



Last Sun of Krypton #2
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Last Sun of Krypton

Part 2 of 3

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Somewhere nearby, a soft rumble of thunder rolled out, and a warm, light rain began to fall over the crystal skylights of Jor-El's lab. For a very long moment, no one spoke.

"Destroy itself?" Lyla finally asked, hugging her fiancé's arm tightly. "But it can't! What will we do, where will we go? What's going to happen?"

"I don't know," said Jor-El quietly. "I wish there were an easier way to break this sort of news, but I haven't found it."

Kal-El was barely listening, his eyes locked on the monitor and his mind working furiously under furrowed brows. "How do you think we can stop it?"

Jor-El looked back at his son. "I don't know that we can. If we don't know what's causing these heat pockets, I can't imagine we'll be able to return them to normal."

"Then we have to find out what's causing them!" Kal shook Lyla away from his arm and ran back to the machine.

"Kal, that is far easier said than done."

"Then we start right now."

"Honey—"

"Well what good is all this then?" Kal interrupted Lyla, starting to pace back and forth and gesturing angrily at all of the shining machinery around them. "What good is science if it's not for helping

people—helping Krypton! Dad, you’ve done so much good for this world, you know how important it is to—“

“I do, Kal-El. Of course I do. Are you suggesting that I don’t care to try to save my own world?” Jor-El’s tone and simple stare were enough to cut Kal’s impassioned speech short. “I don’t know whether it can be done, I’ve told you that. I never said that I would not do everything in my power to aid Krypton in its time of most desperate need.”

“I can’t believe it,” said Lyla softly, after a pause. “It’s too unreal…”

“I imagine that most of the Board will feel the same way when I present my findings,” Jor-El sighed. It would not be the first time that Krypton’s Board of Scientists might refuse to listen to his words. “Although I do hope that they realize that I never joke about matters this grave.”

“I have to write this movie when it’s all over,” said Lyla with a nervous laugh.

Kal took a deep, calming breath and smiled at her. “That’s the spirit, Lyla. Chin up, and we’ll get through this.”

A sharp bark cut through the uneasy quiet, and the door to the lab opened to admit a small white dog, and a gentle-looking woman with long black hair. Jor-El forced back a smile as the dog ran up around his legs. “He isn’t supposed to be in here, Lara,” he said, but his words were undermined by the way he scratched at the dog’s ears.

Lara laughed. “You always say that. And yet you never make Krypto leave once he’s here.”

Jor-El chuckled in return, and Kal whistled for his dog. Lara smiled at her son and husband, and walked over to where Lyla stood. “Has he told you, then?” Lyla nodded, trying to keep the fear away from her face. With a warm smile, Lara wrapped the girl up in a hug. “It will be okay. Have faith, Lyla.”

The blonde held on to her soon-to-be mother-in-law, breathing in the sweet, soothing scent of Lara’s perfume. “But Lara—“

“Think of your wedding, dear,” said Lara with another smile. “The world hasn’t ended yet.

The bright sun that broke over the distant mountains did little to cheer Kal-El’s thoughts. He stood out on the terrace of his family home, the place that he had known all of his life. The House of El had made a strong and powerful name for itself over the years, and Kal had always been grateful for the wealth that allowed them to live apart from the city. Here there was quiet, time to think and study and learn. He knew that his parents had always loved their small seclusion, loved to have a place to return to after the hectic, energized stretches of time in the city. Kal looked out across the calm sea of golden grain and green wildflowers, memories flitting through his head of playing with his toy ships and spy soldiers deep in the grass as a child. He wished that he were somewhere less dear to him—somewhere that wouldn’t hurt so much to think of being destroyed.

Kal was so lost in his thoughts that he didn’t notice his father walking up next to him, until Krypto barked loudly to demand his morning pets. Jor-El saw his son’s weak smile, and did not break the silence again for a long time.

“To think of it all just...” Kal sighed eventually.

Jor-El laid a strong hand on his shoulder. “I know.”

“And I can’t do anything. I can’t stop it.” Kal stared into the deep red sunrise, voicing all the thoughts that had plagued him through the night. “I’ve always been able to help...you remember that earthquake in Kandor last year. I mean, I saved lives!” His face glowed with the memory. “I could do so much, to help other people...I was a hero.” A faint, proud smile passed over Jor-El’s lips while Kal continued. “But this time...there’s nothing I can do. It’s just going to, to happen, whether we want it to or not.”

“Very much of life is the same way, unfortunately,” said Jor-El with his small smile. “It does not do to dwell on impossibles, Kal-El. Not when

that energy has better places to be spent.”

“But I don’t know what else I can do,” the young man protested, searching for answers in his father’s eyes. “Am I supposed to just forget about it?”

Jor-El squeezed Kal’s shoulder, and repeated Lara’s advice. “Go on with life, for now. Think of your wedding. Get back to your column. You will think of something when you aren’t thinking.”

Kal managed to smile. “Wise words, Dad.”

“That’s what I’m known for.” Jor-El squeezed his son’s shoulder again and set off back to the house. “I’ll be meeting with the Board in a few hours. We’ll see what they say then.”

“What if they won’t help? Or don’t believe you?”

Jor-El did not look worried. “Then it will be the same as it has been before. The House of El against the world, one last time.”

He thought made both of them chuckle softly, and Jor-El walked inside, leaving Kal and Krypto to the sunrise. Kal absently patted the little dog’s head and watched the sun spread light and warmth across the world, not knowing how many more times it would be able to.

“Lyla, could you please hit your mark? We’ve really got to get going. We’ll only get you in two dimensions if you’re in the wrong place.”

“Huh? Oh, I’m sorry.” Lyla shook the worries as far away as she could, and stepped into her lighting on the soundstage beside her co-star. Filming was wrapping up for her latest holoscreen project, and all around her lighting, camera, sound and set people were anxious to get off the clock. None of them had the fears and preoccupations that Lyla had, but she was the one who had to smile.

“Now let’s try this again. Just do the lines like we rehearsed them. You’ll

be great, babe," the director called to her. He held up his hand for quiet, and let it fall to signal the cameras.

"Do you really mean it?" She asked, making her eyes go starry as she gazed at the handsome man opposite her, knowing that her famous face would be projected into 3D theatres all across the planet. "You'd do all that, just to be with me?"

"I'd cross oceans to be with you," was the reply. "And climb mountains. I'd stop the world from turning to stop the time, and stay with you always."

"Always?" Lyla's strangled breaths and tears were real, too bitter and sad to make a good take. But she tried to keep back the sobs as long as she could, wishing beyond reason that time could really be stopped.

"Until the world ends."

She couldn't hold out any longer. Lyla turned abruptly away from the camera and began to sob in earnest, her legs and shoulders shaking.

"Cut! Lyla, babe, what's wrong?" The director nearly jumped out of his chair to walk over to her, putting a warm, friendly arm around her shoulders. "Everything okay? What is it, what can I do?"

"Nothing," she choked out, swallowing hard to curb her crying. How could she even begin to explain what she'd seen? How could she put that burden onto so many other shoulders? All Lyla did was stand there until she'd stopped sobbing, until thoughts of the end of the world were pushed back by the care of her friends and co-workers, and she could open her eyes again.

"Alright, everyone break. Take five minutes, go on, clear out." The director waited until most of the others had left before he looked into Lyla's face. "Do you want to go home? Something's got to be going on. I don't blame you, if you don't want to work today it's fine."

"No, I do...I'm sorry, it's just...I don't really want to get into it..."

"Don't worry about it. Listen, go take the day off. Go find some cookies, put on a movie and just take it easy at home. Director's orders," he told

her, smiling warmly, though his eyes were still worried. He softly tapped her chin up with one finger. "Don't hurt yourself, babe. Gotta take care of what's important first."

Lyla smiled back weakly and walked off the set. "Thanks...I just have a lot on my mind. I'll be back in tomorrow bright and early."

"That's my girl." He walked her to the door and watched as Lyla made her way down the street, needing the walk to clear her head, and take the bad feelings away for a little while longer.

"Kal, we need that TODAY, not next month!" Kal-El jerked his head up from where he sat writing—or rather, where he sat staring into space with his fingers poised over the keyboard. "If you want to slack off, I can let someone else write their own column from now on!"

"Sorry Per, I just have a lot on my mind," Kal sighed, watching the cursor blink on his crystallized screen, rhythmically and patiently waiting for his words.

"Well get it off. Better yet, get it on paper." The old editor stalked away to berate an intern, and Kal was left alone again with the thoughts that wouldn't go away.

He had never really needed to retire from his career, but once he had won his first-place medal in the All-Krypton Games, there hadn't been anywhere left to go. He loved the thrill of sprinting, and of course the cheers of the crowds, and he had especially loved representing his city to the rest of the world. He had gotten to travel and mingle with Krypton's most elite. But once he hit the top, he began to be bored by that life. For a time, Kal had considered the life of the masked avengers that the pulp writers were so fond of, but he never could have pulled it off. His style was too distinctive, and he would never have been able to keep that sort of a secret. Especially not when Lyla had come into his life.

Since they had met, Kal had taken a softer, less rigorous job writing a sports column with the Metropolis, Krypton's best-selling newspaper.

He dissected the most popular games of the week, and when there was nothing on-topic to report, he was able to use the column to simply reach out to his fans, occasionally answering letters or giving his opinion on a major news event. He never quite shook his superhero's urge, though. Whenever he felt that he could, Kal was always ready to jump in to help his fellow man, whether through words or actions. More than once, he had earned medals for bravery and valor, and each time he had modestly denied the claims.

He shook himself back out of his memories. The flat crystal screen before him was still blank. He should be running through the scores of the week's intense games, and commenting on why so-and-so beat this or that team. His mind was not cooperating. All he could see was the cross-section of a planet in its last days.

He began to type nonsense on his keyboard, just to fill the space. Small letters forming larger words, lonely shapes on the wide expanse of white, as lonely as little planets hanging so far from their brothers. The crystal was pristine and perfectly flat, energy running through it to put substance to the thoughts that would normally be flowing from Kal's mind.

"Get it on the paper, huh?" He asked himself quietly, wondering if he should. Maybe it would be better to let the Board reveal that sort of information...if the Board were going to reveal it. Would it be better for the people to trust their hero, in case they would not listen to cold, unfeeling facts?

Slowly, he cleared the screen and began again, putting in only a few letters at a time, as Kal chose his words deliberately. He didn't want to be too alarmist...after all, they were working already to stop the problem before the inevitable happened.

"People have a right to know..." Kal thought aloud, hearing the words and cementing them into his mind. His fingers danced over the letters as the sun began to set, as his fellow journalists and columnists waved a farewell and went home to their families, as one by one the lights turned on in the windows of the city around him.

Finally, Kal shook out his wrists and instructed his computer to make a

hard copy, knowing that it'd be picked up and rushed to the press in the morning. He picked up his hat and jacket and walked out the door, feeling that some of the weight had lifted off his shoulders, and anxious for Lyla's arms.

Jor-El sighed as he came through the door late that evening. His eyes were closed as he breathed slowly, centering himself after the day's long trial. He needed that moment for his own thoughts, before his family rushed to his side for the news.

"I have the funding," he told them, before the question passed any of their lips. Lyla grinned and hugged Kal's arm tightly, while Lara laid a warm hand on her husband's shoulder. "I'll work from now till the end of the world if I must..." he trailed off, realizing that he should have picked a different exaggeration. "I will find out what's wrong with our planet."

"I know you will, Dad. And I'll help every step of the way," Kal declared, hiding a sigh of relief.

"We're all behind you, darling," said Lara, running her hand over her husband's shoulders. "Let us know everything that we can do to help."

Jor-El nodded, and reached down his hand to appease the yapping dog amid the forest of legs. "I think we should begin by remaining quiet...the Board has decided among themselves that we shouldn't unduly worry the world at large unless we find no solution."

Kal's arm around Lyla's waist tightened suddenly, and he gulped. Lyla turned to face him. "What did you do?"

"Um, nothing, dear," he answered, hoping to perhaps break the news to her in private...or better yet, to say nothing until the morning paper came out. But now Kal's parents were looking at him too, and even Krypto seemed curious. "Uh...I might have sort of...mentioned-it-in-my-column," he admitted quickly.

Lyla threw her head back and groaned. "Oh Kal, why?"

"I couldn't get it off of my mind," he answered her, looking so plaintive and pleading as he traced a finger over her cheek. "And to be honest...people shouldn't have to wait until there's no hope. I...well I thought it was the right thing to do. I still do."

Jor-El took a step forward to clap his son on the shoulder. "I'd expect nothing less from you, Kal-El. I agree, to be frank. The more people aware, the more that can help us."

"But think about it!" Lyla almost shouted, clenching her fists to hold herself back, and calm herself down. "People are going to panic. I don't know what they might do, but it's not going to be a good thing! If you want people to be happy, you shouldn't have ruined their last days with worrying about it!"

"It isn't about making people happy, Lyla," said Jor-El quietly, the calm of his voice settling the rising energy in the room. "Doing the right thing rarely is. It's about what's best, and what's right and true. The truth often hurts. We all know that, my dear."

Lyla swallowed and gripped Kal's arm. "I know..." she sighed heavily. "But Kal, you could have at least waited until we knew!"

"Well, the time for waiting has passed," said Lara. "Now we must deal with what's to come. There's no use wondering how to change the past."

Jor-El nodded. "First, I believe a good sleep will do us all a world of good. I, for one, will not be able to work until I've rested. Strange how much arguing for a day takes out of you."

With little more than a few 'goodnight's, Lyla and Kal departed for their wing of the large home, and Lara climbed the stairs to her own bedroom. Jor-El sank into a chair and did nothing but stare into the air for a long while, absently scratching Krypto behind the ears until the dog fell asleep, and he was the only alert soul left in the house.

“The end is nigh! Repent, repent! Repent or perish in the fiery depths!”

Kal tried to keep his eyes cemented shut, but couldn't ignore the shouts, or the bright sunlight that streamed through the gaps in his curtains.

“Isn't there a rocket? Somebody needs to build a rocket!”

“Help us! We all need help!”

“Can't somebody do something?!”

What had been a lone voice had grown to a crowd, and finally Kal couldn't ignore it any longer. He walked to the window and pulled open the drapes, and was astounded at the number of people who had gathered outside of his home, rallying around the only voice that they trusted well enough to represent them in their time of need.

“Honey?” Lyla mumbled, sitting up and rubbing her eyes. “What's all the noise?”

When Kal didn't answer, she stood and looked out at the crowd with him.

“I...had no idea that many people read my column,” said Kal, a nervous laugh escaping his lips before he looked over at her.

“We have to do something!”

“I'm telling you, we need a rocket! A huge one!”

“Oh, someone help!”

The couple looked at each other one more time, and without another word, they both hurried to dress and prepare to do anything they could for the crowd. Kal pulled a shirt on and raced down the stairs, and he could have sworn that he felt the earth tremble beneath him as he ran.

TO BE CONTINUED!

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more alternate universe tales of your favorite DC heroes at DC3 Multiverse.

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From the same author on Feedbooks

Ultimate Gotham Girls #11 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 2 (of 3).

With the Joker's 'school' well underway and the clock ticking closer to 3pm, will Batgirl and Zatanna be able to prevent even more carnage? What about with some unexpected help? And how will Harley hold up when forced to choose between her man, and her only friend?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #10 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 1 (of 3).

The Joker's been lurking in the background, and it's never good when he rears his head again! Harley's ideas and Joker's plans are coming together at long last, but is Harley really on-board with the joke? Ivy sure hopes not! And either way, the Clown Prince of Crime is going to have his hands full when Batgirl and Zatanna catch up to him!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #2 (2008)

Don't Say a Word, Part 1 (of 2)

Ultimate Gotham Girls #1 (2008)

Girls' (K)night Out.

Meet Harley Quinn. She is bound and determined to meet her number one hero, the object of her affection, Gotham City's premiere costumed champion...The Joker! To do it, she's teaming up with the seductive and deadly Poison Ivy...whether or not Pamela Isley likes the idea! Just what a neophyte Batgirl needs for on-the-job training!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #3 (2008)

Don't Say a Word, Part 2 (of 2).

The all-new, all-daring Batgirl is put to the test, tracking down a ruthless killer of children! But there's more to the mind of Mockingbird than meets eye, and Renee must walk the abyss of madness to figure it out!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #4 (2008)

The Joker Rules April Fools!

It's April Fools Day in Gotham and that can only mean one thing! The Clown Prince of Crime is giving the city a hearty greeting, and Batgirl must struggle, not only with a diabolical mastermind that gives even Batman pause, but whether or not to accept help from a shocking source!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #5 (2008)

Harvey and Ivy.

Harvey Dent has a curse: he's the acid-scarred mobster Two-Face! And he has a past: having pursued prison for Poison Ivy! Is there a connection between the two events? How does one lead to the other, and how do the lives of these two villains intersect? It's all in this issue of Gotham Girls, as signs point to dangerous storms brewing for our heroes...and other protagonists!

Last Sun of Krypton #1 (2008)

Last Sun of Krypton, Part 1 (of 3).

Travel with us now, into the past, to a time when a great and advanced race of people lived, loved, fought and struggled with the day-to-day and with the higher aspirations of all people. Come and witness Kal-El, with his family around him, as he discovers that for his generation...there seems no future to aspire to! What do you do in the face of the ultimate end?

Last Sun of Krypton #3 (2008)

Last Sun of Krypton, Part 3 (of 3).

"If Lyla had still been there to talk him out of it, Kal knew that he would never have even suggested this solution, let alone volunteered for it. He stood alone in the middle of a large, barren field, staring up at the monolith that was an energy plant, and he could feel the heat of the world gathering beneath his feet.

Two days had already gone by, two more days of heartache and fear, of disbelief and thick, destructive denial. Despite the official pleas from the Board, and despite the few ready rockets off-world that had already left for the colonies, most of the population refused to budge from their homes on only the word of Jor-El.

Kal's breathing was quick and nervous in the heated air. All of those people were depending on his bravery, his intellect...

...and on the nuclear bomb strapped to the hood of his small electric car. "

Ultimate Gotham Girls #6 (2008)

Reality Check.

Harley Quinn can't believe her good fortune! She's made friends with Ivy, won the love of her sweetheart, The Joker, and discovered her old mentor, Jonathan Crane is now in town. Could any woman's life be any better? She's on cloud nine, facing a future bright and exciting, despite The Joker's dislike of Crane's potential influence on the young woman. And then it happens...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #7 (2008)

Reunion.

Where does poor little Harley run with nowhere else to go? To Ivy's house, of course! How long can she hold up away from the Joker, and could he possibly be trying to get her back? Plus, the Ultimate secret origin of Poison Ivy!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #12 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 3 (of 3).

With time racing out, can our three heroines band together and stop the Joker's deadly finale? What's going to happen to Harley Quinn? You won't want to miss the stunning conclusion of Gotham Girls Year One-- with special appearance by the Batman himself!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #8 (2008)

Your Worst Nightmare, Part 1 (of 2).

Jonathan Crane is tired of waiting. He has stores of his prized possession, his finished 'fear gas', all over Gotham. With a push of a single button, he will trap everything that breathes in their own worst nightmare, and for once in his life, Crane will be the one unafraid.

What terrors lurk in the darkest parts of the minds of all our stars? And how will any of them break free? If they even can...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #9 (2008)

Your Worst Nightmare, Part 2 (of 2).

Jonathan Crane --now the full-fledged Scarecrow-- has all of Gotham City under his power, including Batgirl! Can anyone fight

their own most feared demons in time to stop Crane from completely taking over?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #13 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Overrun.

The One Man Army Corps have taken the Gotham streets, and they're doing their jobs on the villains-- but are they safe for our heroes? When Batgirl ticks one off on patrol, can she stop a super-strong robot all by herself, before it hurts anyone else in its attack on her?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #14 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades Part 1 (of 3).

After years of hiding, Harvey Dent has finally returned to Gotham City. But for his old friend Renee, is this a good thing, or bad? And when Poison Ivy is framed for murder, who's going to search out the truth, no matter how shocking it may be?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #15 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades, Part 2 (of 3)

The investigation is underway-- Renee Montoya, AKA Batgirl, hot on the tail of Harvey Dent, AKA Two-Face! But can Renee truly believe that her old friend is a killer? And what would she do if she discovered the proof? Meanwhile, how long can Harvey hold his two selves together, under the stress and the guilt of what he's done?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #16 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades, Part Three.

Batgirl's continued investigation of a double-murder frame job finally brings her to Harvey Dent, and forces her to confront what's happened to her old friend. How deep does Harvey's madness extend? How has it affected him, through his entire life? And what will Two-Face do when he finds Batgirl prying into his secrets?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #17 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades, Part 4 (of 4)

The disturbing origin of Two-Face revealed to her, Batgirl now has to finally face off against her friend-turned-enemy. How badly can Renee stand to hurt Harvey? How badly will she have to, if Two-

Face gets the upper hand? And what shocking revelation will finally end the battle? Find out in our stunning conclusion!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #18 (2009)

Gotham Girls: Jack of Hearts.

Jack Napier has had a crush on Harley Quinzel since they took Psychology together, and she has always ignored him. But when Harley robs Jack's magic shop, could fate be bringing them together? How can a man with such an eerily familiar face win the heart of the girl of his dreams, and is Harley's heart really free for her to give?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #19 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Now and Then.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #22 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Save Our Circus.

Haley's Circus is back in town, and ready to put on a killer show for Gotham City...at least, it was until a half-rate supervillain made a big-name mess by setting the animals loose! Join all our Gotham Girls, even including guest-stars, as they try to clean up in time for the show. And check back in with Harley Quinn, as she makes a couple new friends...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #24 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Face to Face, Part 2.

Two-Face is on the loose, with only Poison Ivy to keep an eye on him. Will Ivy slide back into her villainous ways, or will Two-Face force her to show her new colors? How will Harvey Dent be able to face up to his deepest fears, when he's just become free of them? And what on earth are Ivy and Batgirl doing working together? All this and more in the thrilling conclusion to Gotham Girls year two!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #23 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Face to Face, Part One.

Harvey Dent has had enough. After months of treatment and no progress, he is desperate to get rid of the voice in his head, the other half of his mind that has always been there. And with the help of a touch of magic, Harvey can get his wish...but at what price?

With Two-Face on the loose and no coin to contain him, how will Batgirl be able to keep Gotham City safe?

Ultimate Gotham Girls Annual #1 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls Annual: Resolution & Spoiler's Nutcracker Suite.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #25 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Beginning Again.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #26 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Scout's Honor.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #27 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: A Light in a Dark Wood.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #28 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Rocket's Red Glare, Part 1.

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