Keys

Jason Lane beamed proudly at his parents as Lois sniffed back tears and Richard took picture after picture of the 5-year-old in his brand new school uniform and bright red backpack. They clashed horribly but Jason had picked out the pack himself last week and his parents hadn't been able to refuse.

"Da-ad," Jason complained, finally growing bored with the photography. Richard put down the camera just as Lois excused herself saying she had something in her eye.

"Sorry, buddy," he apologised, ruffling his son's hair. Jason wriggled away and smoothed it back down. "But it's your first day of school. It's important and..." he added, smiling at the thought, "you'll want to remember it when you get older"

Images of Jason leaving for college flashed through his mind. It would come all too soon he knew, it seemed only yesterday that Lois had been crushing his hand in the delivery room. "Got your lunch?" he asked as he patted his pockets, searching for his keys. Jason nodded.

"I eat the muesli bar and apple at morning break and the sandwiches at lunch time," he recited, checking off the items on his fingers.

"Good boy," Richard muttered absent-mindedly as he lifted up some papers, still searching for his keys. "Lois," he yelled up the stairs, "Have you seen the keys?"

"Are they on the coffee table?"

He checked, "No"

"Then, no," she replied. Jason was looking at him curiously.

"You ok, bud?" Richard lifted up some more papers but only found table underneath.

"They're over there." The boy pointed to an old copy of the *Daily Planet* that was lying on the ground, having been knocked off the arm of the couch.

"What's over there?" he asked, moving towards his jacket. Maybe he'd put them in there before he hung it up.

"The keys." Jason frowned at him, "They're by the chair."

Richard looked at the chair and then back to Jason. Deciding to humour the boy he walked over to the chair and lifted up the paper.

The keys were lying on the floor, having been covered by the paper when it fell off the chair. Richard picked them up. "Jason, how did know they were there?"

"I saw them," the boy replied as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. Before Richard could say anything to that Lois came down with fresh makeup and looked at the clock.

"Hurry up you two, we can't be late. Did you find the keys?" he held them up to show

her, still processing what Jason had said.

"We're not going to be late are we?" Jason looked at Richard in horror with big blue eyes. Eyes that weren't quite his. Why had he never noticed that before?

"Richard?" Lois asked, smiling at him, "Are you okay? Do you want me to drive?"

"Uh," he shook his head, trying to snap himself out of the thoughts that were making their way into his head. "No, I'm fine" He smiled just a bit too brightly and led the way out of the house. "Come on then"

Did Lois know that Jason wasn't his? He watched as she buckled him into the car, smiling wistfully. Richard knew how she felt; their little boy was growing up. No, Richard realised, *her* little boy was growing up. He'd always know that Lois had been Superman's friend before he'd left but could it have been more? And on top of that Jason had been premature. But then why was he so fragile?

"Are you sure you're okay?" Lois asked when they stopped at a red light, "You're awfully quiet"

"I'm fine."

She raised an eyebrow "Really," he assured her, smiling. "So, are you looking forward to school?" he asked the boy sitting in the back seat who until this morning he'd been certain was his son.

Jason's eyes lit up and he began talking excitedly about everything he was planning to do that day. As Lois smiled and made the appropriate excited noises Richard wondered what he was going to do about this. What if Jason developed more powers? Richard couldn't teach him how to use heat vision or fly?

He told himself to stop. He wasn't even sure it was true. Jason could've seen the keys fall last night or maybe from his angle they'd been perfectly visible.

"Richard, we're here," Lois warned him as they approached the school. Jason looked out the window, gaping at all the children.

The three off them got out of the car at the gates and stood for a moment. Richard could see other anxious parents farewelling their kids. Jason stood staring at the school for a moment then turned back to his parents. "Do I have to go today?" he asked, suddenly nervous, "I wanna go home"

Lois smiled and knelt down. "Believe me Jason, once you're there you'll have so much fun that you'll completely forget about us"

"What if I don't have fun?" He looked at the school again then back at his parents. "Do I have to go tomorrow?"

"You will have fun," Lois assured him. Jason looked up at Richard for confirmation.

His unearthly blue eyes meet Richard's and in that moment he realised what he was going to do. He crouched down and placed a hand on his son's shoulder. "You'll love it," he promised, "And at three o'clock we'll be back to pick you up and you can tell us all about it, okay?"

Jason nodded. "Promise you'll come back for me?" he asked in a small voice. Richard pulled him into a hug.

"I'd never leave you," he promised. Jason hugged him back and Richard knew that maybe one day he would have to teach Jason how to fly and when that day came he'd be there for *his* son.