

# LOIS LANE and the Men of Steel

a short 1 act play by Nic Murphy

**Clark Kent** comes onstage slowly. He is wearing the classic Clark Kent business suit.

*LOIS (O.S.): Clark? Clark! Where the fuck are you? Goddamnit!*

After a beat, **Lois Lane** comes in more frantically.

LOIS: Clark! Jesus man! What are you doing in here? He'll be outside any minute!

(beat)

LOIS: Wait... why aren't you suited up? You have to get out there! And wrap it up quick because we can probably still make the reservation!

CLARK: Metropolis is fried, Lois. Aquaman's badly burned. Heatwave's on his way to melt this place and kill us both. I think dinner's off the table.

LOIS: Oh, come on – you'll stop him. Like you always do. And then we can go out. Or just chill. Or whatever you want.

(beat)

CLARK: What if I didn't Lois?

LOIS: What if you didn't what?

CLARK: Try to stop him. What if I just didn't?

LOIS: Are you using again? Is this the kryptonite talking? I swear to mother fucking god Clark... //

CLARK: // No, no, no, no.... //

LOIS: // Clark... Baby... I don't know exactly what's happening here but... you *have* to stop him... It's down to you.

CLARK: It's always down to me.

(beat)

LOIS: What's the mind-control codeword?! //

CLARK: // I'm not mind-controlled Lois. //

LOIS: // What's our fucking codeword Clark? //

CLARK: // Feudalism! //

LOIS: // Ok, then cut the shit - what's wrong with you? //

CLARK: // Nothing. //

LOIS: // Then what? Are you actually afraid of some idiot with flame throwers hands? //

CLARK: // No! //

LOIS: // Fabulous! Then find your balls and go fucking fight him! //

CLARK: // Stop!

(beat)

CLARK: Stop. I'm sorry. I'm not afraid. That's... I just wish... I wish I could be... I don't know.

LOIS: Listen... I know we had plans and yeah, this isn't exactly... ideal. I know how hard you work, villain after villain... but you gotta, man. There's nobody else. I can't do it. I wish I could, really, I'd do it for you... but I can't. So please, what can I say to get you out there?

CLARK: Do you know the last thing my father said to me? "Always hold in your heart the pride of your special heritage." Can you imagine that? The city's burning, people are screaming, and the last thing you say to your son before you ship him off to god knows where: You're special. Be proud. Uphold your legacy... //

LOIS: // Hey. You don't have to be Super with me. You know that.

CLARK: But I don't know how to be anything else. Where would I begin? My whole life I've been groomed... expected to be... this, whatever it is I am. I was never taught how to just... be. To hold down a job that sucks and I hate but that I need to pay for things. No one taught me that if I get drunk every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday – why not Sunday? Why not Sunday Lois?

LOIS: Don't be so hard on yourself – you've done worthy things, you've saved the planet... //

CLARK: // And what's it brought me? I'm tired. I'm tired and I'm all alone.

LOIS: You aren't alone.

CLARK: I'm the last of my kind, Lois. Protecting a civilization that isn't even mine... //

LOIS: // A Civilization that loves you! Humankind loves you. I love you. Does that not count? Why don't I count?

CLARK: You're human... you're going to die. But I won't. You're temporary... like a mosquito buzzing around me. //

LOIS: // A mosquito? //

CLARK: // I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I... I wish you weren't – I wish - but that's the truth. You can't understand.

LOIS: How dare you think that you alone know the pressure of expectation? That you alone, Mr. Perfect, Son of Krypton, Man of Tomorrow, have a monopoly on angst? Don't you take that from me. I get the scale might be different but don't think the feelings aren't the same. I know what it's like to be desperate, starving myself, working 90-hour weeks because I *do* have to make money, trying to be the best, while being the prettiest, the thinnest, the most accomplished, someone who might, *maybe*, if you're lucky, be worthy of your father's love. Yeah, the only difference between us, you and I - is that I won't wallow in self-pity. I can't fucking afford it. Sorry, but I just don't have that privilege. //

CLARK: // That's not what I'm saying. //

LOIS: // Name me one successful female reporter - if you can - and I'll guarantee you there's more articles on her fucking pant suits than on that which she's worked her whole goddamn career. So, don't say I don't fucking get it.

CLARK: Okay. Okay.

LOIS: Right, okay. So, let's be on the same team. I'm not dead yet. Go bash Heatwave and I promise, afterwards we can figure this out together. You aren't alone.

CLARK: I don't know how. I don't know who I am.

LOIS: Oh, don't be so dramatic! You're Clark Kent! //

CLARK: // But who's Clark Kent? He's just another costume. You don't know me Lois. I'm nothing. I'm nobody. I'm an actor playing a character playing a character.

LOIS: No! I won't let you say that! You're the only person who sees me for who I am. That matters. That's not nothing. To this mosquito you're not a nobody. So, let me see you. Let me fucking love you.

CLARK: You just love Superman.

LOIS: Wow. I just love Superman. Is that really... you think I just love Superman? You think I'm in this just to forever be The Man of Steel's wife?

**Clark** tries to interject.

LOIS: // I've been kidnapped for you, man. I've been tortured. I've been thrown into space, I've had my memories erased by alien parasites, I've been dropped from more buildings than I can count. I've mourned your death so many times, crying and crying and crying, thinking that this is it, whatever it is between you and I, well it's finally over. What's she going to do now? Who is Lois Lane without goddamn Superman? Your lifeless body in my arms. And then of course, you pop back with a little quip, we have break-the-floor sex, and we start it all over again. Every day this relationship tears me apart. Do you think that's fucking fun for me? Don't you think that maybe I'd like if you were just Lois Lane's husband for once? I want to carry your children, man. I want them to play outside without any of the things that have happened to me happening to them. So, no, don't kid yourself - I'm here in spite of Superman. I don't love Superman. I hate Superman.

CLARK: You said I'd be a terrible father Lois. //

LOIS: // I thought we moved past that shit! //

CLARK: // And Heatwave - don't you want me to fight him? Or should I just move past him too? //

LOIS: // Yeah, why not! Let him melt this place - who cares? You've put in your time. Let's get the fuck out of here. //

CLARK: // We aren't going to dinner Lois. //

LOIS: // Fuck dinner! Let's just go, go somewhere no one can find you. For real. I promise you that you can learn how to just be. That's easy, that's nothing. And we can do it for as long as I've got left. I want that. And I know you want it too. Let's go. Come with me.

(beat)

CLARK: I can't. //

LOIS: // Yes you can. //

CLARK: // I have a duty. //

LOIS: // That's bullshit! You're just afraid of yourself! //

CLARK: // Someone needs to play Superman. And I'm it. //

LOIS: // No! That's in your mind. Don't hide behind that. The Earth doesn't need you - I'm sorry but no one will even miss you. Hell, they might be better off without you... //

CLARK: // No they won't! Stop saying that! **(to audience)** You think any of them are prepared to go through what I go through – this excruciating obsession with myself? I don't have fun. I don't have friends. I don't make money. I don't do anything unless it directly leads me here, the prime of my life wasting away, all so this fucking guy can feed off my body. You think he drove two hours from Venice just to sit in a hot room and watch Superman peacefully raise a family in some cabin by the river? No. He's here to watch me fucking suffer, to laugh with his friends that he could have done it better than me. But you can't, because you're going home to your apartment with the big window, you're talking with your fiancé about your day, you're clocking in tomorrow at your good job, saving a little money for the baby, hiding in the comfort of daily life. Look around! You're living in a world on fucking fire and doing nothing about it. Everybody here. All of You. So, who gives a shit if I'm tired or sad or sick or not myself or whatever the fuck – you need me, you're desperate for me, bared open so that for one second you might glimpse the invisible. We all want that. It's why we're here. But I destroy myself for it. And that sacrifice is my gift to all of you.

LOIS: Who are you talking to?

CLARK: **(Alt if audience laughs: THIS ISN'T FUCKING FUNNY!) I HAVE SUPER SENSES FOR FUCK'S SAKE LOIS. I CAN SEE EVERYONE EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE, ROOMS AND ROOMS FULL OF PEOPLE HANGING ON MY EVERY WORD, WAITING AND WAITING FOR ME TO FUCKING SAVE THEM!**

LOIS: Don't you hear how arrogant you sound? //

CLARK: // Oh, I'm arrogant? You're asking me to play house while they all drown! I cannot be your selfish fantasy, you cannot fantasize about me like that, do not objectify me. I'm too important. I have a responsibility and that's never going to go away. I'm sorry, but you knew what you were getting into.

(beat)

LOIS: You know... I don't think I did. I fell for it. This act. That you were more than this, that you wanted to be more. And that's my fault.

CLARK: No! No. It's not your fault. Please. I love you – I do. I just... I'm...

LOIS: No. Stop. You're Superman. And that's kinda it. Don't blame that on your dead father, your super senses, or all the people out there. You love this shit. That is obvious.

CLARK: Can we table this for after the fight? I'm sure Heatwave's here by now.

LOIS: I won't be here after the fight. //

CLARK: // No! Lois... I... please... //

LOIS: // Enjoy your finale. Enjoy the spotlight. I'm sure the applause, whatever *invisible* you're getting out of this, well, I'm sure it's worth it.

**Lois** leaves. Major beat. **Clark** takes off his tie, unbuttons his shirt to reveal the Superman outfit.