

The Last Days of Clark K.

by Alberto Ramos

(translation by Sílvia Sanfeliu)

Catalan title: *Els últims dies de Clark K.*

This text is an excerpt.

You can ask for the complete play by sending and email to alberto.ramos@gmail.com.

CHARACTERS

CLARK

LOIS

SUPERMAN

LANA

ACT 1

An apartment. Night. On the left side, the bedroom. In the center, the sitting room. On the right side, a balcony. In front of the bedroom, there is a corridor that communicates the sitting room with the entrance door. There's another door that communicates with the bedroom. The walls are invisible.

In the bedroom there is a king size bed. In the sitting room, from left to right, there is a bar, a stereo and a table with two chairs around it, and a sofa.

Lois enters. She turns the music on and pours herself a drink from the liquor cabinet. Clark enters.

They are a couple. Both are around thirty years old. Lois is wearing a summer dress. Clark wears a white shirt and black pants, matching the frame of his glasses.

CLARK: What time is it?

LOIS: Two o'clock.

CLARK: That early?

LOIS: Well, yes...

CLARK: I thought it was later.

LOIS: So.

CLARK: So.

LOIS: It was you who was in a hurry to go.

CLARK: Because I thought it was...

LOIS: Please, Clark! Don't start with that. You knew perfectly what time it was...

Lois goes to the bedroom. Starts getting undressed.

CLARK: You gotta admit that you also thought that the party was a bore.

LOIS: I'll admit that.

CLARK: All the parties that the newspaper throws are a bore, specially the Summer Party. The Christmas party at least has incentive of the Secret Santa thing, but the Summer Party...

Lois puts her pajamas on.

LOIS: What happened was just that you could not stand that I was having enjoying myself.

CLARK: Were you having enjoying yourself?

LOIS: Do you find it so hard to believe?

CLARK: Well... yes. I find it hard to believe.

LOIS: Even if you find hard to believe... I was having a great time!

CLARK: Jimmy couldn't take his eyes off of you!

LOIS: What?

CLARK: Jimmy. He was all over you the whole time.

LOIS: So...?

CLARK: He was coming on to you, Lois.

LOIS: Who? Jimmy?

CLARK: Yes, Jimmy.

LOIS: Well, yes!

CLARK: Yes? Yes, what?

LOIS: Yes. He was coming on to me.

CLARK: And... what-what-what... what did you do? *(Turns the music off)*

LOIS: What did I do?

CLARK: Yes.

LOIS: I fucked him in the bathroom.

CLARK: ...

LOIS: Don't be stupid. *(Hugs him)* I told him that I had already met my lovers quota, but that I could enter his name in the substitute list.

They kiss on the lips.

CLARK: And... this quota... how large is it?

LOIS: Hundreds.

CLARK: And... what number am I?

LOIS: One hundred and fourteen.

CLARK: Only?

LOIS: Only.

CLARK: Ah.

Clark takes his glasses off and starts to undress.

LOIS: And you?

CLARK: ...?

LOIS: How many lovers have you got?

CLARK: Uff....

LOIS: What does “ufff” mean? A hundred? Two hundred?

CLARK: One.

LOIS: One? Come on!

CLARK: Really.

LOIS: And this girl... What is her name? Lisa? *(Pause)* Linda?

CLARK: Linda? What about Linda?

LOIS: The other day... at the coffee machine...

CLARK: Oh, yes... but I didn't do anything!

LOIS: And what about Minnie?

CLARK: Minnie? What Minnie?

LOIS: Sports Minnie. That one that pinched your ass in the elevator.

CLARK: It wasn't you? I thought it was you who pinched...

LOIS: No. And Wendy?

CLARK: Wen... Wendy? I-I swear that it was on-only a ki-kiss, and a very, very fast one... *(He gives her a fast kiss)* Like this. Very fast. It was the only way to make her

leave me alone.

Lois stares at him, very serious. Then she gets into bed. Clark stays in the sitting room, putting his pajamas on.

CLARK: Women never stop hounding me.

LOIS: Of course. It's normal.

CLARK: Do you think it is normal?

LOIS: Yes, of course.

CLARK: But... some of them are really hot!

LOIS: So...?

CLARK: That I also... well... I don't know. When I was in college, for example, that didn't happen to me. Actually, they were the ones feeling harassed.

LOIS: That's also normal.

CLARK: I don't get it.

LOIS: What don't you get?

CLARK: Women. I don't get you.

Lois gets up and goes back to the sitting room.

LOIS: Do you really don't know why women hound you?

CLARK: Frankly... I don't.

LOIS: Don't you realize? Can't you tell that they... *know*?

Silence.

CLARK: They... *know*? All of them... *know*?

LOIS: Of course they know. Everybody knows.

CLARK: Everybody?

LOIS: Everybody.

CLARK: But they know know... they know that I...?

LOIS: Yes, they know that you...

CLARK: That I...?

LOIS: Yes, that you are...

CLARK: That I am...

LOIS: That you are *him*.

CLARK: And... and... how do they know?

LOIS: What do you mean how? They know it. That simple.

CLARK: But, someone must have told them.

LOIS: I guess.

CLARK: Who?

LOIS: How am I supposed to know that? *(Pause)* Who told you that Marilyn Manson was actually that kid in *The Wonder Years*?

CLARK: I don't know. Someone.

LOIS: Well, this is the same.

CLARK: But I am not Marilyn Manson.

LOIS: No, you are Superman.

Silence.

LOIS: Really you didn't realize they knew?

CLARK: Well, I imagined that maybe a few people did know... You, my mother, that guy in the phone booth... But not *everybody*!

LOIS: The guy in the phone booth?

CLARK: Don't, don't change the subject. We were talking about women. *(Pause)* Do you mean that they... hound me because... *they know*?

LOIS: Which woman would not want to fuck Superman?

Silence.

CLARK: Maybe it was me who they wanted to fuck...

LOIS: Of course...

CLARK: ... maybe not all of them... but some.

LOIS: What did I just tell you? They all want to fuck Superman.

CLARK: Well, yes, but... what if... what if they actually wanted to... who they really wanted to screw was... Clark?

LOIS: What's wrong with you?

CLARK: With me?

LOIS: It's like you are jealous of yourself.

Silence.

CLARK: Lois...

LOIS: ...?

CLARK: Do you love me?

LOIS: Of course.

CLARK: And if I wasn't Superman... would you love me?

LOIS: What sort of question is that?

CLARK: Would you love me or not?

LOIS: ...

CLARK: I didn't hear you.

LOIS: I didn't say anything.

CLARK: If Superman and Clark were two different people, which one would you choose?

LOIS: What is this? An interrogation?

CLARK: No, it's an interview. I am a journalist.

LOIS: So am I. *(Pause)* So I'll ask you another question: if Lois, that girl who works with you, and Lois, the girl that fucks with you, were two different people, which one would you choose?

CLARK: Don't be silly. There's no difference between them two.

LOIS: No? And since when a simple co-worker does this to you? *(Starts licking his ear)*

CLARK: Since about a month ago. When I met Cindy by the copy machine.

Suddenly, Lois stops licking and puts her hand into Clark's pants.

LOIS: And this? Which co-worker has ever done this to you? Tracy?

CLARK: No, no. Not Tracy... At least not with her hand.

Lois seats on top of him.

CLARK: Lois, what are you doing?

LOIS: I thought you were smarter than that.

CLARK: Please, not now.

LOIS: What's wrong? Do you have a headache?

CLARK: Kind of.

LOIS: What a lousy superhero!

CLARK: I am sorry.

LOIS: Are you feeling alright?

CLARK: I need some rest. That's all.

Lois goes back to the bedroom. She gets into bed.

LOIS: If we are just going to sleep, turn the light off.

Clark turns the light on the bedroom off.

LOIS: The other one too.

Clark turns off the lights on the sitting room too, he takes a cigarette and a lighter and goes out. He leans on the rail of the balcony. He tries to lit the lighter but it constantly goes off (it is windy). Suddenly, the lighter slips off his hands, and falls down, to the street.

He goes back to the sitting room. He takes his glasses, puts them on, and goes back out. He leans on the rail again and looks down.

Lois wake up and walks towards Clark.

LOIS: I didn't know that Superman needed his glasses to look afar.

CLARK: Actually, he does. Superman is near-sighted. Unlike Clark, who is far-sighted. *(Smile)*

LOIS: *(Looking at the cigarette)* Weren't you going to quit?

CLARK: Quit? Why? You know it has no effect on me.

LOIS: Maybe not on you, but it has on me. I don't like kissing an ashtray.

CLARK: That's not what you used to say to me. *(Kisses her)*

LOIS: Well, not, I don't like it. *(Pause)* It's funny, sometimes you taste different.

CLARK: Sometimes?

LOIS: Yes. The other day, for example.

CLARK: Where?

LOIS: *(Whispering)* At the Tibidabo.

CLARK: *(Also whispering)* At the Tibidabo?

LOIS: Don't you remember? You flew me all the way there.

CLARK: Really?

LOIS: You remember. Don't you?

CLARK: Of course! Of course I remember.

LOIS: Let's go out.

CLARK: Where do you want to go at this time of night? *(Pause)* Don't tell me you want to go back to the party...

LOIS: No. I don't want to go back to the party.

CLARK: Then... what do you want?

LOIS: I want to fly.

CLARK: And I want to sleep.

LOIS: We don't have to get up early tomorrow morning. We are on vacation.

CLARK: Exactly! We have to pack. Our ship sails at 1 pm., we don't have that much time.

LOIS: Our ship sails at 1 pm. the day after tomorrow. And we *do* have plenty of time.

CLARK: Ok, ok... you're right. But, I really want to get to bed.

Clark goes back to the sitting room.

LOIS: It's been so long since you last took me flying. It's been so many days since you

last made me feel special. And I don't know how long I will be able to stand this pathetic, pitiful and boring phase.

CLARK: ...

LOIS: No more excuses!

Lois goes back to the bedroom. Closes the door and gets into bed.

Clark, helpless, goes back to the balcony.

A heroic music starts to play. He hesitates a few seconds before he climbs on to the rail and jumps off.

About fifteen seconds later, Clark's legs appear again, above the rail. The legs and the rest of his body land on the balcony.

Superman is standing on the rail, totally dressed as a superhero: leggings, cape... Even though they look very much alike, Superman and Clark are not identical.

The music ends.

Clark is ecstatic, due to a massive adrenaline rush.

SUPERMAN: Why did you do that?

CLARK: Don't shout.

SUPERMAN: I am not.

CLARK: She could wake up.

Clark takes a cigarette and puts it between his lips. He is looking for something in the pockets of his pajamas.

CLARK: Excuse me... But I think I dropped my lighter. Would you mind...?

Superman gives Clark a disapproving look.

CLARK: Well. Who cares.

Clark puts the cigarette in his pocket.

SUPERMAN: Why did you do that?

CLARK: This is the first time we see each other. Isn't it funny?

SUPERMAN: No. It isn't.

CLARK: Ok.

SUPERMAN: Why did you do it?

CLARK: Why...? Why did *you* do it?

SUPERMAN: What?

CLARK: Why did you save me?

SUPERMAN: Why? Why do you ask me that?

CLARK: Why not?

SUPERMAN: Because...

CLARK: Why didn't you let me fall?

SUPERMAN: I let you fall.

CLARK: Why didn't you let me fall *all the way*?

SUPERMAN: Because you would have died. And I couldn't let you die.

CLARK: Why not?

SUPERMAN: Because I couldn't

CLARK: And why couldn't you?

SUPERMAN: Why? Because... because it's my speciality!: saving people, catching the bad guys... this sort of things. These are the things I go.

CLARK: Ok.

Silence.

SUPERMAN: Why did you jump?

CLARK: I knew you would come.

SUPERMAN: If I hadn't been around I couldn't have saved you.

CLARK: I know.

Superman observes Clark.

CLARK: Are you trying to read my mind?

SUPERMAN: I can't read minds. Why did you make me come?

CLARK: Well... I don't know where to start.

SUPERMAN: Wherever you want. Go on.

CLARK: I guess you are used to things being easy for you: flying, stopping trains, diverting asteroids... But, for the rest of us these things are not easy. Well, besides stopping trains. This we can do, at least once in a lifetime.

SUPERMAN: Yeah.

CLARK: Well... it's not easy. It's no easy telling someone like you, someone so... so you... that I am a fake.

SUPERMAN: I knew.

CLARK: What?

SUPERMAN: I knew it. I knew you were a fake.

CLARK: Oh, great, thank you very much.

SUPERMAN: You are welcome.

CLARK: Of course I knew you knew. You had to know, it's logical. Because you had to know that I wasn't you. And that you weren't me. It's obvious.

SUPERMAN: Why did you make me come?

CLARK: I suppose I have no choice but to confess my sins. Because it's all about this, isn't it?

SUPERMAN: What is it about what?

CLARK: God knows our sins, but still we have to explain them to him... but we do that through a messenger. Someone who doesn't know them and probably doesn't want to know them. Why would he want to know them if he then can't tell them to anyone?

SUPERMAN: Excuse me...

CLARK: Yes?

SUPERMAN: I think it is fantastic that you have the need to confess your sins, but actually I can't be here all night listening to you. I am not a priest.

CLARK: Nor are you God either. But, you are that who most resembles him.

SUPERMAN: Funny, I thought I was you who I most resembled.

CLARK: Yes... *(Cheering up)* I am not a liar.

SUPERMAN: Aren't you? Just a minute ago you were admitting that you were a fake. Was that a lie?

CLARK: No... I am a fake, yes, but I am not a liar.

SUPERMAN: Wait a minute. If you are a fake, you are then also a liar. They are synonymous.

CLARK: No. They are not. Because I have never told a lie. I simply do not stick to the truth.

SUPERMAN: Ok, then...

CLARK: I mean it! I have never told anybody I was Superman. If anyone has ever been led to believe that I was... it's not my problem.

SUPERMAN: It isn't, of course.

CLARK: My only sin has been not denying it. At first, I was about to do it... but I didn't. Why should I?

SUPERMAN: Good question: Why should you? Why should you tell Lois the truth?

Upon hearing her name, Clark shivers. Lois does too, in her sleep.

CLARK: *(Speaking in a lower voice)* I suppose that, if it hadn't been for Lois, this farce would have ended a long time ago. *(Pause)* If it hadn't been for Lois I would have been much more honest. If Lois hadn't fallen in love with Superman... but she did. She felt in love with you. I couldn't compete against you... but, why should I? *(Pause)* When people made comments about how much we look alike. Superman and I look alike. Isn't it funny?

SUPERMAN: No, it isn't.

CLARK: Well, they said it. At first I didn't pay much attention to it. But then rumors started. And it is so difficult to fight against rumors. Actually, if they ever ask me what is stronger, if Superman or a rumor, I would answer that, without a doubt, a rumor is.

SUPERMAN: Well. Thank you.

CLARK: The question is that Lois had fallen in love with Superman, and I couldn't compete with Superman. I was Superman, until proven wrong. I was convinced that, if I could make Lois believe that I was Superman, she would sooner or later fall in love with me. Then, I'd tell her the truth. And Lois swallowed this Superman thing. Even I started to believe it myself, that she had finally fallen in love with me. But now I know how wrong I was. I was wrong, because Lois has all the time only been in love with

you. She loves you, and only you. *(Pause)* She doesn't know it, of course. Because she thinks that I am you. That's why I can't tell her the truth. That's why she cannot know the truth. That's why...

SUPERMAN: That's why you tried to kill yourself. Isn't it?

A very uncomfortable silence. Clark goes to the liquor cabinet.

CLARK: A beer?

SUPERMAN: No thanks. I don't drink.

CLARK: A coke?

SUPERMAN: No, I don't drink coke either.

CLARK: You don't? I have always thought that you...

Clark takes a beer bottle. He tries to open it with his bare hands, but he can't.

SUPERMAN: Come on. Let me do it...

CLARK: No, thank you.

Clark gives up and takes a coke, opens the can and gets out to the balcony.

CLARK: And you... What about you? Why didn't you tell the truth? Why haven't you given me away? Or is it that you don't mind a fake like me is fucking your girlfriend?

SUPERMAN: ...

CLARK: It's kind of funny.

SUPERMAN: You find a lot of funny angles in this story, don't you?

CLARK: She is sleeping with two guys... and they are the ones cheating on her.

(Pause) Because you... you and Lois... you have...?

SUPERMAN: We have what...?

CLARK: Yes...

SUPERMAN: Of course we have.

Clark gets very close to the rail.

CLARK: Then... then we are very similar doing...

SUPERMAN: I suppose.

CLARK: Actually I had not thought about it...

A gun shot stops him from finishing his sentence. In the bedroom, Lois wakes up. Superman runs towards the balcony and stops a second bullet just in front of Clark. He drops the bullet and flies off.

There is a third shot. Clark runs and hides underneath the table.

Lois opens the bedroom door.

LOIS: What is going on?

CLARK: What...? Lois! Get out of the way! It's dangerous!

LOIS: What...?

Another shot. Lois hides by Clark.

LOIS: What's going on?

CLARK: Shots.

LOIS: I know that. But... why?

CLARK: Why? What do you mean why?

Another shot.

CLARK: Because of guns.

LOIS: Clark.

CLARK: Yes?

LOIS: What are we doing here?

CLARK: Is... is this a philosophical question?

LOIS: What are we doing here, ducked under a table?

Another shot.

LOIS: Aren't you going to do something?

CLARK: Wh—what? I am doing something!

LOIS: They are shooting at us! Why don't you get up and do something?

CLARK: Because they are shooting at us.

LOIS: But you are Superman.

CLARK: Yes, and I am here to protect you.

LOIS: And couldn't you protect me much better by getting up and stopping this sniper or whatever this person is?

CLARK: It could be dangerous.

LOIS: Dangerous? Bullets can't do anything to you!

CLARK: Not to me! But, what if the guy sees me and starts shooting to innocent people?

LOIS: He is already doing that!

CLARK: No..., that we cannot know.

LOIS: And are you going to let him keep on shooting all night long?

CLARK: No, I don't think the ammo will last him that long.

LOIS: That we really cannot know.

CLARK: Lois...

LOIS: What?

CLARK: Could you shut up, please? Don't you see I am trying to concentrate here?

LOIS: Whaaaat?

CLARK: I am trying to use my telepathic super powers to reduce this guy.

LOIS: Since when do you have telepathic powers?

CLARK: If you keep on talking, I can't concentrate.

Pause.

LOIS: There are no more shots.

CLARK: You see? I told you that I...

Lois gets up. Clark pulls her back down.

CLARK: Lois, what are you doing? The fact that the shots have stopped doesn't mean that...

LOIS: Why don't you go out and see...?

CLARK: Yes, yes, of course, I'll go. But only if you stay here and promise me you will not move.

LOIS: I promise.

CLARK: Ok.

Clark stays put.

LOIS: Clark!

CLARK (*Getting up*): Alright, alright! But don't you move, ok?

Clark pushes Lois back under the table, and runs to the bedroom, closing the door behind him.

Lois gets out from under the table. The first thing she sees is Superman entering the balcony. She gets up, surprised. Superman wasn't counting on her being there either.

SUPERMAN: Lois!

LOIS: You are back already?

SUPERMAN: Yes. I missed you.

Superman runs to her and hugs her like they hadn't seen each other for a long time.

LOIS: What did you do to...?

SUPERMAN: To what?

LOIS: To the sniper. Of course.

SUPERMAN: Oh, I turned him into the police. It wasn't easy, because many innocent lives were in danger. But, finally, there were no casualties.

LOIS: You turned him into the police?

SUPERMAN: Yes. I read him his rights... Even though I know it's not my job to do so. It is supposed to be part of the police duties.

LOIS: Clark... But... It didn't take you more than three seconds!

SUPERMAN: Three? No way, at least it took me... *(With his X-ray vision, Superman sees Clark hiding in the bedroom and takes fast conclusions)* Four seconds. I think it's been four seconds. Actually I read him the short version of his Miranda Rights.

LOIS: The “short version”?

SUPERMAN: “Shut up”! And he did.

Lois shushes him with a kiss.

Superman moves his lips gently away from her, still holding her.

SUPERMAN: Lois...

LOIS: Tell me.

SUPERMAN: What do you think if you and I... now?

LOIS: ... go to bed?

SUPERMAN: Well, I was going to ask you if you wanted to go patrolling the city with me.

LOIS: Flying?

SUPERMAN: Of course! What do you say?

LOIS: Clark, you know I am always ready to go patrolling with you.

They are about to take off, and Lois turn around and heads to the bedroom.

LOIS: Wait a second.

SUPERMAN: What's going on?

LOIS: I want to take my camera...

Lois starts opening the bedroom door. Clark is half hidden under the bed, but Lois could see him perfectly.

SUPERMAN: Come on! How many times have I told you that I don't like you taking pictures while we are on patrol.

LOIS: I want to finish my roll.

SUPERMAN: Don't you remember that it is dangerous? Last time we almost kill a guy!

LOIS: But you caught the camera in time, didn't you? This time I will put the strap around my neck.

SUPERMAN: I am sorry, Lois.

LOIS: You can't do this to me. I am a journalist!

SUPERMAN: And I am Superman.

Lois shrugs. Romantic music starts to play. Superman takes her and they both jump up the balcony.

Clark goes back to the sitting room and sits, offering a pathetic and devastating view.

Superman gets into the sitting room with Lois in his arms. She is asleep. The music ends.

Superman and Clark talk low, the dialog is almost inaudible.

SUPERMAN: What are you doing?

CLARK: Sitting.

SUPERMAN: It's not the moment now.

CLARK: Of course it is! I have been about to die! I need to recover.

SUPERMAN: You'll recover later.

CLARK: Damn it! Is this why you saved me? So I can see how you fuck her?

SUPERMAN (Offended): Oh, please... She's asleep!

CLARK: It's even worse then.

SUPERMAN: Get out of here.

Clark obeys and goes to the balcony.

Superman puts Lois to bed. She awakes and hugs him. Puts her legs tightly around him.

Clark makes animal sounds. Superman closes the bedroom door.

Clark climbs on top of the rail of the balcony.

CLARK *(In a low voice, simulating distant voices):* No, don't jump! He is going to jump! Hey! Nooo, don't juuuuump! *(Clearly, he has no intention to jump)*

Superman opens the bedroom door. Only his head is outside the bedroom, he looks towards the balcony.

SUPERMAN: Don't do it. Or, do it, if you want. But this time don't expect me to save you.

Superman goes back to bed with Lois, but he realizes she's back to sleep. Discontented, he gets up.

CLARK: Supermaaaan! Someone please call Supermaaaan! Supermaaaan, where are you?! Supermaaaan!

Superman goes to the sitting room.

CLARK: Supemaaan, you are never there when we you are needed! *(Superman goes towards him)* Why... why didn't you tell her the truth? Why didn't you tell the truth to Lois?

SUPERMAN: I suppose that for the same reason you didn't. Because I can't compete with you.

CLARK: ...

SUPERMAN: ...

CLARK: You are teasing me, aren't you?

SUPERMAN: No, I am not. Do you think that if Lois had to decide between us two, she would pick me...?

CLARK: Well, yes. Don't you... don't you think so too?

SUPERMAN: No. At least I didn't use to think so. But now that I have meet you face

to face, I have my doubts.

CLARK: ...

SUPERMAN: Because... Tell me... what do you think she saw in you? Anyway, I still believe Lois would pick you.

CLARK: But... why?

SUPERMAN: It's obvious.

CLARK: If you don't tell me...

SUPERMAN: How can I explain it to you? You see... A woman cannot be with a superhero full time.

CLARK: I don't know if...

SUPERMAN: She just can't be a superhero's partner 24/7. *(Pause)* For example, now, you are going on a cruise, right? *(Lois, in bed, mumbles "Clark". They continue talking in very low volume)* You'll be aboard that ship for I don't know how many days, isolated, disconnected from the rest of the world...

CLARK: Yes.

SUPERMAN: I couldn't! How could I tell Lois that superheroes don't go on vacation? Because you cannot save the world while sailing on a cruise...

CLARK: Why are we speaking so low?

SUPERMAN: Because I heard her with my super hearing.

CLARK: I still believe that if Lois had to choose...

SUPERMAN: Ok. She'd probably choose me, what I tell you for sure that it wouldn't be long before she'd regret it.

CLARK: I don't know.

SUPERMAN: Believe me. Perfection can end up being very boring. That's why I envy you,

CLARK: ...

SUPERMAN: Sometimes I'd love to be just a simple guy. Like you. Do you have a cigarette?

CLARK *(Surprised)*: Do you smoke?

SUPERMAN: I mean it. You don't know how lucky you are to be so... so like the rest.

CLARK *(Taking a cigarette out)*: I thought you didn't smoke.

SUPERMAN: I don't smoke.

He takes the cigarette that Clark gives him. He takes a lighter from inside his suit "pants". Lights the cigarette.

He takes a drag. Coughs.

CLARK: And they talk about Kryptonite...

SUPERMAN (*Putting the cigarette out*): I know this may sound ridiculous, but... you are my hero.

CLARK: And this lighter?

SUPERMAN: Actually, I don't need it... I could have lit it with my... But it is just part of the ritual.

CLARK: Yes... but this lighter... Isn't it *my* lighter?

SUPERMAN: No. I found it on the sidewalk.

CLARK: On what street?

SUPERMAN: This street. Just underneath this balcony.

CLARK: Of course! Because it is my lighter!

SUPERMAN: Are you sure?

CLARK: Yes! Don't you remember I told you I dropped it?

Superman looks at it, not too convinced. Finally, throws the lighter at Clark, he tries to catch it, but he misses and has to pick it up from the floor.

SUPERMAN: Actually, I don't need it.

Clark stares at Superman.

CLARK (*Thoughtful*): So... you'd like to be me?

SUPERMAN: Well, don't overdo it.

CLARK: Would you like to be me, or not?

SUPERMAN: Don't take everything I say so literally. The truth is that I could not live without my superpowers. Without this sensation that I am the strongest man in the world. Without being the best, in short.

CLARK: So? Yes or no?

SUPERMAN: But sometimes, I'd love to know what it is like being mediocre, like you.

CLARK: So I'd love to have your superpowers so I could kick your ass!

SUPERMAN: You see? I couldn't kick you! The press would jump all over me.

CLARK: Being a journalist had to have some advantages too. Superheroes can't attack you.

SUPERMAN: No.

Lois wakes up and gets up from bed. Superman hears her and makes Clark hide behind the table. He lights a cigarette to appear casual. Lois opens the door.

LOIS *(Still half asleep)*: Don't smoke.

Lois goes back to bed. Superman coughs.

CLARK *(Getting up from behind the table)*: Would you like to be me?

SUPERMAN: I've already told you that...

CLARK: I am not talking about being me forever, but... Would you like to replace me for a few hours, for a day...?

SUPERMAN: Well...

CLARK: ... for a week!

SUPERMAN: Do you really mean that?

CLARK: Totally.

SUPERMAN: Are you suggesting that I... that you want me to pretend to be you?

CLARK: Yes.

SUPERMAN: Let me see, so I understand it well: I pretend to be you... while you... you pretend to be me?

CLARK: No, not that...

SUPERMAN: Pretending to be Superman is not easy.

CLARK: Of course I don't intend to pretend to be you... Actually, you don't have to be me all the time.

SUPERMAN: ...?

CLARK: Only when you don't have to save anybody. After all, if you need to disappear for a while people will understand.

SUPERMAN: Are you sure?

CLARK: Of course. What do you think I have been doing all this time? When you appeared, I vanished. *(Pause)* Well, not always, of course, because I had no way of knowing exactly what you were doing all the time...

SUPERMAN: That relieves me.

CLARK: ... but, each time you had a specially notable performance, then I would hide.

SUPERMAN: You'd hide?

CLARK: Yes. In the news room bathroom, underneath a restaurant table, inside a phone booth...

SUPERMAN: A phone booth?

CLARK: Yes, a phone booth. *(Lois moves in her sleep)* But sometimes the remedy is worse than the illness, specially with phone booths. They are traps!

SUPERMAN: Why?

CLARK: Do you remember that fire a few weeks back?

SUPERMAN: On Fritz Lang Avenue?

CLARK: Yes, that. Well, so when it happened I was inside a phone booth.

SUPERMAN: Hidden?

CLARK: No. Talking on the phone. I knew nothing about the fire... Until a man saw me. He recognized me, and started to bang on the booth, like a mad man, while pointing at a building a few blocks away.

SUPERMAN: The one that was on fire.

CLARK: Yes. Obviously, the man expected Superman to come out of the booth and proceed to the rescue.

SUPERMAN: But you are not Superman.

CLARK: Of course not! I didn't know what to do... I came out of the phone booth and started to run towards the building on fire. Phone booths are traps.

SUPERMAN: You ran?

CLARK: Yes, I ran.

SUPERMAN: How did you run?

CLARK: Well... running.

SUPERMAN: Yes... but... Show me how.

CLARK: What?!

SUPERMAN: I want to see how you ran.

CLARK: You are not saying this seriously...

SUPERMAN: You only have to run back and forth around the...

CLARK: Come on!

SUPERMAN: Do it!

CLARK: Who cares how I ran?

SUPERMAN: Do it!

CLARK: But... why?

SUPERMAN: Do it, please. It is important to me.

CLARK: ...

SUPERMAN: Please.

CLARK: Well... I suppose...

Clark goes to the balcony, starts to stretch.

SUPERMAN: What are you doing?

CLARK: Getting ready to run.

SUPERMAN: You are supposed to be inside a phone booth, you can't get ready.

CLARK *(Stops the stretching routine):* Very well, very well... *(Pause)* Are you going to time me?

SUPERMAN: No need to.

CLARK: ...

SUPERMAN: Whenever you want...

Clark starts running around the sitting room. He is a little tired due to the effort.

SUPERMAN: Did you really run like this?

CLARK: More or less.

SUPERMAN: Oh my!

CLARK: I wasn't that bad...

SUPERMAN: What? It wasn't "that bad"? You say it wasn't "that bad"? Oh, please! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

CLARK: Well...

SUPERMAN: For goodness sake! And you were pretending to be me! If you ever try to be me again, could you at least try to do it right? You can't pretend to be me and run like that...

CLARK: Nobody noticed it.

SUPERMAN: Well, then I wish they had! Are you aware of the damage that that can cause to my image?

CLARK: It's not that bad...

SUPERMAN: Superman can't run like that!

CLARK: Alright, alright!... I am sorry. *(Pause)* But really, hardly anybody saw me. Only that man and a few more. Everybody was looking at the fire. And I quickly disappeared into the crowd.

SUPERMAN: And nobody noticed you?

CLARK: Nobody. Well, that's what I think. And then you appeared.

SUPERMAN: So there were about... how many people? About one hundred, two hundred people?

CLARK: If I knew you were going to get mad like this, I wouldn't have told you all this.

SUPERMAN: You have to understand that you are messing with my public image.

CLARK: That also applies to you.

SUPERMAN: What?

CLARK: You are also messing with my public image.

SUPERMAN: Excuse me; it's you who's pretending to be me.

CLARK: And you allow it to happen, which turns you into an accomplice. And from the moment that you allow people to think that you and I are the same person, all that you do in public is affecting *my* image too. And since you have far more public appearances than me, it is *my* image that gets much more exposed. Isn't it? Yes or no? Yes? Or maybe normal, average people like me, we don't have an image to protect too? Everybody is exposed to public opinion, not only those who appear in the media.

SUPERMAN: I know...

CLARK: And I am telling you, that I am a journalist.

SUPERMAN: Yes, well...

CLARK: That's why, if you pretend to be me, my image will be in danger 24/7.

SUPERMAN: It wasn't me who suggested that I would pretend to be you.

CLARK: Yes, but do you want to? You want to be me.

SUPERMAN (*Thinking*): And what will you do while I am you? Will you hide inside a phone booth?

CLARK: No. I want to go home, visit my mother. It's been a long time since I saw her last.

SUPERMAN: I never met my parents. I only saw them in some recordings.

CLARK: I am sorry.

SUPERMAN: How long will you be gone?

CLARK: One week.

SUPERMAN: Ok.

CLARK: You'll be me for a week. Do you think it's ok?

SUPERMAN: Oh, yes. With one week I have plenty of time.

CLARK: Ok...

Clark offers Superman to shake hands in order to seal the deal. Superman hesitates and finally doesn't shake Clark's hand.

SUPERMAN: It's just...

CLARK: ...?

SUPERMAN: ... that I don't know if I'll know how.

CLARK: That you won't know how...?

SUPERMAN: I don't know if I'll know how to behave. If I will be able to pretend I am you.

CLARK: It's not that hard. I didn't need to do anything, and they already thought I was Superman.

SUPERMAN: All right, but...

CLARK: You will manage just fine.

SUPERMAN: I don't know. First of all, I am not a journalist. I don't even have a degree

in journalism.

CLARK: So...?

SUPERMAN: So I don't know if I am allowed to work as a journalist.

CLARK: Please! If you knew the amount of people who pose as journalists and have never studied journalism. You only have to turn your TV on and you'll see... And, the degree is actually no use...

SUPERMAN: I don't know how to write an article.

CLARK: Once you have the news you write everything down. And don't worry about spelling. You press F7 and everything gets corrected.

SUPERMAN: I have never written an article.

CLARK: Anyway, if you ever have a problem, you can always ask...

SUPERMAN: Lois?

CLARK: No. Interns. That's what they are there for. *(Pause)* Will you remember?

SUPERMAN: Yes. Interns, interns, interns...

CLARK: That's right.

SUPERMAN: But...

CLARK: What?

SUPERMAN: Now that I think about it... Aren't you leaving on vacation?

CLARK: Yes. So...?

SUPERMAN: Then I won't have to replace you at work.

CLARK: What?

SUPERMAN: If you are on vacation, I won't have to replace you at...

CLARK *(Interrupting)*: Hey, hey. Don't go so fast. The exchange will be next September, when we come back from our vacation. Monday, September 2nd.

Clark offers Superman to shake hands again, and this time, Superman accepts. They shake hands.

CLARK: Eight o'clock pm.

SUPERMAN: Don't you come back in the morning?

CLARK: Yes, but you come at eight pm.

Superman leaves jumping off the balcony.

LIGHTS OUT.