

A Tale of Two Marthas

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Rated PG

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Summary: Just who is Martha Kent?

All characters are the property of Warner Bros, December 3rd Productions, ABC, and anyone else who may have a legal claim on them. The story, however, is mine.

This fic is for LaraMoon, although it doesn't strictly qualify as a ficathon fic as I didn't manage to get all of her prompts in here. I think I'm just missing one, though.

A huge thank you to Carol for reading this on short notice during a crazy weekend!

More notes at the end.

Thank you also to Caroline K. for GEing this for me.

~Smallville, 2009~

I gasped when I saw the two men at my door. I tried to cover it up, and I even thought I had succeeded until Clark asked, "Mom?" in such a concerned voice I felt a combination of guilt for worrying him and annoyance at his super-hearing.

"I'm fine, Clark," I told him as I moved away from the door to let him in. "Jonathan, Clark's here," I called up the stairs, trying to cover my discomfiture.

"Mom, this is Bruce Wayne," Clark said, introducing me to the man by his side. As if I needed to an introduction.

"It's nice to meet you, Mrs. Kent." Bruce held his hand out to me.

Jonathan's laugh came from the stairwell. "I don't remember the last time Martha let someone call her Mrs. Kent."

"That's right," I added, and even I could hear that my voice was softer than usual. "Please call me ..." I faltered for a moment, before taking a deep breath and adding, "Martha."

Clark gave me another strange look, but I ignored it.

"And I'm Jonathan," Jonathan said, shaking Bruce's hand.

"Jonathan," Bruce nodded. "I'm Bruce. Bruce Wayne."

Clark led us into the kitchen. "I smell chocolate chip cookies," he announced.

"You said Lois was still not feeling well," I reminded him, trying to focus on the inane conversation.

"Is this some sort of Kent family secret?" Bruce asked, confused. "Cookies for illness?"

Clark laughed, "No, it's a Lois thing. Chocolate cures all."

Bruce laughed as I put some of the cookies on a plate.

"So, Mom, Dad, there's a reason I brought Bruce here," Clark said.

"We could have assumed that," Jonathan said.

"You did fly him here," I added. There. That sounded normal.

Clark nodded. "Bruce knows my secret."

"I didn't realize anyone besides Lois knew," Jonathan said, and I wondered at how good natured he was being about this. But he had learned to trust Clark's judgment more on this.

"Well ..." Bruce hesitated before finally saying, "I have one of my own. Clark discovered mine and sort of shared his as an act of goodwill."

Jonathan looked surprised by this, and clearly was trying not to seem too curious. I tried to emulate his look, but worried that I didn't look surprised at all. How could I?

"Bruce is Batman," Clark explained.

Jonathan's eyes lit up. "The Caped Crusader! In our kitchen! Can you believe it, Martha?"

"No," I replied, but my tone was flat, lacking the wonder in Jonathan's voice. Again Clark looked at me strangely, and this time Jonathan joined him, but I shook it off. I was trying to act as normally as possible. Under the circumstances, I thought I was doing incredibly well.

~Smallville, 1965~

Jonathan kept a hand in mine while we drove, even though the snow outside made the road conditions a little treacherous. Neither of us spoke. What was there to say?

"I'm sorry," Dr. Whitmore said, his tone compassionate. "There's nothing I can do. We can run some tests if you'd like, but usually in these cases there's little we can do."

"There's not anything?" Jonathan asked, and I squeezed his hand tighter at the sound of pain in his voice. "There's not something one of us can take or ..."

Dr. Whitmore shook his head. "There are no pills or fast fixes. We could do more tests like I said, and find out specifically what the problem is, but in most cases it is the woman and there is little we can do." He looked at me kindly.

It wasn't me. I knew it wasn't me. But I wasn't going to say anything. It wasn't important; there was no reason to say anything.

"And if it's me?" Jonathan asked.

"Still, there is rarely anything to be done," Dr. Whitmore said.

"I love you," Jonathan said quietly as he turned the car into the driveway.

"I love you, too," I whispered back.

"Do you want to do the tests?" he asked me. "Just in case he's wrong?"

I wasn't sure what to say. I knew he was wrong. My son was proof of that. But what was I supposed to say? If I believed that funny little man with the bowler hat, this was going to happen for us. Was that because I suggested we get tested? Or did it just happen on its own?

Or maybe it didn't happen at all. Maybe this wasn't what I thought at all. Maybe I had left my son alone for no reason. Maybe I sacrificed everything for nothing.

I looked over at Jonathan. That wasn't fair. While I had thought there was no chance I could find happiness as a farmer's wife, the truth was that I loved Jonathan. I hadn't expected to. I had thought that after Thomas, nothing would be left. But I was happy here. Aside from my one regret and my desire to have a child with Jonathan, my life was nearly perfect.

Still, I hoped he hadn't been wrong. I hoped this wasn't in vain. As much as I loved Jonathan, I worried about him everyday. I loved Jonathan, but Bruce was just a little boy. Some days I couldn't believe I had made the decision I had. And if he had been wrong, if Jonathan and I never had a son ... Well, we just had to.

~Gotham, 1962~

"Mrs. Wayne? Martha Wayne?" I heard the call behind me. I turned around in surprise. I hadn't expected to bump into anyone I knew here.

And actually I hadn't met anyone I knew. I had never

seen this man before. I was sure of it.

“Mrs. Wayne,” he continued to call until he caught up to me, breathless. I considered running, but I couldn’t really imagine I was in any danger. It was the middle of the day, I was in a crowded place, and honestly, I felt fairly confident of my ability to defend myself against this man.

“Mrs. Wayne,” he repeated once more, more quietly this time.

“Yes?” I asked him. He was short — shorter than I was, and a bit strange looking with his bowler cap and pocket watch. Even the style of his clothing spoke of an older time. In fact, I would have said he dressed like my father, but even that was a bit off.

“I need to speak with you,” he said, and I realized why his clothes looked off. He was British. Did they really still dress this way in England? “It’s very important,” he insisted, and I finally absorbed his words. What could a complete stranger have to tell me that was so important?

“Okay,” I agreed warily.

“Not here,” he said. “We need someplace with some privacy. Will you come with me?”

“I most certainly will not!” I told him. The nerve! “Look, I don’t know who you are or how you know my name, but I’m in a rush. If I’m not home in less than a half hour, my husband is going to be looking for me.”

“This won’t take that long,” he assured me. As if that made me feel any better. I should have run. “My name is Herbert George Wells ...”

“Really?” I laughed. “Your parents are fans?”

“I am *the* H.G. Wells,” he clarified.

Well that would explain the clothes. But ... “Aren’t you dead?” I asked with a smirk.

“Well, in a manner, yes,” he told me. “I died in 1946, but this is the me from 1940.”

“Oh,” I said, matter-of-factly. As if this insane man was making any sense. “If you’ll excuse me,” I said, “I need to finish my shopping.” I needed to get away from him.

“My time machine — the one I wrote about — it’s real. I use it,” he exclaimed, as he walked quickly to keep up with me. “I just recently came back from a visit with your son and his wife.”

This got me to stop. It was silly and I didn’t believe it for an instant, but I was curious. “What did you see?”

“Clark and Lois are very happy,” he informed me.

“My son’s name is not Clark,” I told him.

“Not yet,” he told me.

“So, you’re claiming to know that Thomas and I ...”

At this the strange man’s head dropped. “This is what I need to talk to you about. Clark is not Thomas’ son.”

I knew it was stupid, but his words made me curious and a bit annoyed. “Are you claiming ...?” I started, but he cut me off.

“Bruce is important, too,” he added, and this brought my anger up short.

“Please, come with me,” he asked again. “It won’t take long.”

Against my better judgment, I followed him. Thomas did always tell me I was too curious for my own good.

“Please call me Herb,” the man said conversationally while we walked.

I said nothing, not even sure what to say.

“This is my time machine,” he said, motioning to a strange device in an alley. I knew it was stupid to go with him, but I wanted to see it more closely. While, obviously, I still didn’t believe this was a time machine, it was ...

different looking.

“It also has the ability to move between universes,” he told me.

“Excuse me?” I asked.

“There are several parallel universes — places where a minor change has spun off an entirely different world. That’s what I’m here about.”

“You are here about a parallel universe?” I asked, confused.

“Well, yes. Specifically, I’m here about yours. Let me show you. Please.”

Again, I ignored the rational voice in my head, the one that sounded a lot like Thomas, and got in. Herb turned a few knobs and then we were moving. Or sort of. The machine never moved, as much as the air around us did.

A few seconds later, we were stopped. “This isn’t Gotham City,” I said when we exited the alley. I saw the famous globe atop the Daily Planet building in front of me. Nearly everything else was foreign to me, though. The automobiles were all much smaller, or much taller, than the ones in Gotham. And a different style, too.

“No, this is Metropolis,” Herb told me something I had already known. “1996.”

“I’m sorry,” I said. Surely he was joking. I walked over to a newsstand and picked up a copy of the Daily Planet. Sure enough the date on the paper was October 18, 1996. “Is this for real?” I asked Herb, but the newspaper man spoke instead.

“Are you going to buy that, lady?” his tone was gruff, a bit sharper than I expected. I looked at him. In Gotham no one went to work in a t-shirt, even the newspaper men. Or maybe that was just in 1962.

“Lois, stay there!” A voice called out, breaking my thoughts.

“That’s him,” Herb whispered. “Please, let’s move a little out of the way. It would be simpler if Clark didn’t see us.”

“That’s Clark?” I asked. He looked nothing like me.

A moment later, Clark had exited into an alley, followed by a sonic boom. I looked up, expecting to see an aircraft, but there was a man up there. A man in tights.

I gaped at him in awe.

“Superman,” Herb whispered.

“He’s ... well, he’s flying,” I said.

“Yes,” Herb said quietly. “Your Clark can fly.”

“That’s Clark!” I exclaimed.

“Shh ...” Herb urged me. “He prefers to keep his identity a secret.”

“But ... what does this have to do with me?” I asked.

Herb led me to a park and sat down on bench. I sat next to him, wondering if I would believe a word he said.

“Clark and his wife, Lois, are the founders of a utopian society,” he said. I looked around me at the trash on the sidewalk and wondered what sort of utopian society this was. “It hasn’t been formed yet,” Herb said, seeing my gaze, “but it is built upon their ideals. Superman stands for ...”

“Who?” I cut him off.

“Superman. The man who can fly. Clark goes by Superman in the suit,” Herb explained and I nodded. “He stands for truth and justice. He helps others out whenever he can, and as Superman that’s a lot. His wife is the same way.”

“Can she fly too?” I asked.

“No. Lois helps in a more normal way,” Herb said.

“Still, nothing they did would work without the fact that there are others that support them.”

“Others like whom?” I asked.

“Care to visit the Gotham of 1996?” he asked me.

I went with him. I’d already come this far.

As soon as we exited the alley we landed in, we were nearly run down by a big black car. It was more in keeping with the cars I was used to, including large tailfins. But something about it still seemed off.

“The Batmobile,” Herb whispered.

“The what?” I asked, just as the vehicle stopped and a man got out. Or what I thought was a man. He was in a weird costume, although not much weirder than Clark’s. It was blue and black and covered his face.

“Batman,” I heard a man whisper loudly.

I almost giggled. “Batman. Can he also fly?”

Herb pulled me along to another park. “That’s Bruce,” he said simply.

“That’s ...”

“In this universe, you, Thomas, and Bruce are held up at gunpoint. Neither you nor Thomas survived, and Bruce swore vengeance, an oath he fulfills by fighting crime with an assumed identity,” Herb told me.

“He grew up without us?” I asked, tears in my eyes.

“Yes, and it was hard for him, but his alter ego, Batman, is important,” Herb insisted. “While he is not on the best terms with the police department, and he is hardly Clark who tries to uphold the law at all costs, the way he fights for justice supports Superman’s ideals. He is just as important to the formation of Utopia as Lois and Clark are.”

“And that’s because of my ... well, sort of, my death?”

“Yes,” Herb nodded. “And that’s why I needed to talk to you. For Bruce to become Batman, he needs to see you murdered. For Clark to become Superman, he needs to be found by Jonathan and Martha Kent. In your universe, neither happens.”

“I don’t understand,” I tell him.

“In your universe, you survive the shooting. Or I should amend that. You survive the shooting in every universe, but in this one, you know you do.”

“I’m still not ...”

“In this universe, you and Thomas are shot. Thomas dies before the ambulance arrives. Oh, I’m sorry,” he breaks off when he realizes his words upset me. “I know this is hard to hear, but remember it’s because of these events that Bruce becomes what he is.”

“A vigilante?” I ask. I’m not at all sure that’s a good thing.

“Well, yes,” Herb admits, catching my tone. “But also one of the founders of Utopia.”

I nod my head, not understanding where all of this is going.

“Bruce runs away,” Herb explains. “Early in the hold up, he runs as you tell him to. And after it’s over, he comes over, but is taken away by some passersby. You are presumed dead, but when the ambulance arrives they discover you have a pulse. When you regain consciousness days later, you have been moved to another hospital and Bruce still thinks you are dead.”

“And I don’t go to find him?” I ask, not believing this story for an instant.

“You have amnesia. And the hospital has lost your records, so has little to tell you. You decide, for reasons that must be fate, to move to Kansas. There you meet Jonathan Kent, fall in love, and one day find Clark Kent.”

“Find?”

“Clark is not your natural child,” Herb tells me. “You find him.”

I nod, not that I believe any of this, but what other response could I have?

“But in your universe, you survive and know who you are,” he tells me.

“Wait. Are you claiming that in this universe I never remember Bruce or Thomas?” I ask.

Herb gives a sad sigh. “No. It may be that your amnesia is that severe. It may be because by moving to Smallville you aren’t surrounded by any reminders. I’m not sure. But you invent a history for yourself and by the time Clark is a grownup, you even believe it.”

“But ...”

“Your history involves a falling out with your parents. You have no family to tie you to a past.

“Martha, the future of your universe resides with you. You must pretend to die during the holdup and then move to Smallville.”

“What?” I ask when I understand what he is saying.

“You want me to leave my son?”

“Our very future depends on it,” Herb said gravely.

~Smallville, 2009~

“We’re here because Bruce needs a favor,” Clark continued, bringing me back from my thoughts.

I couldn’t keep my eyes off of Bruce. He didn’t recognize me, but then again, he was only eight when I left. I couldn’t believe what a grown-up he was. He was so handsome, too.

Not that I hadn’t seen pictures of him. Bruce Wayne was always showing up on the society pages — usually with a different woman on his arms, I had noted. But grainy newspaper pictures didn’t do him justice. Even the cover story in “People” last year hadn’t done him justice. I could see so much of Thomas in him.

Sometimes it was hard to imagine I had made the choice I had made. Even though I could see that thus far everything Herb had promised was true. I hadn’t known it then. Sometimes I still couldn’t believe I had trusted him.

I pushed the hair back from his forehead. He was sleeping, almost peacefully. As peacefully as could be expected given that he thought Thomas and I had both been killed tonight.

I knew, some part of my brain was obsessed, with realizing that I wasn’t dealing with Thomas’ death. The entire hold-up had had an eerie feel for me. Thanks to the visit from the funny little man, I felt like I knew what was going to happen. When the bullet grazed my blouse, I fell to the ground on instinct. I started to open my eyes when Bruce came out of his hiding spot, when he called my name.

But something had kept my eyes closed. And now, after sneaking back into the house, sitting beside his bed, I knew what it was. I believed him. I had no reason to think that was really H.G. Wells except ... well, what other explanation was there for the things I’d seen? And if he had been right about that, maybe he was right about Utopia, too.

Bruce swiped at his cheek in his sleep where my tear had fallen. I hoped this wasn’t a huge mistake. I hoped that he would have a good life, even without me.

He smiled at me now, a warm, engaging smile. “These cookies are wonderful, Mrs. Kent.”

“Thank you, Bruce,” I answered quietly, and again I could see Clark and Jonathan giving me strange looks. “But please call me Martha,” I repeated, ignoring them. “What is it you need?”

“I need to ...” Bruce paused for a moment before seeming to decide to trust us. “I need to pretend to be dead for awhile. I need a place to hide out.”

“It’s a long story,” Clark said, answering my unasked question. “But I thought the farm would be the perfect place. While there is some speculation that Superman and Batman are friendly, no one knows that Clark Kent and Bruce Wayne even know each other. So no one would look for him here.”

Jonathan looked at me. Jonathan. I had moved to Smallville because if I believed Herb, I was supposed to. I had even intended to marry Jonathan Kent. But I hadn’t ever really thought I’d fall in love with a farmer. But I had. Jonathan was the best man I’d ever known. I never made a direct comparison with Thomas, but it wasn’t hard to see, when Clark’s abilities starting showing up, that Jonathan was a different sort of man than I had expected from small town America.

And even before that, he had trusted me when my half-baked stories of a past couldn’t have been all that reassuring. I had eventually told him that I had amnesia, and he had told me he didn’t care if I didn’t recall my past. It was my present, the person I was now that mattered. And I found that the person I was loved him.

That love had only grown through the years, and now I couldn’t imagine a life that didn’t involve Jonathan and the farm.

“So, what do you think, Martha?” he asked me.

“I think it’s a wonderful idea,” I said, blinking quickly to remove the tears from my eyes. Having Bruce here would let me get to know him. He might never know who I really was, but this would enable me to mother him, to love him. To get to know him as much as I knew Clark.

“Thank you, Mrs. Kent ... I mean, Martha,” Bruce said, his voice soft and the gratitude clear. “I’ll try not to be in the way. It will be like I’m not here at all.”

“I hope not,” I told him. “I hope to get to know you. We get to meet so few of Clark’s friends,” I said, my voice breaking slightly on the made up reason.

“Thank you,” he said. And then to my surprise, given what I had read of Bruce Wayne, he got up and walked over to where I was standing near the stove, placing cookies in a care package for Lois. He wrapped his arms around me tightly. “Thank you,” he said again.

I sighed, leaning against him, and holding my son once again.

The End

LaraMoon’s request was for:

Three things I want in my fic:

1. A snow storm
2. A missed deadline
3. Words left unsaid

Preferred season(s)/holiday [if applicable]: S1 or S2

Three things I do not want in my fic:

1. Villains
2. Songs or song lyrics
3. Lois and Clark in the same room together. (They can talk on the phone, or chat, but they can’t be in the same room, unless Clark shows up as Superman and Lois doesn’t know they’re one and the same.)

Oops — so I missed more than one prompt. There is no

missed deadline and this is certainly not a season 1 or 2 fic.

So, as a note, since I got my ficathon assignment and saw that it was for Lara I had wanted to do a story where Batman played a part. But the truth is that I know next to nothing about Batman and so after several days of thinking it over, I realized I’d never make it work and moved on to something else. A few nights ago, though, while rocking my daughter to sleep, I remembered this and realized that perhaps if I did some reading on Batman, I’d get an idea. So, I read the wikipedia article on him (or parts of it) and discovered that the impetus for Bruce Wayne becoming Batman was seeing his parents, Thomas and Martha Wayne die.

In translating that little bit of knowledge into this fic, I’m sure I broke several rules of Batman canon. I tried to research the bits I included to make sure they weren’t too far off, so hopefully I didn’t massacre Batman canon. If I did, though, my apologies.

THE END