Your coma,” Bruce clarified.

“Oh. Well, yeah,” Clark admitted. “That’s when it started.”

“I see.” The hologram paused for a moment before he pried, “Can you describe the moment you woke up? Did you hear anything?”

“Yes, I heard Bruce.”

“What?” Bruce gaped at him in surprise.

“I heard your voice.” Clark met his gaze and smiled. “You were telling me to wake up, and that you loved me. At first, I thought it was a dream. But it wasn’t a dream, was it?”

He actually heard me… Bruce blushed as he stammered, “N-No, it wasn’t. I spoke to you the night before you woke up.”

Jor-El frowned with a concerned expression on his face. “Once a Kryptonian enters a healing coma, it is important to finish the regenerative process naturally. Interrupting that process can be very harmful. Your love for Bruce awoke you before you were ready. That is why you are so weak.”

“Oh…” Clark furrowed his brow like he was thinking.
Bruce watched the troubled Kryptonian while his heart clenched painfully in his chest, crushed under the weight of guilt. “So, it’s my fault?” he muttered sadly.

“No, it’s not,” Clark said quickly.

“Essentially, yes,” Jor-El replied on the contrary.

“Don’t blame him!” Clark yelled at the hologram.

“I am only stating the truth, Kal-El. Bruce is the reason why you are awake.”

Bruce guiltily bowed his head as he asked, “Is there any way for Clark to regain his strength?”

“Yes. His strength should return naturally if he doesn’t overexert himself,” Jor-El explained.

“How long is that going to take?” Clark crossed his arms impatiently.

“Possibly years.”

“Years?! I can’t wait that long,” Clark complained.

“If you want to recover faster, you could reenter the healing coma,” Jor-El suggested.

“No way!” Clark immediately rejected the idea. “I have to stay awake.”

“Very well. There are other methods…but they are risky. Your safest option is to rest and wait for your strength to return.”

“What other methods?” Clark asked curiously.

“We won’t take any chances.” Bruce quickly grabbed Clark’s hand as he announced, “It’s my fault that Clark is in this situation, so I’ll take full responsibility.”

“What?” Clark glanced at him.

“Rest for now.” Bruce declared seriously, “I will protect you until your strength returns. It doesn’t matter how long it takes. So don’t worry about it or overexert yourself. I’ll take care of everything.”

“I’m not an invalid, Bruce.” Clark argued, “You can’t expect me to just sit around and do nothing-”

“Please. Let me take care of you.” He squeezed Clark’s hand while gazing into his eyes pleadingly.

“F-Fine.” Clark caved in, unable to withstand his boyfriend’s emotional stare. “I…I guess I can take a vacation as Superman. But I’m still going to work at the Daily Planet. I’ll go crazy if I don’t have something to do.”

“Okay.” Bruce smiled in relief.

The hologram watched them both thoughtfully. “Kal-El… You and your beloved seem much closer. Have you finally consummated your relationship?”

Clark bristled, blushing brightly. “W-What? Don’t ask me that!”

“Did you use protection?” Jor-El pried.
“Are you seriously giving me ‘the sex talk’ right now?!” Clark screeched in embarrassment while Bruce cracked up, laughing.

“I am merely trying to educate you, my son. When you ejaculate-”

“Okay, we have to go now. Bye, Father. Thanks for the help.” Clark quickly shut off the hologram. Then he grumbled as he stomped away, “Can you believe that? He was treating me like a teenager. Geez.”

Bruce chuckled in amusement while he walked away with Clark, still holding his hand.
In the living room, Clark laid on the couch, watching TV. For the past few days, he hasn’t done anything, except rest. Most of the time, he was asleep. And when he was actually awake, he’d just laze around. This was probably the longest vacation he has ever taken. Every now and then, he’d hear people crying out for help in Metropolis, but then he’d also hear Kara rushing to the rescue. It seemed like his city was in good hands.

With a yawn, Clark stretched on the couch and lazily rolled onto his side. He knew that he needed to rest. But this was so boring… He really wanted to return to work. Even though he couldn’t fight as Superman right now, he could still work as a reporter at the Daily Planet. But Bruce said that he needed to wait awhile longer before going back to work because it would seem odd if Clark Kent returned so soon after Superman did.

Clark huffed in frustration. He wished he had something to do. Bruce had been busy in the Batcave all day, and Clark was trying to let him work in peace. Maybe Bruce was ready for a break now. Clark could really use some company.

Jumping off the couch, Clark hurried over to the kitchen and brewed a pot of coffee. Then he prepared two cups and headed down to the Batcave. He found Bruce sitting in front of the Batcomputer, still working on something.

Clark set down the cups of coffee and sat beside him. “Hey, Bruce. I brought you some coffee.”

“Thanks.” Bruce continued typing, still focused on the computer screen.

With a sigh, Clark drank some coffee and sulked for a while in silence.

After a few minutes, Bruce finally glanced at him. “Is something wrong?”

“I’m so bored,” Clark whined. “We should do something fun.”

“Like what?”

Clark perked up excitedly. “Let’s go on a date.”

Bruce crossed his arms. “If we’re seen in public together, the paparazzi will take photos of us again then everyone will know you’re awake.”
“Oh… Yeah, that’s true I guess,” Clark muttered in disappointment.

Bruce let out a long sigh. “If we go on a date, what would you even want to do?”

“It doesn’t matter.” Clark smiled. “As long as you’re with me, I’ll be happy. Since we’re officially a couple now, I just thought it’d be fun to go on a date…”

“Fine.”

“What?” He blinked in surprise.

“I’ll take you on a date tonight.” Bruce announced.

Clark brightened hopefully. “Really?”

“Yes. Really.” Bruce gazed at the Batcomputer again. “Let me finish this work first, then I’ll plan everything. Just go back to the manor and rest for now.”

“Okay!” Clark bounced up and flung his arms around Bruce, hugging him tightly. Then he hurried away with a huge grin on his face. “See you tonight!”

SxB

For a couple hours, Clark sat on his bed, reading the news on his laptop. The Daily Planet was still printing newspapers, but all of their articles were also online. Clark read through all of Lois’s articles to see what he had missed for the past six months. When he eventually returned to work, he wanted to be up to date on everything.

While he was reading, Clark laid back on the bed, resting the laptop on his stomach. Then he shut his eyes for a moment…

He must’ve dozed off because the next thing he heard was Alfred’s voice.

“Master Clark, wake up.”

“Huh? What?” Clark opened his eyes and yawned sleepily.

The butler was standing by his bed, holding a dark navy suit on a hanger. “It is time for your date with Master Bruce. He is waiting for you at the restaurant.”

“Oh, okay.” Clark grinned as he sat up and set his laptop aside.

Alfred handed him the expensive-looking clothes. “This suit is for you. Please get dressed and meet me downstairs. I will be your chauffer for the evening.”

“Sure.” He nodded while the butler walked away.

After Alfred left the room, Clark stood and held up the fancy 3 piece suit, studying it. The clothing looked like something Bruce would wear, except it was a dark navy blue instead of black. Clark started taking the suit off the hanger, then he saw a price tag sticker on the collar.

“Oh, my God.” His eyes widened as he read the large number. The suit cost $10,000. Holy shit...

Clark quickly rushed out of the room and found the butler down the hall. “Wait, Alfred! I-I can’t wear this.” He held up the ridiculously expensive suit.
Alfred turned around and walked towards him. “Why not?”

“It’s really expensive. See.” Clark pointed at the price tag. “What if I get it dirty or torn up?”

The butler gave him an amused look and ripped off the price tag. “This suit is a gift from Master Bruce. Don’t worry about damaging it. Besides, it only cost $10,000.”

“O-Only $10,000?”

“Please get dressed, Master Clark. I’ll be waiting for you downstairs.” Alfred turned and strolled away, heading down the staircase.

With a sigh, Clark walked back to his room. Unbelievable… Didn’t Bruce know how much stuff he could buy with $10,000? Clark could pay the rent at his old apartment for a whole year with that kind of money. He felt uneasy about wearing something so expensive. His clothes get ripped apart all the time. It was a common problem for those with super strength.

In his room, Clark carefully changed into the fancy suit. Then he headed downstairs and followed Alfred to a black limousine parked outside. He sat in the backseat while Alfred drove them away from the manor, towards the city. It was almost 8 PM and downtown Gotham was crowded tonight. Luckily, the car windows were tinted, so no one could see inside the limo. So far, Clark didn’t have to worry about being seen.

For a while, they drove by the sea, then Alfred turned into an underground parking lot, underneath a tall building. The parking lot was completely empty. There were no other vehicles down there. The butler parked the limousine and they both stepped out. Then Clark followed Alfred to an elevator and they headed all the way up to the top of the building.

On the 40th floor, there was a fancy restaurant with diamond chandeliers, vases full of roses, and an open view of the ocean. All the tables were empty, except for one. Bruce was sitting alone, waiting for him.

Clark excitedly rushed over to the table and sat across from him. “Bruce, this is great! Are we the only ones here?”

Bruce smiled. “Yeah, I cleared out the whole building.”

“That’s so cool!” Clark grinned happily.

Then Alfred walked to their table and handed them a couple menus. “I shall prepare your dinner this evening. Please select anything on the menu.”

Clark quickly read through the menu and ordered a ribeye steak. Unsurprisingly, Bruce ordered lobster thermidor, which he always ate. After Alfred left with the menus, Clark gazed at Bruce again and smiled widely.

“Thanks for setting this up, Bruce. I really appreciate it.”

“Oh, don’t mention it.” Bruce waved a hand dismissively.

They talked casually for a while until Alfred finally brought out their food. Then Bruce ate his lobster while Clark ate his steak. Since Alfred had cooked, everything tasted great as expected. Clark finished the entire steak with a smile on his face. When Alfred returned to collect the dirty dishes, he set down a piece of apple pie in front of Clark.
“Here is your dessert, Master Clark. Please enjoy.” The butler gave him a smile and walked away.

Clark stared at the pie for a moment. He hadn’t asked for any dessert, but he’d definitely eat it. He loved apple pie.

“Bruce, do you want any?”

Bruce shook his head. “No, that’s for you.”

“Well, okay.” Clark took a bite of the pie, then his eyes lit up with joy. “This is really good! It tastes just like my Ma’s.” He quickly ate more of the pie, enjoying the sweetness.

“That’s because it is hers.”

“Huh?” Clark stopped eating.

“I called your mother and asked for the recipe,” Bruce explained. “She said that apple pie is your favorite.”

“Wow…” Clark gaped at him in awe.

“What?”

“You’re a really good boyfriend.”

Bruce raised an eyebrow. “You say that like it’s surprising.”

“Yeah…” Clark laughed sheepishly. “I guess I am surprised. In a good way, of course. You’re just being so nice to me.”

Bruce huffed and crossed his arms. “I’m nice all the time.”

Clark tried not to laugh as he agreed, “Uh-huh…”

“Here. I got you something.” Bruce took out a small leather box and set it on the table.

Clark opened the box, revealing a beautiful silver wristwatch. It looked incredibly expensive.

“Whoa. Thank you. But I didn’t get you anything.” Clark winced guiltily. “I didn’t know we were exchanging gifts…”

“That’s your birthday present.”

“What?” Clark gave him a confused look.

“While you were in a coma, you missed your birthday,” Bruce explained.

“Oh… Yeah, that’s right. I forgot.” Clark was so touched that he became teary-eyed. He quickly wiped at his eyes as he smiled. “Now you’re just spoiling me.”

“Try it on.” Bruce grabbed the watch and fastened it around Clark’s wrist. “Do you like it?”

“Yeah.” He grinned brightly, overflowing with happiness. “I like it a lot.”

Bruce glanced at the time on the watch, then he stood. “It’s almost nine. Come on, I’ve prepared something else.”

“There’s more?” Clark stood and followed Bruce across the room.
They stepped onto the balcony, overlooking the city of Gotham and the sea. It was a fantastic view. A chilly gust of wind blew past them, then Clark wrapped his arm around Bruce, pulling him closer for warmth. Even though it was cold outside, Clark was far too happy to care.

Suddenly, he heard the boom of fireworks as colorful lights streaked across the night sky. Dozens of fireworks exploded, one after another, raining down brilliant lights. Soon, the whole sky was painted red, white, and blue.

Clark gazed up at the pretty lights, completely mesmerized. “Why fireworks?”

“I talked to your dad too,” Bruce explained. “He said that you always celebrated the 4th of July in Smallville, and the fireworks were your favorite. But you missed it this year because of the coma, so I thought—”

Clark interrupted him with a kiss.

“I love you so much,” he whispered before kissing Bruce again and again.

Bruce kissed him back as he flung his arms around Clark’s neck, pressing their bodies close together. Then Clark grabbed his ass roughly, causing Bruce to gasp. Clark deepened the kiss as he slid his tongue inside, ravaging Bruce’s mouth. They kissed each other messily, frantic with lust. Clark groped Bruce’s ass again while grinding their erection together through their clothes. Bruce shuddered against him, gasping. Then Clark leaned down, kissing and sucking on Bruce’s neck.

“Shit,” Bruce cursed like something was wrong.

Alarmed, Clark instantly pulled away, then he spotted the Bat signal in the sky.

Bruce sighed in frustration. “I have to go…”

Clark nodded. “Yeah, looks like Gotham’s busy tonight.”

“I’m sorry, Clark. I’m really, really sorry.” Bruce bowed his head with a guilty expression on his face.

“For what? It’s not your fault that some criminals are causing trouble.”

Bruce glanced up at him. “You’re not mad?”

“No. Why would I be?”

“Because our date…” Bruce grumbled, “Rachel always got mad at me in situations like this.”

“Oh, Lois got pissed off at me too sometimes.” Clark smiled reassuringly. “But it’s okay. Trust me, I understand.”

“Yeah. Of course, you do.” Bruce looked so relieved.

“Go be Batman. I can wait.”

Bruce smiled gratefully. Then he pulled Clark into another kiss and whispered in his ear, “Tonight I want you to fuck me.”

Clark’s eyes widened in shock while Bruce rushed away, swinging off the balcony with a grappling hook.
Damn it, Bruce. Clark let out a shaky breath and leaned against the railing. How can you say something like that and just leave?! He was tempted to fly after Bruce and drag him to bed right now. But Bruce wouldn’t like that… Clark needed to be patient and wait like he said he would.

Frustrated beyond words, Clark tightly gripped the balcony railing until his hand crushed the steel rail. His cock was so hard right now that it was painful.

“You better hurry,” he growled.

SxB

In the Batcave, Clark paced back and forth, anxious for Bruce to return. It was almost 11:30 PM now. He had been waiting for two and half hours. Clark impatiently clenched his fists as he continued to pace. His mind kept replaying Bruce’s words over and over.

“Tonight I want you to fuck me.”

Clark trembled with nervous energy while his heart raced. He was so excited for tonight. It was driving him crazy. He didn’t know how much longer he could wait. Tonight, he could finally have sex with Bruce!

With his super hearing, Clark listened for Bruce’s heartbeat and heard him on the outskirts of Gotham. Apparently, Bruce wasn’t on his way home yet. Clark continued to listen, then he felt a jolt of panic when he noticed a sharp increase in Bruce’s heart rate. Something was wrong.

Surrounding Bruce, there was a hundred other heartbeats rushing toward him. Were all those people enemies? If so, he was severely outnumbered. It must be a trap. Batman was strong, but he couldn’t fight a whole army on his own.

In a blur of super speed, Clark flew up to the manor and changed into his Superman suit. Then he zoomed across the sky, hurrying to the rescue.

SxB

It was a goddamn trap. Batman punched and kicked several gangsters as he ran through an abandoned warehouse. He had followed the Penguin here, but he wasn’t expecting to find a horde of Falcone’s men. Obviously, the Penguin had teamed up with the mafia boss. Falcone must’ve recruited a lot of new manpower from Italy. There were gangsters all over the warehouse, blocking every exit. Whenever Bruce thought he found a way out, a dozen machine guns would open fire on him.

While he ran from the thugs, Batman reached into his utility belt and threw a smoke bomb. A cloud of smoke filled the warehouse as he fired his grappling gun and swung away. Then he dashed up a set of stairs and headed towards a window.

Before he could escape, another group of thugs appeared from the shadows and shot at him. There was no time to dodge. Bruce tightly shut his eyes, then he suddenly felt a pair of strong arms holding him.

He opened his eyes and saw Superman hugging him against his chest. The bullets bounced off the Kryptonian’s back, ricocheting around them.

“Are you okay?” Clark asked.

“Y-Yeah,” Bruce muttered, still numb with shock.
Suddenly, Superman disappeared in a flash, whizzing around the warehouse. The hero hit all of the gangsters, knocking them unconscious. Then he reappeared in front of Bruce and grabbed him.

“Let’s go home.” Clark carried him bridal style as he flew out the window.

They quickly soared across the night sky, arriving back to the manor. Clark landed on the balcony and carried Bruce into his bedroom.

Inside the dimly lit room, Bruce pushed the Kryptonian away as he growled, “Put me down.”

Clark released him, letting him stand.

Shaking with anger, Bruce clenched his fists as he glared at Clark. “What the hell was that?”

The hero shrugged. “You were in danger. I had to-”

“Damn it! You’re supposed to be resting!” Bruce yelled furiously.

Clark sighed. “It’s not a big deal. I can handle a few bullets.”

“You don’t know that! You’re weaker now! What if the bullets actually hurt you? You could’ve died!”

“Calm down. The bullets didn’t hurt me.”

“But they could have!” Bruce shouted at him. “Since you’re weaker now, you can’t be so fucking reckless!”

Clark stubbornly crossed his arms. “I don’t regret saving you, Bruce. You know I’d die for you.”

“Don’t you dare sacrifice yourself for me,” Batman snarled, gritting his teeth.

“I can’t help it. I love you. When you’re in danger, I’m going to save you whether you like it or not,” Superman said sternly. “You’re mine to protect.”

“But you promised that you wouldn’t fight! You promised!” Bruce screamed as tears sprang to his eyes.

Clark immediately wrapped his arms around him and held him close. “I know. I shouldn’t have promised that. I’m sorry. Please don’t cry.”

“I’m not crying, you bastard!” Bruce pounded his fists on Clark’s chest, trying to push him away.

“Forgive me.” Clark pulled off Batman’s cowl and kissed his forehead. Then he tenderly kissed his cheek while stroking his hair. “I love you so much. Please forgive me.”

Bruce trembled, trying to hold onto his anger as it slipped away. “I-I’m still mad.”

“Forgive me.” Clark kissed him strongly on the mouth, nibbling on his bottom lip and sucking on his tongue.

Bruce shut his eyes, melting into the kiss. Their tongues slid against each other as they kissed wetly. When Clark lifted him off the floor, Bruce wrapped his legs around the Kryptonian’s waist, still locked in the kiss. Clark carried him across the room as they ravaged each other’s mouths. Eventually, Bruce pulled away from the kiss and breathed deeply, dizzy from lack of air.
Then Clark dropped him on the bed and straddled him. Leaning over him, Clark kissed Bruce again and smiled. “Still mad?”

“Shut up.” Bruce yanked him into another kiss.

Clark moaned hungrily as he peeled off the Bat suit. He ripped the black kevlar like tissue paper, revealing more and more of Bruce’s skin. Apparently, a weakened Kryptonian was still pretty damn strong. Bruce helpfully removed the rest of his Bat suit, throwing the tattered kevlar aside.

Now Bruce was completely exposed. Clark stared at him with lustful eyes as he slid his hands down Bruce’s body, caressing his bare skin. Bruce arched into the man’s touch, writhing eagerly underneath him.

“Why am I the only one naked?” Bruce complained.

Clark smirked. In a blur of super speed, he threw off his Superman suit and straddled Bruce again. “Is that better?”

“Much better.” Bruce leered at the nude hero, admiring his beautiful body.

Clark blushed slightly, then he leaned down and kissed Bruce again while stroking his erection. With a gasp, Bruce spread his legs wider, welcoming the touch. Then he reached down and grasped Clark’s large cock, returning the favor. They kissed messily as they fondled each other, moaning in pleasure.

Soon Clark lowered his hand toward Bruce’s ass, fingering at the tight ring of muscle. Bruce shuddered at the strange sensation, then he scooted away.

“Wait a second.” He reached toward the nightstand and opened a drawer. Then he took out a small container of lube and tossed it to Clark.

The Kryptonian smirked in understanding before he leaned over Bruce again. “Lay back.”

His heart raced anxiously as Bruce followed the command, laying down on his back. He watched while Clark opened the container of lube and reached down between his legs. Suddenly, Bruce felt a cold wetness between his ass cheeks and flinched in surprise.

Clark smiled apologetically. “Sorry. This is new for me.”

“Me too,” Bruce admitted.


“Yeah, but I was never the one who…” Bruce blushed in embarrassment.

Clark’s eyes widened. “You mean…you’ve never bottomed before?”

Bruce nodded nervously.

With a possessive smirk, Clark reached down and slid a finger inside Bruce’s hole. “So, I’m the first man to do this to you?”

“Y-Yes.” Bruce shuddered.

Clark kissed him again while easing another finger inside. After sliding in two fingers, he scissored at the ring of muscle, slowly spreading it open. Bruce trembled underneath him as he kissed Clark
over and over, trying to ignore the discomfort of being stretched out. He knew that he needed to be prepared like this. Clark was so well-endowed. Bruce was worried about him fitting inside.

Suddenly, Bruce felt a jolt of pleasure as Clark touched something inside him. He gasped and arched his back when Clark massaged the same area again.

“Found it.” Clark smirked as he twisted his fingers, aiming for Bruce’s prostate over and over.

Wave after wave of pleasure crashed through him, clouding his mind. Bruce panted as he writhed on the bed, moaning loudly. Meanwhile Clark added another finger, thrusting in and out with more speed. Bruce could already feel his orgasm approaching fast. Why did he wait so long to let Clark do this? It was fucking amazing.

When Clark abruptly removed his fingers, Bruce glared at him for stopping.

Clark chuckled. “Sorry. I don’t want you to finish yet. We’re just getting started.”

He smiled and grabbed onto Bruce’s hips, spreading them apart. Then he finally positioned himself at the prepared opening. With a deep moan, Clark slid his cock past the ring of muscle, filling Bruce to the hilt.

“Ah!” Bruce cried out as he arched his back.

“You’re so tight.” Clark pulled out his cock and thrust back inside, fucking Bruce deeply.

Bruce gasped while clutching the bedsheets. He had never felt this full before. It didn’t hurt as much as he had expected. The dull burn of being stretched was mixed with pleasure. Each time Clark entered with more ease as the thrusts became faster and faster. Soon, all the discomfort disappeared, replaced only with ecstasy.

“C-Clark!” Lost in a haze of pleasure, Bruce moaned as he latched onto Clark, clawing at his back.

Clark’s hard cock plunged deep inside him over and over, easily sliding into the slick opening. With a wet smacking sound, Clark fucked him at a fervent pace. Bruce breathed in short gasps as he felt a knot tighten in his stomach. He was so close to cumming. He loved the feeling of Clark fucking him.

Bruce moaned shamelessly, unable to stop himself. Then Clark kissed him while thrusting deep inside him. In a burst of pleasure, Bruce cried out as he climaxed, cumming all over his stomach and Clark’s chest. For a while Bruce trembled, enjoying the aftershock of his orgasm.

In a matter of seconds, Clark moaned as he orgasmed too, cumming inside of Bruce. Breathing heavily, he laid down next to Bruce and finally slid his cock out. Bruce shivered at the sensation of Clark’s cum leaking down his thighs. He felt so empty now without that large cock inside him.

Clark wrapped his arms around Bruce, holding him close.

“I love you,” he whispered before shutting his eyes. Clark instantly fell asleep, obviously exhausted.

Bruce smiled as he cuddled against the sleeping Kryptonian. “I love you too.”
Sunlight shined brightly through the window, illuminating the bedroom. When Bruce finally opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was Clark sleeping beside him. The Kryptonian looked so peaceful and happy with his mouth curled into a small smile. Now Clark was always smiling, even in his sleep. Bruce smiled too, unable to stop himself. He could stare at Clark’s handsome face all day. For the rest of his life, he wanted to see Clark smile.

“So, I’m the first man to do this to you?”

Bruce remembered those words as the events from last night replayed in his head. In great detail, he recalled everything they did. The feeling of Clark thrusting inside him… And, how much Bruce had enjoyed it, moaning loudly over and over…

His cheeks burned with a blush as Bruce turned his head, hiding his face in a pillow. He could’ve showed a little more restraint… It was embarrassing how loud he had been. Clark just had that effect on him. Usually, Bruce was far more quiet during sex. Usually, he was in complete control. That was why he had never bottomed before. He wanted to stay in control, and he didn't trust random guys enough to let them top. But he trusted Clark…

Last night Bruce had freely given up control, letting Clark take charge. It had been so different from all the other times Bruce had sex. Different. In a good way… Clark was definitely the only man he would ever submit to like that. Only Clark was allowed to do such things.

Bruce sat up and gazed at the sleeping Kryptonian again. A blanket was draped over his waist, covering the lower half of his body. They were both still naked, and the bedsheets were stained with cum. It would be awkward when Alfred did the laundry later. They really made a mess.

With a sigh, Bruce leaned against the headboard, still watching the other man sleep. At least Clark was resting for now. Bruce was still a little irritated that the hero broke his promise and fought last night. But it was so hard to stay mad at Clark. After just a few kisses, Bruce was like putty in his hands. He didn’t have the willpower to resist Clark anymore.

“You’re mine to protect.”

Bruce remembered that declaration from last night and huffed under his breath. “I have to protect you too, idiot.”
He brushed a hand through Clark’s hair, then he scooted away to the edge of the bed.

Before he could stand, Clark suddenly grabbed his arm.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Clark yanked him back to the center of the bed.

Bruce fell on his back as Clark straddled him. Leaning over him, Clark kissed him strongly on the mouth. Bruce immediately kissed back, sliding his tongue against Clark’s.

While they kissed deeply, Clark positioned himself between Bruce’s legs, his erection rubbing against that tight ring of muscle. Bruce trembled at the sensation. His hole was still slick with Clark’s cum, but the area felt sensitive from being used last night.

He gasped as Clark slowly slid inside him, opening him once again. Bruce winced at the dull ache of being stretched. Like he could sense Bruce’s discomfort, Clark stilled above him and kissed him on the forehead. In response, Bruce grabbed onto the Kryptonian’s shoulders and pulled him into a messy, open-mouthed kiss.

After Bruce had time to adjust, Clark began fucking him in earnest. With every thrust, he penetrated deeper and deeper. Bruce moaned as he felt that beautiful cock rub against his prostrate. Clark aimed for the same spot over and over while Bruce writhed underneath him, lost in an overwhelming surge of pleasure.

“Please more. Don’t stop,” Bruce babbled, completely out of his mind.

Clark fucked him even harder, grabbing his hips and lifting him half-way off the bed. Throwing his head back, Bruce moaned and trembled in ecstasy, clutching the bedsheets.

“Ah!” In a burst of pleasure, Bruce cried out as he climaxed, arching his back.

Within seconds, Clark orgasmed too, cumming inside him. Then he laid down next to Bruce and held him close, spooning him from behind. Bruce panted for a while, trying to catch his breath while enjoying the afterglow of sex. He was all sweaty and covered in cum. Behind him, he could hear Clark snoring lightly. The Kryptonian was already fast asleep again.

With a shiver, Bruce realized that Clark’s cock was still inside him. He started to scoot away, then Clark pulled him back.

“C-Clark, you’re still…in me.” Bruce tried to squirm free, but Clark wouldn’t let go.

“Mine,” Clark whispered in his sleep.

Bruce smiled despite himself. “Possessive bastard.”

If he really wanted to escape, Bruce could yell at Clark and wake him up. But he felt so comfortable in the Kryptonian’s arms. Also, his body had grown accustomed to the cock inside him. Melting into the embrace, Bruce let his himself relax. He rested his eyes for a moment, then he dozed off.

When Bruce woke up again, Clark had a much looser grip on him. He carefully pried himself away from the sleeping Kryptonian, scooting to the edge of the bed. After Clark’s cock slide out of him, Bruce felt a bunch of cum seeping down his legs. He was so messy. He really needed to take a shower.

Bruce staggered as he stood up. His legs were shaking underneath him and his ass was sore. With a
grimace, he stumbled away towards the bathroom. Then he stepped into the shower stall and turned on the water. Steam filled the air as hot water sprayed down on him. Bruce leaned his forehead against the glass wall, relaxing.

When the shower door suddenly swung open, Bruce flinched in surprise. Clark was standing by the door, still completely nude with a large erection. He entered the shower stall with a hungry look in his eyes.

Bruce took a step back, gaping at the erect cock. “Again?!?”

“I just can’t get enough of you.” Clark kissed him deeply while lifting him in the air and leaning him against the wall.

Without thinking, Bruce instantly kissed back and wrapped his legs around Clark’s waist. Soon, he could feel Clark thrusting inside him again. Bruce clutched the Kryptonian’s back and moaned loudly as the large cock entered him over and over. He was practically screaming now. All of his self-control was gone.

Overcome with pleasure, Bruce gasped and pleaded while Clark fucked him roughly.

SxB

It was almost noon when Bruce and Clark finally headed downstairs. In the kitchen, Alfred was busy cooking breakfast, and there were already two cups of coffee on the table, waiting for them. Clark sat down at the table while Bruce hesitated for a moment. His ass was so sore right now…

Bruce winced in pain as he sat down. Then he glared at Clark.

“Sorry.” Clark smiled guiltily. “I guess I got a little carried away.”

“Whatever. I’m fine,” Bruce grumbled and drank some coffee.

Alfred placed two plates of food on the table, then he gave Clark a stern look. “Please be more careful with Master Bruce. Last night, I could feel the whole manor shaking.”

Bruce choked on the coffee, coughing loudly.

“Oh, God. Really?” Clark looked concerned. “I’m sorry, Bruce. I’ll be more gentle.”

“I said I’m fine!” Bruce yelled angrily as his face flushed. “Alfred, mind your own damn business.”

“Your wellbeing is my business, Master Bruce. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have work to do.” The butler walked away, leaving the kitchen.

Clark still had a worried expression on his face. “I didn’t really hurt you, did I?”

“No, I’m just a little sore. It’s not a big deal,” Bruce reassured him.

Clark sighed and crossed his arms. “Maybe I should’ve prepped you more on the second or third time. I’ll definitely be more careful next time. I want to take good care of you.”

Bruce blushed even more while averting his gaze. “About last night… It seemed like you knew exactly what to do. Am I really the first guy you’ve been with?”

“Yes. You’re my first.” Clark smiled.
“Then…how do you know so much about-?”

“Gay bro talk.”

“What?” Bruce blinked in confusion.

“Uh, you don’t wanna know.” Clark laughed nervously. “I just got some advice, that’s all.”

“Advice from who?”

Clark quickly wolfed down his breakfast. “Wow, this tastes so good.”

“Clark,” Bruce growled. “Advice from who?”

“I wonder if Alfred needs any help with the chores.” Clark anxiously jumped to his feet and hurried away, fleeing the kitchen.

What the hell is he hiding? Bruce huffed in annoyance.

At the Watchtower, Batman and Superman walked down the hallway together toward the conference room. It was time for the weekly Justice League meeting, and Clark had stubbornly insisted on coming even though Bruce was against it. Clark should be at home right now, resting. But the Kryptonian had argued that he only wanted to attend the meeting so he could see his friends, and he didn’t plan to fight at all. After a few days of arguing, Bruce finally caved in and said Clark could come. All of the mind-blowing sex may have helped persuade him… It was hard to argue with a cock up his ass.

When they entered the conference room, all the other league members were already seated at the round table, waiting for them. They all waved at Superman and greeted him happily.

“Hey, Supes!” Green Lantern grinned.

“It’s great to have you back!” Flash chirped excitedly.

Wonder Woman agreed with a smile. “Yes, it’s a relief that you have returned, my friend.”

Aquaman nodded. “Yeah, it wasn’t the same without you.”

“Welcome back, Superman.” Martian Manhunter smiled as well.

“Thanks, guys!” Clark replied cheerfully as he walked to his chair, “I’m glad to be back.”

“Superman is only here for the meeting. He still needs to rest,” Batman grumbled.

“Yeah, I have to take it easy for awhile. I’m still healing right now, but I’ll be okay.” Superman sat down at the table, smiling reassuringly.

Then Bruce sat down and flinched in pain. His ass was still sore from having sex. Lately, Clark has been fucking him multiple times a day. Across the table, Hal immediately noticed Bruce’s discomfort and smirked mischievously.

Hal winked at Clark and gave him a thumbs up. “Hell yeah. Gay bro talk.”

Then Barry quickly elbowed Hal and shushed him.
Gay bro talk... Bruce stared at Hal for a moment, then he glanced at Clark, who immediately avoided eye contact with him. Now it was obvious what Clark had been hiding... Hal was the one who taught him about sex. Fucking Hal. That nosy perverted bastard.

Bruce glared at Hal, angrily clenching his jaw. After the meeting, he was going to have a talk with the little creep.

Restraining himself for now, Batman began the Justice League meeting as usual. There was nothing major to report. Since Luthor and the Joker behind bars, everything has been fairly peaceful. Aquaman was still having some trouble in Atlantis, but he stubbornly refused any help like he always did. Meanwhile Martian Manhunter reported that he found inconsistencies with their deep space scanners. J’onn explained that there could be an alien ship with a cloaking device, but he wasn’t sure. Batman ordered him to keep working on the scanners. If an alien ship was really coming, they needed to know so they could prepare for it.

After everyone gave a report, Bruce stood and hurried to the other side of the table. “Meeting’s over. Lantern, come with me.” He quickly grabbed Hal’s arm and pulled him away. “We need to talk. Alone.”

Batman stormed down the hallway, dragging Green Lantern to the other side of the Watchtower. While they walked, Hal tried to yank his arm free, but Bruce kept a painfully tight grip on him.

“Hey, Spooky. What’s the big deal?” Hal whined.

Bruce finally released the idiot as he growled, “What the fuck is gay bro talk? What have you been doing with Clark?”

Hal gave him a shit-eating grin. “Heh, I see my lessons paid off. I totally knew you were a bottom.”

Infuriated, Bruce shoved him against the wall. “Tell me what you did. Right now.”

“Hmph. You should thank me.” Hal bragged, “I showed Clark everything that he needed to know and taught him how to make sweet, sweet love.”

“Taught him how?” Bruce pried distrustfully, “Did you touch him?”

“What? No, no! Nothing like that. I just showed Clark some porn.”

“You watched porn with him?!” Bruce yelled furiously, clenching his fists.

“Well, yeah. It was educational. Oof!” Hal doubled over when Bruce punched him in the gut.

“What the hell is wrong with you?!” Bruce shook with rage. “If Clark needed to learn something, I would’ve taught him myself, you fucking moron!”

“Hey, I was just trying to help-”

“By watching porn with my man?!” Bruce shouted, then he heard the sound of Clark’s voice behind him.

“Aww.”

He turned around to see Clark smiling happily and Barry shaking his head.

“Hal, I told you Bruce would be pissed off.” Barry sighed.
“I don’t get the problem,” Hal huffed indignantly. “I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Bruce glared at Hal again as he snarled, “If you mess with Clark again, I’m going to chop off your balls.”

Hal paled in shock while Clark cooed affectionately, “That’s so sweet.”

“Sweet?!” Hal shrieked, “Your psycho boyfriend just threatened to castrate me!”

“It’s not a threat. It’s a promise,” Bruce said menacingly as he took a scalpel out of his utility belt.

Hal yelped in fear and quickly hid behind Flash. “Barry, save me!”

“Please don’t castrate my boyfriend,” Barry pleaded. “Can’t you just break his legs instead?”

“What the hell, Barry?!” Hal looked betrayed.

When Batman stepped toward them with the scalpel, Hal and Barry both cowered fearfully.

Then Clark grabbed Bruce’s arm and pulled him back. “That’s enough, Bruce. Stop scaring them.”

Barry clasped his hands together as he begged, “Please have mercy on Hal’s balls.”

“Yes. Have mercy.” Hal nodded in terror.

“Fine.” Bruce put the scalpel away and growled, “But if you try anything weird or perverted with Clark again, you will regret it.”

“I’ll be good!” Hal quickly assured him, “I’ll be good! I swear!”

Clark smiled at Bruce with an adoring look in his eyes. “Come on.” He suddenly flung Bruce over his shoulder and zoomed away.

In a blur of super speed, they instantly appeared in Superman’s quarters across the Watchtower.

Clark shut the door before dropping Bruce on the bed. Then he quickly straddled Bruce and kissed him passionately.

Clinging to Clark, Bruce yanked him closer as he deepened the kiss. For a long time, they ravaged each other’s mouths, kissing over and over. Eventually, Bruce pulled away, gasping for air. Then Clark ripped off the cowl and revealed his flushed face. They kissed again while Clark peeled off more of the Batsuit. Bruce helped him, impatiently throwing off his utility belt and kicking off his pants.

Once Bruce was undressed, Clark immediately tore off his Superman suit. Then he positioned himself between Bruce’s legs, spreading his thighs apart. Bruce flinched as Clark reached down and pried at his entrance with a finger. The area was still so sensitive. They definitely needed lube.

Noticing the discomfort, Clark quickly removed his hand. “Sorry. I don’t have any-”

“Wait.” Bruce rolled onto his side and reached for his utility belt, which was laying on the floor. Then he pulled out a small bat-shaped container and tossed it to Clark.

For a moment, Clark studied the container. “Bat lube?”

“I’m always prepared.” Bruce smirked proudly.
Clark almost fell off the bed as he cracked up, laughing. “Oh my God! I love you!”
Butt Hurt

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Clark bicker as usual

Chapter Notes

Hey, everyone! Sorry I've been gone for so long. I've just been really busy with life. (I rescued a 4 week old kitten and adopted him. Then I moved into a new apartment and decided to go back to school and change jobs. I just have a lot going on.) The story has not been abandoned I promise. This fic is almost done. Only a couple more chapters to go. But I've decided to write a sequel because there's still so much more to this story. Lol

His ass was still sore. Bruce shifted his weight in his chair, trying to find a more comfortable position. Tonight he was dressed in his Bat suit, sitting in front of the Batcomputer, trying to work. Lately, he has been neglecting his duties as Batman. It was hard to get any work done with a certain Kryptonian constantly after his ass. Clark’s libido was insane. Bruce winced as he shifted in his chair again. That horny bastard.

When he heard the elevator door open, Bruce glanced over his shoulder and scowled. Clark was walking across the Batcave, carrying two cups of coffee.

“Hey, Bruce. How’s it going?” Clark smiled happily and sat down next to him.

“We’re not having sex tonight.”

Clark blinked in surprise. “Uh… Okay.”

“Or tomorrow night,” Bruce added as he took a cup of coffee. “Or the night after that.”


“No. I just need a break.”

“But why?”

Bruce narrowed his eyes as he growled, “Seriously? I can’t have sex 24/7. I could barely walk yesterday because of you!”

“Geez. You’re really that sore?” Clark lowered his head, looking guilty. “I’m sorry.”

His anger instantly dissipated when he heard the sincerity in Clark’s voice. Bruce knew the hero would never hurt him on purpose. With a sigh, he said, “It’s fine. Just give me a few days.”

They sat in silence for awhile, drinking coffee. Then Bruce continued working on the Batcomputer.
After a couple minutes, Clark broke the silence. “So… You don’t want to have sex because your butt is sore, right?”

Bruce gritted his teeth in frustration. “Did you listen to anything I just said?”

“What if we switched places?”

Bruce sputtered, almost choking on the coffee. “W-What?”

“If I bottomed, could we have sex?”

Bruce gaped at him in disbelief. “You’re serious?”

“Sure.” Clark smiled. “It’s only fair, right? If we take turns switching places, then you won’t be as sore. It makes sense.”

Even though Bruce couldn’t deny the logic of it, he was still caught by surprise. Part of him thought Clark would never offer to bottom, and he had already accepted that. Personally, Bruce didn’t mind bottoming every time, but he was really sore… Also, the idea of topping for once was very tempting.

While Bruce considered it, he noticed the smug look on Clark’s face. That manipulative bastard. Clark had only offered to bottom so he could lure Bruce into another night of sex. Batman had work to do, dammit!

“The answer is still no. We’re not having sex tonight.” Bruce stubbornly turned away from the other man and focused on the computer screen.

“You don’t want to top?” Clark looked confused.

Of course, I want to.

“Of course, I want to. I have work to do, Clark,” he grumbled.

Clark leaned back in his chair and sulked for a few minutes, obviously pouting. Bruce tried to ignore him while he researched the recent criminal activity in Gotham. With the Joker locked away, the city has been fairly peaceful, but Batman needed to remain vigilant.

Suddenly, he heard the sound of a cup crashing on the floor. Bruce glanced to the side and spotted a coffee stain on Clark’s shirt.

“Oops. Clumsy me.” Clark smiled as he yanked his shirt off. “I hope I can get this stain out.”

Bruce’s eyes widened slightly, staring the Kryptonian’s bare chest. Then he quickly gazed back at the Batcomputer. He wouldn’t let Clark distract him. Batman was determined to work.

“Where did that cup go?” Clark stood, then he leaned over while raising his butt in the air.

Bruce immediately leered at that tight muscular ass, before forcing himself to look away. God damn you, Clark! Bruce clenched his jaw as he growled, “What the hell are you doing?”

“Just let me clean this up.” Clark sped away and returned with a towel. Then he kneeled down on the floor in a very suggestive manner while wiping up the split coffee.

Tense with frustration, Bruce clenched his fists as he stared at the Batcomputer. It was hard to ignore Clark when he was in that pose… On his hands and knees like he was waiting to get fucked. Bruce shook that thought from his mind. Come on, focus. Don’t think about sex.
“Oh, it’s all sticky,” Clark whined.

“Get the fuck out!” Bruce suddenly screamed at him.

Clark stood with an annoyed expression on his face. “You’re so grouchy. Fine, I’m going. You don’t have to yell.” He threw the towel on the floor and turned to leave, then Bruce quickly snatched his wrist.

“Wait.”

Clark glanced back at him while Bruce hesitated for a moment. It was embarrassing how much Clark wrecked his self-control.

“You’re okay with it?” Bruce asked, “I can really fuck you?”

Clark smirked mischievously. “I don’t know. Can you?”

Bruce returned the smirk. He has never been one to back down from a challenge. After shutting off the Batcomputer, Bruce stood and yanked Clark into a kiss.

Instead of going on patrol, Batman spent the night fucking Clark on top of the Batmobile. It was time well spent.

SxB

In April, Clark finally returned to his job at the Daily Planet. All of his coworkers welcomed him back with open arms. Even Perry seemed glad to have him back. While he was gone, Lois had told everyone that Clark was badly injured during Doomsday’s attack on Metropolis and he had to be hospitalized, which actually wasn’t far from the truth.

Right now, Lois and some other coworkers were standing around his desk, chatting happily.

“It’s great to have you back, Smallville.” Lois smiled warmly.

“Yeah, I’m glad you’re okay,” Jimmy Olsen agreed.

“Thanks, guys. Glad to be back.” Clark grinned. These past few weeks, he has been bored out of his mind. He knew he must’ve been driving poor Bruce crazy. That’s probably why Bruce finally agreed to let him return to work.

“Oh my God!” Cat Grant suddenly gasped and grabbed his hand, staring at his wristwatch. “Is that a Jaeger-LeCoultre?”

“A what?” Clark blinked in confusion.

“That’s a million dollar watch!” she exclaimed.

“What?!” Clark yanked his hand away, studying the beautiful silver watch. It was the present Bruce had given him on their date. He had no idea it was that expensive!

“Wow.” Lois chuckled as she teased him, “It must be nice to have such a rich sugar daddy.”

“He’s not my sugar daddy!” Clark flushed with embarrassment.

Lois cracked up laughing while Clark stood and stomped away. Damn it, Bruce! Across the office, he entered the bathroom and took out his phone. Then he called Bruce while he angrily paced back
and forth.

After a few seconds, Bruce answered the phone. “Clark? What is it?” He sounded sleepy like he had just woken up.

“How much did you spend on my watch?”

“What?” Bruce yawned. “Why does that matter?”

“It matters if you spent a million dollars on it!” Clark yelled in outrage. “You have to take the watch back. I can’t accept something so expensive.”

In response, Bruce let out a long sigh. “Don’t be ridiculous. That was a gift.”

“I don’t need expensive gifts!”

“But I thought you liked the watch.”

“Of course, I do! I love it!” Clark shouted.

“Then keep it! What’s the problem?” Bruce yelled back angrily.

“Don’t you get it? I like the watch because you gave it to me! You could give me a plastic Hello Kitty watch and I’d still like it!”

Bruce chuckled. “You want a Hello Kitty watch?”

“No! I was just using that as an example. I don’t care what you give me because I just want you! So, you don’t need to spend so much money.”

“Okay… Since you don’t care, I’ll spend as much as I want.”

“What?”

“You just said that you don’t care what I give you. So, I’ve decided to give you the very best that money can buy. From now on, you’ll only have the finest things,” Bruce declared.

Clark sputtered, “H-Hey, that’s not what I-”

“I’m glad we worked this out. I’m going back to bed.”

“Wait! Bruce!”

When he heard the sound of static, he knew Bruce had already hung up.

“Dammit…” Clark put his phone away and ran a hand through his hair in frustration. As always, Bruce wouldn’t listen. He could twist Clark’s words to mean whatever suited him. It was nearly impossible to win an argument with Bruce. Unless the argument was about sex… Clark had become very skilled at talking the vigilante into bed.

With a smirk, Clark remembered their love-making from the night before. Then he stared at the fancy watch and shrugged. In the end, it really didn’t matter if Bruce gave him expensive things. The billionaire could do whatever he wanted with his money. Clark already had the greatest gift of all: Bruce.

SxB
During his lunch break, Clark sat with Kara on the roof of the Daily Planet. On top of the tall building, they had a great view of downtown Metropolis. Since Clark was still recuperating, Supergirl spent a lot of time in the city, protecting the citizens. Clark was very grateful for all her help. Thanks to her, he could rest and know that his city was safe.

While he ate a sandwich, Kara sat next to him, talking excitedly. Apparently, she really enjoyed the hero work. For the past twenty minutes, she told Clark about all the different villains she had defeated. It was a pretty impressive list.

“And then I punched Luthor in the shoulder and his armor cracked,” she said proudly. “After I ripped open his Warsuit, I yanked him out and threw him to the ground. It was great. He looked so surprised like he couldn’t believe that he lost. That bald creeper.”

Clark laughed while Kara smiled at him. “It was a really tough battle though. I wouldn’t have won without Oracle’s help. How many times have you fought Luthor?”

“I don’t know.” Clark shrugged. “Honestly, I lost count. I’ve been fighting him for years.”

“Why does he hate Kryptonians so much?” she asked.

“Hmph. Because he’s an egomaniac. He wants complete control of Metropolis and all the people who live here. He thinks we’re a threat to his power.”

Kara nodded in understanding. “Yeah, that sounds about right. Do you have any enemies, who are more dangerous than him?”

Clark thought about it for awhile. “Well, Doomsday is the most dangerous, but you don’t need to worry about him. He’s barely alive and locked away in some government lab. Darkseid is dangerous too, but he should be far, far away from here... There’s also Zod. Do you know Zod?”

“Yeah, of course. General Zod was famous on Krypton. Didn’t he attack Earth?”

“He did, and I had to fight him. Now he’s trapped in the Phantom Zone.”

“Good. So, he shouldn’t be a problem either.”

Suddenly, Clark heard a loud explosion coming from the chemical plant on the outskirts of Metropolis.

Kara heard it too, and jumped to her feet. “I gotta go.”

“Good luck.” Clark grinned.

In a flash of super speed, Supergirl zoomed across the sky with her red cape flapping in the wind. Part of Clark was tempted to join her, but he knew that would piss Bruce off. Superman was technically on vacation for now. Until his strength returned…

With a sigh, Clark stood and walked back inside the Daily Planet.

SxB

At his desk, Clark was typing on his computer, working on a new article. It was almost 3pm, but it felt much later than that. He yawned while staring at the computer screen. It was difficult to stay awake. At least the deadline was later this week. He had plenty of time to work on the article.

With another yawn, Clark propped his elbows on the desk and rested his forehead in his hands. He
was so tired. Maybe he could just rest his eyes for a minute…

The next thing he heard was Lois’s voice. “Clark? Hey, Clark!”

“Huh? What?” Clark opened his eyes and raised up his head.

Lois was standing next to his desk with a worried expression on her face. “You fell asleep about an hour ago. I think you should go home and rest.”

“No, no. I’m fine,” Clark quickly insisted. “I’m sorry I fell asleep. I can keep working.”

She shook her head. “No, you can’t. I already called Bruce. He’s coming here to pick you up.”

“What?” He snapped, “Why did you do that?”

“Because Bruce asked me to keep an eye on you. He thinks you aren’t ready to work full time yet, and I agree with him. Maybe you should work part time for awhile, or work from home.”

“I’m fine.” Clark stubbornly turned to face his computer screen. “I’m not leaving.”

Lois sighed. “Don’t make me involve Perry.”

Clark glared at her. “Are you threatening me?”

She huffed and crossed her arms. “You need to go home, Clark.”

“No, I don’t.”

“Yes, you do.” Suddenly, he heard Bruce’s voice, then he stood up and turned around. To his surprise, Bruce was standing across the office, dressed in a business suit and giving him a very stern look. Clark couldn’t believe that he didn’t hear Bruce coming. He must be more tired than he thought.

“I own this company remember,” Bruce growled. “Do I have to order you to leave?”

Clark angrily clenched his fists as he stormed past the billionaire. “Fine. I’m going.”

Before he could leave, Bruce quickly followed him into the elevator and pressed the button for the top floor.

“What’re you doing?”

“My private jet is on the roof,” Bruce explained. “I’ll fly you home.”

Clark rolled his eyes. “I can fly myself.”

When they reached the roof, Bruce grabbed his arm and tried to pull him towards the sleek black jet. “Just get in. You look like shit.”

“Gee, thanks.” Clark glared at him, refusing to move even an inch. It didn’t matter how much Bruce pulled on him. The Kryptonian wouldn’t budge unless he wanted to.

Bruce pleaded with him. “Please. I don’t want you to pass out on the way home.”

“…Okay,” Clark relented. He could see how worried Bruce was.

They both stepped into the jet, then Bruce sat down in the pilot’s seat while Clark sat beside him.
Soon, the jet took off into the sky, heading back towards Gotham. Resting his eyes again, Clark swiftly fell back to sleep in his chair.

SxB

After Bruce parked the jet in the Batcave, he glanced over at Clark who was still sleeping soundly in the front passenger seat. He’d known that it was too early for Clark to return to work. Now Bruce was kicking himself for letting the Kryptonian go. He should’ve forced Clark to stay at home. The stubborn idiot would only slow down the healing process if he kept overexerting himself.

“Hey, Clark.” Bruce nudged the Kryptonian’s shoulder. “Clark, we’re home.”

Clark opened his eyes, then he looked embarrassed that he had fallen asleep again. “Thanks for the ride,” he mumbled as he exited the jet.

Bruce followed him, heading across the Batcave. Before Clark could escape to the elevator, Bruce called out, “You shouldn’t go to work tomorrow.”

Clark stopped and turned to face him with an annoyed look. “Is that another order?”

Bruce sighed in frustration. “Come on, Clark. You can barely stay awake.”

“I feel fine now. I’ll just sleep a lot tonight. I can stay awake tomorrow at work, I swear.”

“You shouldn’t overexert yourself,” Bruce reminded him.

“I’m not!” Clark argued, “I’m just sitting at a desk.”

“You need to rest.”

“I’m sick of resting!” Clark shouted, then he suddenly froze in shock like something was terribly wrong.

“What is it?” Bruce asked, “Did you hear something?”

“J’onn’s in trouble! The Watchtower is under attack!” Clark disappeared from the cave in a blur of super speed.

“Clark, wait!” Bruce yelled, but it was too late. The Kryptonian was already gone. “Damn it!”

He quickly pulled out his JL communicator, then the emergency signal started beeping. Martian Manhunter was sending out a distress call to the entire Justice League.

“I require immediate back-up!” J’onn announced frantically over the communicator. “The Watchtower has taken heavy damage.”

“J’onn, what the hell happened?” Bruce demanded.

The Martian replied, his voice muffled by static. “It’s Darkseid. He’s back.”
Superman zoomed through the atmosphere, flying into space. To his horror, Darkseid’s colossal starship was already orbiting the Earth, firing missiles at the Watchtower. Another missile hit the space station, blasting off huge hunks of debris. Superman dodged the hurtling debris as he flew into the Watchtower.

Inside the space station, dozens of Darkseid’s minions were waiting for him. Superman pushed past all the winged aliens, punching and throwing them out of the way. He could barely hear J’onn, so he knew the Martian was still alive, but he didn’t have much time. The whole Watchtower could explode any second.

When Clark reached the control room, he ripped off the steel door and rushed inside. The entire room was engulfed in flames. Through the smoke, he could see Martian Manhunter laying on the floor, unconscious and badly injured.

“J’onn!” Clark flew through the flames and quickly grabbed his friend.

He flung J’onn over his shoulder, then sped out of the Watchtower as fast as he could.

Mere seconds after they escaped, the space station erupted in a series of fiery explosions. Superman flew back down to Earth while evading more missiles from Darkseid’s ship. Once they reached safety, Clark stopped in midair to catch his breath. His heart was racing and he felt slightly light-headed. That was the most he had used his powers in months. He just needed a short break, then he’d be fine.

Through the clouds, he spotted the Batplane racing towards him. The top hatch on the plane slid open, then Superman flew inside the aircraft and set Martian Manhunter down on the floor.

“Is J’onn okay?” Batman asked as he piloted the plane.

“I don’t know. He’s unconscious.” Clark sat down next to the injured Martian. “The Watchtower is gone. Darkseid blew it up.”

“Fuck,” Bruce growled angrily. “His ship must have a cloaking device. Obviously, our scanners couldn’t detect him. This is my fault. I should’ve prepared more for-”

“It’s not your fault, Bruce,” Clark interrupted him. “No one saw this coming.”

Bruce sat in silence for moment, then he said, “We need to go back to the cave to regroup.”

“Alright.” Clark leaned his back against the wall, resting.

Soon, they arrived at the Batcave. After Bruce parked the Batplane, they all exited the aircraft. Clark carried J’onn’s unconscious body and laid him down on the floor. Then Batman kneeled beside the Martian, examining his wounds.
“None of his injuries are life-threatening. J’onn should be fine when he wakes up,” Bruce concluded as he stood up.

“That’s good.” Clark let out a sigh of relief. “I’ve been thinking. We should attack Darkseid’s ship instead of waiting for him to come to us.”

“We?”

Clark frowned. “Yeah. We.”

Bruce just shook his head. “Clark… You aren’t ready to-”

“Stop telling me what to do,” Clark snapped angrily. “This fight is too important. I can’t sit on the sidelines and do nothing.”

“You’re in no condition to fight.”

“Yes, I am! I just saved J’onn, didn’t I?” Clark pointed at Martian Manhunter as he declared harshly, “You need me for this battle. You can’t beat Darkseid without me and you know it.”

To his surprise, Bruce stepped toward him and pulled him into a hug. Clark’s eyes widened as he froze.

“I don’t want to argue,” Bruce whispered in his ear.

“Neither do I.” Clark returned the embrace, then suddenly he felt a needle prick his neck. He backed away, staring at Bruce in shock. Batman was holding a syringe in his hand, and he had a guilty expression on his face.

“Did you just drug me?” Clark stumbled slightly as his vision began to blur.

“I’m sorry.”

Bruce’s apology was the last thing Clark heard before everything faded to black.

SxB

When Clark awoke, his head was throbbing. With a groan, he sat up, then he noticed the long green bars surrounding him. He was still in the Batcave, locked inside a cage made of kryptonite. Of course, Bruce would create something like this. That paranoid control freak.

Clark winced in pain as he cradled his aching head in his hands. He felt so weak inside this damn cage. Bruce was such an asshole for drugging him. Clark wished that he was surprised by his boyfriend’s behavior. But, sadly, he wasn’t. In fact, he should’ve seen it coming. When Bruce hugged him in the middle of their argument, Clark should’ve known it was trap. Batman was a sneaky bastard.

Suddenly, he heard a female voice yelling, “Kara, you have to retreat! Fall back!”

He glanced across the Batcave and spotted Barbara, sitting in a wheelchair in front of the Batcomputer. On the computer screen, he could see Darkseid shooting red lasers from his eyes followed by the sound of Kara screaming. Then the view became distorted with static and an error message popped on the screen, saying ‘connection lost’.

“Kara!” Barbara shouted as she tore off her headset and threw it. “Damn it!”
Alarmed, Clark jumped to his feet. “What happened?! Is Kara okay?!”

“I don’t know.” Barbara quickly typed on the computer, then the battlefield appeared on the screen once again.

Now Wonder Woman and Aquaman were both charging at Darkseid while Kara laid in a crater of wrecked pavement. She was bleeding and groaning in pain, but still very much alive. After seeing her, Clark finally exhaled a breath that he didn’t realize he was holding. He shouldn’t be locked in this damn cage! He belonged out there, fighting.

“Barbara, let me out,” Clark demanded.

On the screen, Darkseid easily knocked Wonder Woman and Aquaman away, then Green Lantern and Flash rushed over to attack the villain. In the background, the half-demolished buildings looked familiar. They were fighting in Metropolis, Superman’s city.

Barbara turned away from the computer and gave him a sympathetic look. “I’m sorry. I can’t let you out. Batman’s orders.”

Back on the screen, Darkseid flung Flash aside, then he punched Green Lantern into the ground. The Justice League was obviously losing the battle, and that terrified Clark. He needed to help his friends!

“Please!” Clark shouted desperately, “They can’t win this without me!”

Barbara sighed. “Bruce told me that you aren’t strong enough to fight right now. If I let you out, you’ll just get yourself killed.”

When he heard Kara scream, Clark glanced at the computer screen again. Now Darkseid was holding Kara by the throat, choking the life out of her.

“Where is Superman?” Darkseid roared angrily, “Answer me, Kryptonian!”

“He’s going to kill her! Let me out!” Clark banged on the bars of his cell even though the kryptonite burned his hands. “Let me out! LET ME OUT!”

Kara struggled in vain while the monstrous alien continued to strangle her. Right before she could pass out, Darkseid dropped her on the ground, then he stomped on her chest.

She cried out in pain as Darkseid growled, “I am not done with you yet, little one.”

“He’s torturing her!” Clark shook with righteous fury. “Barbara, have to let me out! Aren’t you Kara’s friend? Are you going to sit there and watch her die?!”

“There’s nothing I can do!” Barbara shouted back. “Even if I let you go, you’ll just die too!”

“No, I won’t.” He remembered the conversation he had with Jor-El. “There’s a way to get my strength back. And once I do, I can beat Darkseid.”

“What?” Barbara looked surprised as she wheeled towards him. “Bruce failed to mention that.”

“Because it’s risky,” he explained. “Bruce wanted me to wait for my strength to return naturally, which would be safer… But I think you can agree, this is an emergency.”

She nodded. “Desperate times call for desperate measures.”
“Exactly. I’m our only chance of defeating Darkseid. Just let me go. I’ll get my strength back, then I can beat him, I swear.”

“I…” The girl hesitated. “I promised Bruce that I wouldn’t let you out.”

On the Batcomputer, Kara was still screaming on the screen.

Clark stepped close to the cell bars, staring at her intensely. “If you don’t let me out, Kara, Bruce, and everyone else is going to die. Darkseid is going to destroy this entire planet.”

Barbara seriously met his gaze, then she cursed under her breath. “Dammit. Don’t make me regret this.” She reached toward the control panel on the cage and typed in a code.

“Thank you, Barbara.” He smiled in relief.

As soon as the cell door slide open, Clark rushed out of the cage and flew away.

SxB

His cape rippled in the wind as Superman soared through the sky, heading north. He listened for Darkseid’s minions and successfully avoided them on his journey to the Arctic. It was dark and freezing cold with the blistering wind hitting his face. On his last flight to the Arctic, he had passed out on the way there, but he felt stronger this time. More determined. With his adrenaline pumping, he pushed through his exhaustion and kept going. Nothing would stop him now.

Once he reached the Fortress of Solitude, Superman landed on the snowy ground and walked through the entrance. He headed down the long corridor until he reached the computer room. Then he stepped towards the podium and typed on the control panel, activating his father’s A.I. program.

In a flash of light, the hologram of Jor-El appeared.

His father smiled. “Kal-El, it is always a pleasure to see you.”

“Hey, Dad. I’m in a bit of hurry.” Clark explained quickly, “Earth is under attack and I need to get my strength back as fast as possible. I don’t care how risky it is. Just tell me what to do.”

“I see…” Jor-El paused for a moment before he replied reluctantly, “There is a way to regain your strength almost instantaneously if it is successful. But the risk is quite high.”

“Just tell me what to do,” Clark insisted.

“Fly into the sun.”

“What?” Clark blinked in surprise. “Won’t I just burn up?”

“That’s a possibility,” Jor-El admitted. “Your power comes from the yellow sun, so in theory, flying into the sun should restore your power. Either you will regain your strength or your body won’t be able to handle the sudden influx of power…”

“What do you mean?”

“You could die.” His father warned him, “If you do this, you will either regain strength or you will die. Think about this carefully, Kal-El. It is much safer to simply wait-”

“There’s no time.” Clark decided hastily, “I’ll do it. I’ll get my strength back, or I’ll die trying.”
Flying into space, Superman carefully sneaked past Darkseid’s ship. The debris from the Watchtower was still floating in Earth’s orbit, creating the perfect cover. Superman hid behind the debris as he flew around the starship, undetected.

Heading towards the sun, Clark zoomed through the dark void of space. Soon, he flew past Venus, and in the distance, he could already see Mercury. He was almost there. He was so close. Superman kept pushing himself forward, despite the fatigue. His whole body was aching, and he desperately wanted to take a breath. But there was no oxygen in space. He had to continue holding his breath until he returned to Earth.

His vision began to blur as he struggled to stay conscious. Normally, he could handle a prolonged flight in space, but he was weaker now. He didn’t know how much longer he could survive under these conditions. His lungs were burning from lack of air.

Once he flew past Mercury, Clark could feel the sun’s rays against his skin, invigorating him. Those rays gave him the last bit of energy that he needed to push onward. In a matter of seconds, he finally reached his destination. Close up, the sun looked like a huge ball of fire.

For a moment, Superman hesitated as he gazed at the swirling flames on the surface of the sun. How could he just fly in there? Would he really survive it?

What choice do I have? Clark reminded himself of all his friends and family on Earth. If no one stopped Darkseid, they would all die… They needed Superman. Clark couldn’t abandon them now. Even if this kills him, at least he’ll know that he did everything possible to save them all. If
he dies, he’ll have no regrets. He was always willing to sacrifice himself for the ones he loved.

With a newfound determination, Clark propelled himself forward, flying straight into the sun. He let out a silent scream as the flames engulfed him in an overwhelming surge of power.

SxB

The situation was bad. Batman stood on a pile of rubble, surveying the battlefield. Several buildings in downtown Metropolis were destroyed, and Darkseid’s winged minions were everywhere, swarming over the city like a plague of locusts. Wonder Woman and Aquaman were completely surrounded by the aliens, trying to fight their way out. Above the city, Martian Manhunter was caught in the swarm, flying erratically as he fought for his life.

With the Justice League divided, they didn’t stand a chance. Green Lantern and Flash were both trying to attack Darkseid, but their combined effort just wasn’t enough. Defeating Darkseid would require the whole team…including their strongest member. But right now, Superman was in no condition to fight. Without him, the battle seemed hopeless.

Charging at Darkseid, Hal formed a large green mallet and swung it at the alien. Unfortunately, the green weapon shattered as soon as it struck. Before Darkseid could retaliate, Flash sped by in a blur of super speed and pushed Hal out of the way. He managed to protect Hal, but he wasn’t fast enough to escape himself. Darkseid grabbed onto Barry, crushing the bones in his lower right leg. Flash screamed in pain as the alien swung him in the air like a ragdoll and hurled him to the ground.

“Barry!” Hal rushed to his lover’s side and held him in his arms.

Darkseid’s eyes glowed red, about to fire lasers at them. No! Batman immediately took off running. There was no way Hal and Barry could survive that blast. It would vaporize them. Even though Bruce knew he couldn’t reach them in time, he still ran. He ran as fast as he could.

A split second before the lasers fired, Darkseid was suddenly hit by a blue blur. The large alien stumbled back while Supergirl stood before him, panting with exhaustion. Kara’s uniform was torn in several places, and she was covered in cuts and bruises. It was obvious that she could barely stand, yet she didn’t back down.

“Leave them alone.” Kara glared at Darkseid as she staggered on her feet.

“You’re still alive?” Darkseid instantly snatched Supergirl by the neck, choking her. “Time to die, Kryptonian.”

His eyes glowed red once again.

At that exact moment, Batman hurled a grenade at Darkseid’s face. The power of the explosion was enough to knock the large alien slightly off balance. When the lasers fired from his eyes, they barely missed Kara, striking the ground instead. Dust from the destroyed concrete filled the air. While Darkseid was momentarily distracted, Bruce grabbed onto Kara and fled.

“Run!” He shouted at Green Lantern and Flash as he dashed away, carrying Kara over his shoulder.

Hal immediately scooped Barry in his arms and followed him. They all hid behind a huge piece of rubble, staying close to the ground. It was only temporary cover. Without a doubt, Darkseid would find them all soon.
Bruce carefully set Kara down. The poor girl was unconscious now. There was no fight left in her. Barry wasn’t faring much better. He was grimacing in obvious pain from his broken leg. Flash relied on his legs too much in battle. If he couldn’t run, then he couldn’t fight either.

Hal formed a green splint around Barry’s broken leg, then the speedster cried out in agony.

“Shh. I know it hurts. I’m sorry. I’m so sorry,” Hal whispered as held Barry in his arms, trying to comfort him.

Steeling his nerves, Bruce stood tentatively and glanced over the rubble. Darkseid was stomping towards them, glowering with rage. As soon as he spotted Batman, he let out a blood thirsty roar.

“What should we do?” Hal asked him, looking afraid.

“Take Supergirl and Flash, and get out of here,” Batman ordered.

“What about you?”

“I’ll buy you some time,” he replied grimly.

Hal shook his head, horrified by the idea. “Are you insane? He’ll kill you!”

“That’s an order, Lantern. Take them and go.”

“But-”

“Just do it,” Batman growled, then he leapt out in front of the rubble.

A short distance away, Darkseid was steadily approaching him, the ground shaking with every step he took. His eyes were glowing with murderous intent.

Bruce placed a hand on his utility belt, ready to fight until his last breath. Then Hal jumped over the rubble and stood beside him.

“What are you doing?” Bruce snapped at him.

“We fight together. We die together,” Hal declared as a transparent green shield materialized in front of them.

“Damn it, Hal… Barry?” Bruce blinked in surprise when he saw Flash staggering on his feet.

“I can still fight.” Barry leaned against the rubble and gave him a pained smile. “We’re in this together.”

Bruce let out a sigh of frustration and nodded. “Fine. Together.” If the Justice League lost this battle, they were all going to die anyway.

Suddenly, Darkseid lunged forward, charging straight towards them. Batman tensed as he grabbed another explosive from his belt. He wouldn’t go down without a fight.

Right before Darkseid could reach them, there was a blinding flash of light. Bruce squinted, struggling to see. The glowing beam of light suddenly struck Darkseid and sent him flying through the air. The villain crashed into a nearby building causing the whole structure to collapse with a deafening boom.

Bruce stared at the beam of light until his eyes finally adjusted to the brightness. Then he gasped in
shock. It was Superman… Clark was glowing so brightly with a golden light shining all around him.

*What the-?* Bruce gaped at the Kryptonian. “Clark?”

In the distance, Darkseid let out a furious roar as he flung off the rumble, freeing himself from the wreckage. Superman reacted immediately. The ground cracked as the hero launched himself into the air, zooming towards Darkseid.

Superman punched the villain, then he grabbed onto Darkseid’s leg and threw him repeatedly into the ground like a ragdoll. When Darkseid managed to escape and fly away, Superman quickly caught him again. In a blur of super speed, he beat the villain mercilessly, punching and kicking him across the sky.

On the ground, Bruce, Hal and Barry were all gazing up, watching in awe.

“Holy shit.” Hal rubbed at his eyes like he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. “Is that really Clark?”

“Rao…” Behind them, Kara was laying on the ground, staring up at the sky with a smile on her face. “It’s Rao,” she rasped before losing consciousness again.

*Rao?* That was the name of the Kryptonian God. Bruce gazed up at Superman once again. Admittedly, the hero did have a God-like appearance, shining brightly with that golden aura. Also, his power had increased exponentially. Bruce has never seen Clark this strong before. How was this even possible?

“Wow.” Barry sank to the ground, looking relieved. “I guess Superman just got even more super. Talk about perfect timing.”

“Yeah, no kidding.” Hal let out a strained laugh. “And why the hell is he glowing? What’s up with that?”

“I don’t know…” Batman frowned, tense with worry. For Superman to regain his strength so quickly, he must’ve gone to Jor-El. This sudden increase in power didn’t come naturally. Clark did something dangerous for it.

With a thundering crack, Darkseid crashed into the ground, forming a large crater. Above him, Superman hovered in the night sky, shining as brightly as the sun. Suddenly, all of Darkseid’s minions let out an ear-piercing screech and flew towards the hero. Thousands of the winged aliens swarmed around Superman, all attacking him at once. For a split second, the Kryptonian disappeared, engulfed in the horde of his enemies. Then Superman screamed as the golden light expanded from him in an explosion of power, shooting all his enemies away. The charred remains of Darkseid’s army plummeted to the Earth, withering away to ash.

Bruce watched in both amazement and fear. In the sky, Superman was still radiating with that awe-inspiring, God-like power. The Kryptonian had always been strong, but now he was on another whole level. Beyond anything Bruce has ever seen…

Darkseid must’ve realized that he was outmatched because he instantly teleported away, then all the alien starships quickly disappeared as well.

“Wait, where did all the bad guys go?” Green Lantern looked around in confusion.

“They retreated,” Martian Manhunter replied as he flew down and landed next to them.
“Seriously? That’s awesome!” Hal grinned, obviously over-joyed.

“Clark beat them so badly that they all ran away!” Barry exclaimed cheerfully.

Wonder Woman walked towards them with a smile on her face. “Yes, thanks to Superman, we are victorious.”

Even Aquaman was grinning happily as he leapt over a pile of rubble, joining the rest of the team. “Clark made Darkseid his bitch!”

Hal and Barry both burst out laughing while Bruce kept his eyes focused on the glowing Kryptonian. Soon, Superman flew down and stood in front of them all. That strange golden energy was still radiating from him.

Bruce tensed anxiously until he saw Clark’s smile. It was the same sheepish smile Clark always had when he was about to apologize for something. Underneath all that incredible, fearsome power, Superman was still himself. Still Clark Kent…

Bruce relaxed, letting out a sigh of relief.

When Clark noticed Kara laying on the ground, he quickly kneeled beside her. “Will she be okay?”

“She requires rest, but she should heal quickly.” Martian Manhunter kneeled down too, and lifted the unconscious girl off the ground. “I will take her home, and watch over her. It is the least I can do to repay you.”

“Thanks, J’onn.” Clark smiled gratefully.

J’onn nodded and flew away with her. Then Superman stared at Flash’s broken leg like he was examining an X-ray.

“That fracture looks bad. You should go to the hospital right away,” he advised.

Flash gave him a pained smile. “I-I’m okay. I can wait a bit.”

“Nope, we’re going now.” Hal instantly grabbed his boyfriend, flinging him over his shoulder. “Come on, let’s go.”

After Hal flew away with Barry, Clark glanced over at Bruce again. They stared at each other in silence until Clark finally sighed.

“Look, I’m sorry, okay? I know that you didn’t want me to fight, but—”

“What did you do?” Batman demanded.

“Huh?”

“How did you get your strength back? What is it dangerous? Will there be any consequences?” Will you be okay? Bruce was still worried about the glowing…

“I’m fine, Bruce.” Clark smiled nervously. “I just, uh, flew into the sun.”

“You WHAT?!” He snapped in outrage.

“Jor-El said I had to fly into the sun to get my strength back, and it worked. So everything’s fine. And, look, I got a tan.” Clark rolled up the sleeve of his Superman suit, revealing perfectly tanned
skin.

Bruce frowned, still concerned. “You’re glowing. Are you radioactive?”

“Uh, I don’t think so. It seems to be wearing off.” Thankfully, the golden light was starting look a little dimmer.

“You’re sure you’re okay?”

“Yeah. Actually, I feel great.”

Bruce wasn’t completely convinced, and the worry must’ve shown on his face.

Trying to reassure him, Clark stepped toward him and held his hand. “Bruce, I swear I’m okay.”

“You risked your life, didn’t you?”

Instead of answering, Clark bit his bottom lip and averted his gaze.

Bruce bristled angrily, yanking his hand away. “Damn it, Clark. I told you-”

“No, you don’t get to lecture me.” Clark yelled, “You drugged me and locked me in a cage!”

Wonder Woman gasped while Aquaman smirked wickedly. “Kinky.”

Diana giggled at the Atlantean king’s remark before Clark glared at them both. “Really, guys?”

Arthur shrugged.

With a sigh, Bruce argued, “I only used the cage to keep you safe.”

“Right. And, if Darkseid destroyed the world, how safe would I be then?” Clark countered.

Bruce shut his mouth and looked away, crossing his arms. He didn’t want to admit it, but the Kryptonian had a point.

“Yeah, I did something dangerous, Bruce. Because I had to. The whole world was at stake, so I risked my life to save it. I’m Superman. It’s who I am. It’s what I do. And you shouldn’t try to stop me,” Clark declared passionately. “I know you would do the exact same thing if you were in my position. You’d fly into the sun too, if you thought it was the only way to save the world.”

“You’re right,” Bruce muttered.

“What?”

He finally met Clark’s gaze as he confessed, “I said you’re right.”

Clark gaped at him in disbelief. “Really?”

“I may have been overprotective. I shouldn’t have kept you from the fight. We needed you. I…I’m sorry,” Bruce apologized.

“Aww. How sweet,” Diana cooed as she watched.

Meanwhile Aquaman scoffed, “Just fuck already.”

Clark snapped at his friends, “Can we have some privacy?”
Unfortunately, crowds of people were already returning to the demolished area of the city. Any hope for privacy was gone. Reporters rushed toward the group of heroes, snapping photos and recording them.

“Apparently not…” Superman let out a sigh of frustration. Then he smiled and wrapped an arm around Bruce while waving at the cameras.

“What are you doing?” Batman growled at him.

“Just smile and wave,” Superman whispered back, still smiling brightly for the cameras.

“I don’t do photoshoots.” He shrugged Clark’s arm away, then he felt the Kryptonian reach underneath his black cape and squeeze his ass.

Bruce bristled, his eyes widening in shock. He almost panicked before reminding himself that no one could see where Clark’s hand was. It was all hidden by his cape. Everyone else had no idea that Superman was fondling Batman in public, in front of dozens of reporters and cameras.

_Damn it, Clark! Now is not the time for-_ Bruce blushed underneath his cowl when he felt Clark kneading and massaging his ass. The reporters were asking questions but Bruce couldn’t even focus on what they were saying. Thankfully, Superman and Wonder Woman were doing all the talking.

Spots filled his vision as the cameras continued snapping photo after photo. His heart raced at the possibility of being caught. He briefly wondered which headline would sell more papers: _Justice League Saves the World Once Again_, or _Superman Gropes Batman in Public?_ The groping one would definitely win.

He squirmed slightly when he felt Clark sliding in the cleft of his ass and prodding at his hole with a finger. The Bat suit acted as a barrier, but Bruce could still feel Clark through the fabric, playing with him. All the while, no one else knew what dirty things the so-called Big Blue Boy Scout was doing. Right in front of them. In front of their cameras.

Bruce has never felt so mortified and turned on at the same time. Even though he tried to act unaffected, blood was rushing straight to his groin. Soon, his erection would become painfully obvious. He needed to get the hell out of here.

Under his breath, Batman whispered one word so quietly that only someone with super hearing could hear him. “Bedroom.”

Clark smirked and immediately grabbed Bruce, carrying him bridal style in his arms. “Bye, everyone. Gotta go!”

In a blur of super speed, Superman blasted off into the sky, flying away with Batman.

_SxB_

As soon as they reached Wayne Manor, Clark zoomed through the balcony doors and flung Bruce on the bed. Then he instantly straddled the other man, kissing him. By now, Bruce was no stranger to being manhandled. Part of him actually loved it when Superman threw him around.

Opening his mouth, Bruce deepened the kiss, sliding his tongue against Clark’s. While they ravaged each other’s mouths, the Kryptonian worked quickly with his hands, ripping off the Bat suit. The torn kevlar came off in shreds until Bruce’s body was totally exposed. The cowl was pulled off last, revealing lustful, half-lidded blue eyes.
“You’re so beautiful.” Clark leaned down for another messy, open-mouthed kiss.

Bruce arched his back, pressing himself against the large body above him. While they kissed, he grabbed onto Clark’s Superman suit, attempting to pull the fabric off. Once Clark realized what his lover wanted, he stripped instantly using his super speed and straddled Bruce again, this time completely naked.

They kissed wildly as their erections rubbed against each other. Bruce moaned into the kiss, desperate for more. Feeling impatient, he turned away from Clark and reached for the nightstand, where they kept the lube. Before he could open the drawer, Clark pulled him back and flipped him over onto his stomach.

Bruce huffed in annoyance, “Clark, the lube-”

“I wanna try something.”

He grabbed onto Bruce, spreading his ass cheeks apart. Before Bruce could protest, he suddenly felt something very warm and wet lapping against his entrance. He gasped, his body jolting at the strange sensation. Was that Clark’s tongue?

Clark licked at his hole again and pushed against the tight ring of muscle with his tongue, slowly prodding his way inside. Bruce quivered beneath him, moaning as the wet appendage swirled up against his prostate. Then he felt Clark add a couple fingers, scissoring at his hole while he continued fucking him with his tongue. The pleasure was a slow, sweet torture. Bruce began bucking his hips as he whimpered, desperate for more contact. His erection was achingly hard and already leaking precum. He moaned when Clark added a third finger, and then a fourth, opening him up wide. Then Clark began thrusting with his fingers, hitting Bruce’s prostate more and more.

Bruce panted, struggling to form words, “C-Clark, slow down, I-I’m about to-”

His warning only spurred Clark to thrust faster. Within seconds, Bruce moaned loudly as he climaxed, cumming all over himself and the bedsheets. He sank into the mattress, boneless in the afterglow of his orgasm. Above him, Clark finally removed his fingers from the gaping hole, leaving a slick wide entrance.

Then the Kryptonian leaned over him and kissed the back of his neck.

Clark whispered in his ear, “I’m going to fuck you all night.”

Bruce shivered with anticipation. He was more than ready when Clark finally plunged that beautiful cock inside him. Bruce moaned as Clark filled him to the hilt before pulling out and slamming back in again.

Soon, Clark began fucking him in earnest, thrusting in and out at deliciously fast brutal pace. He flipped Bruce onto his back so they could face each other as he pounded into him. Bruce held onto Clark with all his strength, clutching him tightly while panting for air. He almost didn’t notice when Clark hovered off the bed. The Kryptonian held Bruce in his lap as they flew up towards the ceiling. Then he pressed Bruce against a wall and continued fucking him, nearly six feet off the ground.

Bruce stared down at the floor before Clark caught his mouth with a kiss. He shut his eyes, losing himself in the pleasure. Clark was angling his thrusts now, aiming for that sweet spot inside Bruce over and over. The Kryptonian could fuck him midair or against the ceiling for all he cared. He was so close to cumming.
Clark reached down and stroked Bruce’s erection while fucking him. It only took a few tugs. His orgasm hit him hard as Bruce trembled in ecstasy. Clark climaxed shortly afterwards, spilling his seed inside of him.

Without removing himself from Bruce, Clark flew them back down to the bed. Bruce relaxed against the mattress with a sigh of contentment while Clark laid on top of him. When Clark finally pulled out of him, Bruce shivered as he felt the semen leaking out.

Clark licked his lips, watching him with hungry eyes. “I love seeing you like this, overflowing with my cum.”

He sat between Bruce’s thighs, spreading his legs apart as more semen came seeping out his hole.

Bruce let out a choked gasp. “C-Clark…”

“I’m already getting hard again. Just looking at you.” Clark inserted a couple fingers and twisted them, searching for that sweet spot again.

When he found it, Bruce arched his back, moaning breathlessly.

Clark smirked. “There’s something else I wanna try.”

Suddenly, Bruce felt something vibrating inside his ass. He nearly leapt of the bed in surprise.

“W-What? What are you doing?!” He yelped, his voice much higher than normal.

“I’m just moving my fingers fast. Does it feel good?” Clark pressed the vibrating fingers directly against Bruce’s prostate.

“Oh, fuck!” Bruce wailed, convulsing on the bed.

With those damn fingers, Clark played him like an instrument, enlisting all kinds of embarrassing sounds from him. He brought Bruce to the brink of orgasm before he finally pulled those fingers out and fucked him again. All throughout the night, Clark fucked him over and over. Bruce eventually lost count, loving every second of it.

They had sex for hours until Bruce reached his limit.

“I can’t… I can’t anymore,” Bruce rasped, trying to catch his breath. He was exhausted. His whole body ached, and he felt so sticky, covered in a mixture of sweat and cum.

In bed, Clark laid beside him, smiling guiltily. “I’m sorry, Bruce. I may have gone a little overboard. I just have so much energy now.”

“Yeah, no shit,” Bruce grumbled.

Clark sat up and gave him a worried look. “I didn’t hurt you, did I? Was I too rough?”

Bruce stared up at the hero and smiled, too tired and satisfied for any real anger. “I’m fine. Just give me a week to recover.”

Clark still looked concerned.

Bruce sighed as he admitted, “Yeah, you were rough, but I enjoyed it. So no harm done.”

“You sure you’re okay?”
He rolled his eyes. “I’m better than okay. I just had the best sex of my life.”

Clark blinked in surprise, then he smirked proudly as he leaned toward Bruce. “Really? I’m the best?”

Underneath the blankets, Bruce could feel Clark’s erection brushing against his leg. “What the fuck?” He shot up, yelling, “You’re hard again?! Is the sun like Viagra for you?!

“Hehe, Sorry.” Clark reached down to grab himself. “I’ll take care of it on my own.”

“The hell you will.” Bruce slid down, disappearing under the blankets.

“What are you-?” Clark gasped when Bruce greedily swallowed his erection, deep-throating him without warning. “Oh, God, Bruce,” he moaned in pleasure, bucking his hips as he fucked Bruce’s hot welcoming mouth.

SxB

After three more orgasms, the Kryptonian finally seemed satiated. Now Clark was resting comfortably with his arms wrapped around Bruce while they laid in bed together. Thankfully, the golden light radiating from Clark was barely a glimmer now. His power was probably returning to normal, which was a relief. Clark already had a healthy libido without the insane boost of energy.

“Hey, Bruce.”

“Hm?” He hummed, too lazy to respond.

Clark spoke nervously, “You know how everyone thinks we’re engaged… Because you lied when I was in a coma…”

“Yeah…” Bruce pulled himself out of the embrace and sat up, his heart racing with anticipation. “What about it?”

“The engagement. I want it to be real.”

He stammered in surprise, “Y-You mean-“

Clark sat up and clasped both of Bruce’s hands in his own. Then he met Bruce’s gaze, staring into his eyes affectionately. “I love you so much, Bruce. Will you marry me?”

Bruce froze for a moment, his heart fluttering in his chest.

When he didn’t reply, Clark bowed his head in disappointment. “If…If you don’t want to-”


SxB

In the morning, Alfred opened the front door and grabbed the newspaper off the porch. Then he walked to the kitchen, where he began cooking breakfast. He highly doubted that Bruce and Clark would join him. Those two had caused quite a ruckus last night, banging against walls and skidding their bed across the floor. At least that meant Bruce would be in a good mood today. And if he was really sore, Batman may even take the night off.

Once his breakfast was ready, Alfred sat down at the kitchen table and unfolded the newspaper,
glancing at the front page. In the newspaper, there was a large photo of Superman and Batman
standing together after the battle with Darkseid. Superman was grinning brightly while Batman had
the smallest hint of a smile. Above the photo, the article was titled *The World’s Finest.*

Alfred smiled proudly.

The World’s Finest, indeed.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!