

Somebody, Save Me

Setting: A therapist's office. KAL (dressed in street clothes with a hint of a certain blue outfit peeking out of his shirt collar) is lying on a chaise. THERAPIST is sitting in a chair taking notes. There is a window behind her chair.

KAL: I mean, it started when I was a baby, really. The first flight I ever took ended up in a crash-landing after plummeting to Earth. I still dream about the fireball and the impact when the ship hit the ground.

THERAPIST: Ship? Not plane?

KAL: It was definitely a ship. A space ship.

THERAPIST: I see, so you're here because you feel alienated from your peers

KAL: No, I mean, yes. I mean... You understand that I literally am an alien, right?

THERAPIST: We all feel like that sometimes, Calvin.

KAL: It's not Calvin. Just Kal. Well, Kal-El if you want to be formal, but the House of El never did much for me. I mean they sent my cousin to find me but...

THERAPIST: Your cousin wasn't in the plane – ship – with you?

KAL: No, she was supposed to arrive with me, but ended up being delayed. Another reason flying scares me. Another form of transport wouldn't have separated us for my entire childhood.

THERAPIST: I can certainly see why you have a problem with air travel, but so many people are in the air at any given time, and so few crash. Really, I think you've had your one tragic flight.

KAL: But I haven't.

THERAPIST: Oh?

KAL: My girlfriend always wants me to take her places. "Fly me there, Clark – "

THERAPIST: I thought your name was Cal.

KAL: My family and close friends call me Clark. It's sort of a family nickname.

THERAPIST: So, you're a pilot?

KAL: What? No? Why would you think that?

THERAPIST: Well, your girlfriend wants you to fly her places.

KAL: Well, yes, but not in a plane.

THERAPIST: A helicopter then?

KAL: No, just in my arms. Do you know who I am?

THERAPIST: Should I?

KAL: You've never been standing outside a building in Metropolis when someone has pointed to the sky and said, "Look! Up in the air! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's – "

THERAPIST: "... a pterodactyl!"

KAL: Excuse me?

THERAPIST: That's the line, isn't it?

KAL: I was going for "Superman."

THERAPIST: The comicbook character? That's absurd.

KAL: And a dinosaur that hasn't lived since the late Jurassic is a frequent sight in your skies?

THERAPIST: Well, no.

KAL: Look, I used to love flying. When I was in high school, and I missed the bus, I didn't borrow Dad's pickup or run as fast as a speeding bullet to get there on time. I would take to the skies. But, there was a lot less up there then.

THERAPIST: Oh?

KAL: Do you know how much stuff the clouds obscure. Birds, sure – birds love to buzz me or try to drift after me, the way kids skateboard after fast cars. But then there are drones – I try to fly above them, but once their operators recognize me, theyglom onto me like magnetic mines on a warship.

THERAPIST: So you fear birds and drones?

KAL: And smog. I'm supposed to stand for truth, justice, and the American way –

THERAPIST: Oh, you're one of those MAGA people.

KAL: I am *not*. But I am supposed to represent American ideals, and unfortunately capitalism and consumerism have destroyed the atmosphere. That whole thing about a carbon dioxide level of 350 parts per million being the threshold for life?

THERAPIST: We're coming up on it?

KAL: Look behind you.

THERAPIST: Oh.

KAL: People think I can use super-breath and just blow pollution away, but it doesn't work that way – it has to *go* somewhere.

THERAPIST: And you're afraid to breathe it?

KAL: I'm afraid to fly through it. I mean, in some places it's so bad that it blocks the sun's rays for hours at a time. That's the source of my power. One bad downdraft and splat!

THERAPIST: You'd fall to your death.

KAL: No, I'm indestructible. But I could land on someone and crush them.

THERAPIST: Ouch.

KAL: Exactly.

THERAPIST: Anything else.

KAL: Well, I'm not too fond of automated missiles or fireworks either.

THERAPIST: I can understand that. But maybe it's important to focus on the reason you're flying. It's not just transportation, is it?

KAL: Sometimes. But usually not. Not these days. Usually when I'm leaping tall buildings in a single bound, I'm carrying a child or animal, removing them from danger. Or I'm dragging some form of incendiary device out of the atmosphere. Or ferrying a bus or train to a safe landing after they've had a nasty encounter with the edge of a cliff.

THERAPIST: So, flying comes with a lot of responsibility for you.

KAL: It's *all* responsibility. Even when it's just a date with my girlfriend. What if I get distracted and drop her? What if one of those demonic geese crashes into us. I'm impervious, but she's not. And when I try to wrap her in my cape she complains.

THERAPIST: Suffocation? Blindness?

KAL: It messes up her hair.

THERAPIST: Ah.

KAL: So, you see why I'm afraid to fly? And I have to wonder... are people more negligent because they know I'll swoop in and save them? If I'd never revealed my powers, would humans still be so reckless?

THERAPIST: I don't think you can blame yourself for the entire history of stupid human tricks.

KAL: Wanna bet.

THERAPIST: Alright, then... I don't believe you *should*.

KAL: What do you suggest?

THERAPIST: Meditation might help. Go somewhere where you can be alone, where there aren't any drones or birds, and maybe just fly for the fun of it?

KAL: I do have a place...

THERAPIST: A cabin in the woods?

KAL: A fortress, actually. Somewhere remote. I haven't spent much time there lately. (He cocks his head toward the window) Maybe I – hold that thought –

(KAL leaps up from the chaise ripping off his clothes to reveal his SUPERMAN outfit, then bounds across the room and dives through the window. He is gone for several seconds, while THERAPIST sits, stunned. Just when an

audience would begin to get restless, KAL returns, still dressed as SUPERMAN, and takes up his previous position on the chaise, one booted foot crossed over the other.)

KAL: Did I forget to mention broken glass?

BLACKOUT