

## Back of the Box

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# Back of the Box

by [Jerseygrl](#)

## Summary

Jordan, who emerged less than a year earlier as Superboy, has discovered that there are rumors floating around on Reddit that Superboy has a secret superpowered brother. He knows that a mysterious user named “theSource” is behind it all, and he needs to find a way to stop it before it completely spirals out of control.

Of course, it would probably help if Jon, who is living his own, glorious life at Metropolis University, would actually talk to him for a change...

Meanwhile, Jordan has received a letter from the Wheaties corporation inviting him to be featured on the back of their box. Though Superman was featured on it twenty years earlier and this is far from a new concept he is finding it extremely difficult to get comfortable with the idea.

## Notes

I actually wrote this first chapter months ago and somehow got distracted...

There is a large Superman and Lois community on Reddit and this story is partially inspired by it. To those of you who are frequent flyers over there, I hope you enjoy my little foray into that world with our beloved Jordan! (And for those of you who aren't, come join us! It's a lot of fun!)

This is a continuation of a previous story I wrote called “Down the Hall.” It will be a richer experience if you read that first but it's not necessary to do so. I threw this into a series with it so it'll be easy to find if you want to check it out first.

# Back of the Box, chapter 1

Back of the Box, chapter 1

**Sarah Cortez** : I miss you. I feel like my head is going to explode. There's something wrong with me, I know you're horrible for me but I keep drifting right back. I feel like I'm going to die, I never want to touch alcohol ever again.

**Jordan** : I love you too, Cushing.

**Jordan** : I'll see you tomorrow.

**Sarah Cortez** : Same time, same place?

**Jordan** : Of course. I'll grab the first drink.

**Sarah Cortez** : See, I told you you're horrible for me. Get off of WhatsApp, don't you have better things to do? I'm sure there's a cat somewhere in the world that needs to be rescued out of a tree...

When Jordan came downstairs that morning he was too tired to do anything the way a regular human would, so he let himself revert into superspeed, reaching to grab a pancake right out of the pan as Dad stood at the stove, sizzling them up in perfect, round circles—

But unfortunately Dad was just as fast as he was, and he managed to bat Jordan's hand away just in time. He shook his head, narrowing his eyes.

“We don't use superpowers in this house to grab food before it's ready,” he lectured.

“Speak for yourself,” Jordan replied. “I'm too tired to hold back right now— and anyway, I'm starving— last night was— wait— what is all of that?” Jordan suddenly noticed the kitchen table, which had several large plastic boxes piled on top of it, each stamped with the USPS logo brilliantly on the side.

“Huh?” Dad replied, then turning to glance at the table. “Oh, that. Yeah, Mom stopped by the PO boxes this morning—“

“PO boxes?” Jordan replied, just as Mom came strolling into the kitchen.

“Oh, morning sweetie,” she said, tightening her belt around her waist. “I didn’t realize you came home last night...”

“Where else would I go?” Jordan asked, sighing. Though Jonathan was away at college at Metropolis University, living down the hall from Sarah, coincidentally, Jordan had decided to stay local and was attending Central Kansas A & M. He just found the idea of living in a dorm room with a random person far too daunting, especially because he often floated in his sleep (and he would never even consider rooming with Jon, which Jon wholeheartedly agreed with). And although he could easily make the commute to Metropolis from Smallville in about half a second, it would be a little hard to explain...

He was mostly ok with his college choice, and his classes were interesting enough, but sometimes he found it a little frustrating, especially when Mom continued to insist on calling him sweetie when he came downstairs every single morning.

“Whose PO boxes?” Jordan finally followed up as Mom sat down at the table, staring at the large pile of boxes looming before her.

“Ours, of course,” Dad replied. He picked up the pan, sliding the pancakes onto a plate.

“We have PO boxes?” Jordan asked, still utterly confused.

“Well— Superman and Superboy do,” Mom replied. “Babe— can I have those? I was so swamped at the Gazette yesterday that dinner totally slipped my mind... I’m famished...”

Dad grinned, carrying the plate across the room and setting it before Mom. She reached up to him, grabbing his fingers and giving them a little squeeze.

“Hey— I thought those were mine,” Jordan said. “I only saved an entire city last night— I think I earned it—“

“And Mom saved the world,” Dad argued, still grinning. “With her reporting, anyway. Another top notch article, Ms. Lane, you smacked it right out of the park yet again—“

“Why thank you, Smallville, that means a lot coming from you,” she replied, batting her eyelashes flirtatiously at him.

Jordan groaned. Parents weren’t supposed to act like this, especially after being together for over a quarter of a century...

He ended up retreating into his phone, toggling between instagram, where he felt plenty of fomo scrolling through his peers’ posts about their college experiences, and Reddit. He didn’t admit this to a lot of people (or really, to any people), but he often ended up snooping on the Superboy subreddit when he was bored— he knew it didn’t help his anxiety on any level, but he just needed to know what people were saying about him, both the good and the bad. And although 99 percent of the content lauded his praises, talking about how amazing he was, and even sometimes fawned over him— there was always that one percent who said otherwise... And as much as he tried to prevent it, he couldn’t help but fixate on that freaking one percent.

Of course, as he scrolled through the feed that suddenly became the least of his worries.

**r/Superboy**

u/theSource

**Met U Incident— New Evidence**

*Discussion*

*I know we are all painfully aware of what happened at Met U, and all of the implications that have been tossed around over the past few weeks. (For those of you who have been living under a rock, I'm referring, of course, to the incident when that boy fell off of a sixth story terrace, only to be very publicly rescued by what was described by witnesses as a "blur".) Since this incident occurred four weeks ago there have been many claims that Superboy must attend Met U as a student with some sort of "secret identity."*

*I'm here to bring new evidence to light. As some of you might be aware, I am the developer and host of the famous Met U social networking server, popularly referred to as "the forums." In that context I have uncovered evidence that the "blur" that was witnessed was not, in fact, Superboy. Rather, the "blur" was someone else entirely— it was Superboy's brother.*

*Yes, my friends, you read that right. Superboy does indeed have a brother, Superman has two sons, not one, and there is a half-Kryptonian mongrel hiding at Met U, posing as a student, and hoodwinking the entire student body of one of the most premiere universities in the world...*

Jordan felt his heart come to a complete stop. Of course he had heard about the incident, though Jon hadn't bothered to take the time to tell him; it had been Granddad who heard about it through his contacts at the army, then passing it along to Jordan. The incident had actually completely blown up, leading to a government investigation, but Granddad had told him that it was taken care of, that the necessary files were deleted, that there would be nothing further to worry about...

Jordan was starting to second guess his decision not to tell Mom and Dad. He glanced up from his phone, watching as Mom whispered something into Dad's ear, causing him to guffaw in his usual dorky manner.

He rolled his eyes.

He looked down at his phone, shocked to see that there were hundreds of upvotes and over a hundred comments, despite the post only being two hours old and having been posted absurdly early in the morning.

He knew he shouldn't get involved. In fact, he told himself this every single time...

### **ToBoldlyGo612**

This is a really big assertion, u/theSource, and one you have provided zero evidence for. I'm guessing Superboy wouldn't be too happy with your spreading misinformation about him and his family.

The downvotes started pouring in very quickly, as did the responses.

### **Arachnidxl**

TheSource has never misled anyone in this group, toboldlygo, but nice try

### **Lacey27**

Boldygo is clearly just looking for attention. It's pathetic.

### **IamSuperboy**

It's really hard to know one way or another. This is far from the first time anyone has wondered if there could be more kryptonians hiding among us. Once Superboy revealed himself as Superman's son the question of if Superman could possibly have more children that we are just not aware of has always been on the table. Superman hasn't even revealed who Superboy's mother is, even now that almost a full year has gone by since we learned the news of Superboy's existence.

### **SqueakyBruce**

Superboy's mother is probably Wonder Woman. He has the same black curly hair that she does— and I can't even imagine Superman banging a regular human. He can lift a planet out of its orbit— if he had sex with a human he would probably kill her with his first thrust—

"Jordan," Dad suddenly said, causing Jordan's head to snap up from his phone. "Your mom and I are going to start tackling the boxes— any interest in joining us?"

“Uh, um, what?” Jordan replied, his mind still buried very deep within the Superboy sub.

“I know it looks like a lot,” Dad continued, “but don’t worry, with superspeed we can be done with it all in less than ten minutes—“

“Ten minutes??” Mom asked. “Why on earth would you go so slow?”

Jordan wasn’t even paying attention anymore. He couldn’t even imagine starting to go through his fan mail right now— he had much more pressing matters to attend to. Like Reddit.

“Bud— do you want me to go through some of yours for you? I’ll let you know if there’s anything you need to see—“

“Uh, sure, whatever Dad.” Jordan had no idea what Dad was even saying anymore, his nose already back in his phone.

“Sometimes I think phones have totally ruined our civilization,” Mom murmured in a huff.

His eyebrows shot up when he discovered he had a private message from TheSource. He had gotten to know him pretty well over the past few months, in the superficial context of the sub, anyway. He hesitated for a moment, finally succumbing to temptation and clicking it.

### **TheSource**

You clearly have your doubts— but I can assure you, my evidence is sound. I know that what I said is true.

### **TheSource**

I’ve grown to respect you or I wouldn’t waste my time. But you have very reasoned opinions about Superboy— and I know that once you see my evidence you will agree— it is irrefutable.

Jordan swallowed, feeling his heart starting to race.

### **ToBoldlyGo612**

It’s very dangerous to spread conspiracy theories. I thought you were better than that.

### **TheSource**

This is no conspiracy theory.

And then Jordan noticed that TheSource was typing... he waited, his anxiety building as the seconds ticked on...

And a picture finally appeared.

It was a screenshot, taken from another social media modality— though Jordan didn't have to think too hard to figure out which one it was.

*Footballguy : I'm the blur.*

*Footballguy : You were right. It wasn't a gust of wind. It was me.*

*NotaMermaid314 : So... you ARE Superboy.*

*Footballguy : No, I told you already. I'm not Superboy. But Superboy— he's my brother.*

*NotaMermaid314 : Your brother? He's your brother? Superboy?*

*Footballguy : Yes, Atlantis. Yes to all of that.*

*NotaMermaid314 : But that would make Superman— your father.*

*Footballguy : Yes to that as well.*

*NotaMermaid314 : But that doesn't make any sense. That would mean you're Kryptonian... but how can you be Kryptonian...*

*Footballguy : I'm actually only half Kryptonian. So is Superboy, by the way, though no one really knows that.*

Jordan was stunned, completely at a loss as to what to even think. Though he did know one thing— he was going to kill Jon the next time he had a chance.

How stupid could he be? Not only to go ahead and reveal himself to this stranger, but then to do it over an insecure internet platform... Jordan shook his head, sighing.

**ToBoldlyGo612**

I'm not an idiot. This could totally be fabricated. It means absolutely nothing.

**TheSource**

Except we both know that it doesn't. And trust me— I'm not going to stop until I find out who Footballguy is— and what he wants from us all.



Ok, Jordan was REALLY going to kill Jon. Slaughter him, toss him out in the garbage...

## **TheSource**

And trust me, Boldlygo—I have the means to do it.

And then Jordan jumped as a letter was thrust in front of his face, right between his eyes and his phone screen. He looked up, staring right into his mother's bright, blue eyes.

"What?" he asked, his head still spinning from his conversation over Reddit.

Mom didn't answer, just smiling at him eagerly. She gestured to the letter, which she had dropped on the kitchen table in front of him. "Go ahead and open it."

Jordan glanced at the return address, cocking an eyebrow. "Um... why are you showing me a letter from General Mills?"

Mom's smile widened. "Trust me..."

Jordan furrowed his brow, picking it up, and contemplating the letter for a moment. It was thin and pretty obviously junk—but Mom's behavior about it was beyond bizarre.

And then he finally ripped it open. He peered down at it, skimming the words on the page.

"Um..." he uttered. He didn't really know what else to say...

"Isn't it wonderful?" Mom continued. "I can't believe it, you haven't even reached your first anniversary as Superboy yet!"

Dad walked over to him, ruffling his hair. "Mom's right—I didn't get a letter like that until I had already been Superman for five years—"

"Um... I hate to break it to you guys but I'm not going to do it..."

But then mom glared at him, in her intense, no nonsense way. "Of course you will, Jordan. We went over this when you decided to take on the mantle as Superboy—there are many sides of being a superhero and I'm sorry, my dear, but this is one of them."

"Don't worry," Dad said, smacking him on the back. "It's not going to be as bad as you think."

Somehow Jordan highly doubted that.

"I've never seen Batman on the back of a Wheaties box," Jordan attempted, knowing full well that he had already lost.

Mom glared at him. “Batman doesn’t have a constant uphill battle to stay relatable. Your powers make it a whole different ballgame, Jordan, you know this just as well as I do.”

Jordan sighed, thinking about how terrified Sarah had looked years earlier when his eyes glowed red right in front of her... and he knew that Mom was right.

“I hate you guys,” he said.

Mom and Dad exchanged knowing glances, causing Jordan to sigh in response.

“Well, I’m off,” Dad said, grabbing his plaid jacket next to the door. “The fields aren’t going to plow themselves—“

“Could you just pick up some of those amazing pastries you brought home the other day on your way home?” Mom asked, pecking him on the lips before yanking Jordan’s letter out of his hands and heading over to the fridge. Jordan cringed, hoping she wasn’t about to do what he thought she was doing...

But then she took a magnet off the corner and stuck it right onto the letter, allowing it to sit there, out in the open, for all to see.

Jordan closed his eyes and groaned— he really needed to move out, as soon as yesterday...

“You mean the ones I picked up in Paris? Sure, no problem...”

“Thanks, Babe,” she said, squeezing his bicep.

Jordan glanced down at his phone, toggling back to messages.

**Jordan** : Scratch that, Cushing. I’m coming today— and I’m staying the night.

**Sarah Cortez** : 🙄

**Jordan** : Ugh, sorry, that’s not what I meant. I just need to get away from my parents for a little while.

**Sarah Cortez** : What about Jon? Or are you still not talking to him?

Jordan thought about his encounter with Jon at the museum, when Jon had totally blown him off after he told him about Granddad saving his ass from the FBI— and then he remembered how angry he was at him about the forums.

And he started fuming all over again.

**Jordan** : Work in progress.

**Sarah Cortez** : You guys really need to chill one of these days.

**Jordan** : Yeah, you're right, because that's TOTALLY my way of doing things.

**Sarah Cortez** : Seriously, Jordan. Think about it. Whatever's going on with the two of you—it's not worth it.

**Sarah Cortez** : Love you, Flyboy. See you later.

## Back of the box, chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

It's true what they say, it takes a village...

Thank you to Argentum\_LS for the awesome fan art!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### Back of the Box, chapter 2

When Jordan finally walked through the main gates of Met U the sun was getting high in the sky, casting an white, blinding light on the tall buildings around him. He smiled as he took in the city landscape, shoving his hands in the pockets of his jeans and strolling down the sidewalk. Being in the city always made him content, bringing back memories of his childhood here, well before he had any inkling of who he really was, or that his life would ultimately become absolutely insane.

Not that he didn't love being who he was. On the contrary, actually— the feeling he got when he had the opportunity to save a life was absolutely indescribable, and he knew that there were only a select few who could truly identify it and understand it. He loved being Superboy, he really did—

Though it would be nice if it could be a little less complicated sometimes.

He found Sarah's building fairly quickly, looking all around him before lowering his glasses and shooting a jet of heat vision at the electronic lock on the front door.

The light turned green and he turned the knob, letting himself in as he always did. He pushed his glasses back against his eyes, continuing forward towards the stairs—

“Jordan!”

His head shot up, meeting a very familiar pair of bright, blue eyes.

“Oh— hi Lori,” he replied. It was Lori Lemaris, Sarah's roommate, whom he had met briefly a few weeks earlier, when he brought Sarah back to her dorm room, extremely drunk and

very sleepy. “Did you just come from upstairs? Sarah’s there, right?”

Lori didn’t reply, her jaw dropping as she stared at him, gaping awkwardly.

He scrunched his nose in confusion. “What?” In a panic he glanced down at his shirt, wondering if he had forgotten to button some of the buttons and maybe his Superboy suit was showing through...

But it looked fine, all buttons in place. He furrowed his brow, his confusion deepening.

“Yeah... um... no, she’s there. Sarah, I mean. Sarah’s there. Upstairs. I mean she’s in, um, our room...” Lori’s face reddened as she abruptly cut herself off.

Jordan raised his eyebrows. Her reaction to him was REALLY bizarre— but then again, Jordan was no stranger to acting like a total ass in front of random people for absolutely no discernible reason...

“Um... ok, thanks,” he said.

Lori scurried away, leaving Jordan alone. He shrugged, then climbing the stairs towards the third floor, where he knew Sarah was probably laying face down in her bed.

He emerged from the staircase, passing a solitary, unadorned single room in the corner, and then he finally reached her room. He paused for a moment, staring at the rusty number “312” that had clearly been much shinier when it was first hung, decades earlier.

And then he knocked.

He listened in, hearing faint rustling inside. He knew better than to use his X-ray vision to peer inside; he wasn’t going to make that mistake more than once.

But then Sarah’s door popped open, her head slipping out through a slim open crack.

She looked into his eyes, clearly annoyed. “What the hell are you doing here?”

Jordan furrowed his brow in confusion. “I told you I was coming—“

“Tonight. You told me tonight.”

Oh, right. He had, hadn’t he. And he did have that intention— originally anyway. But when it came to Sarah, it sometimes seemed like his patience was slim to none.

It has always been like that with her, hadn’t it. He huffed under his breath. It was amazing— no matter how much he tried to change over the years, how much he tried to grow, he continued to fall into the same patterns, over and over and over again...

Sarah rolled her eyes. “Look, Jordan, I have a really busy day. Maybe you can like... hang out somewhere else for a little while?”

Jordan's heart fell at his gross miscalculation about this whole thing, and then he started wondering if even the moon would be far enough away.

But then Sarah let out a deep sigh. "Ugh. Just... give me five minutes."

The door slammed closed in front of him, and once again Jordan heard her rustling inside.

He stood there for a moment, awkwardly at a loss of what to do with his weirdly hanging hands, which didn't seem to have a place to go. He never had this issue when he was in his red Superboy suit, which he felt hugging him under his gray hoodie. Somehow, when he was in his famous persona, his awkwardness seemed to slip away entirely— but he couldn't even think of how Superboy would handle this, or where Superboy would stash his hands, or even how Superboy would spend five minutes waiting in a hallway.

So he stuffed his hands into his jeans pockets, hoping he didn't look like a total dork in the process, and then he leaned against the wall. That's what a regular person would do while waiting for his girlfriend— right?

And then he sighed. Girlfriend?? How had his mind even gone there?? Sarah wasn't his girlfriend, and hadn't been for years now. She was his...

Ok, there wasn't really a good word for what she was to him. But if she ever found out his mind had gone to the word "girlfriend," she would drop him so fast he probably wouldn't even be able to see it with his super speed...

His hands continued to dig into his pockets, and he became more and more convinced he must look like an absolute jackass— but then he felt his phone sitting there, right at the bottom of his pocket.

So he slid it out.

He tried to tell himself not to head over to Reddit. It was a terrible idea to do so. Like, beyond terrible. There was no way it could end in a positive way. The only thing that it would accomplish would be making him emotional. And overwhelmed. And pissed off. And probably completely beside himself in anxiety, on top of everything else...

He listened in to Sarah's room again, continuing to hear the sounds of clothing shuffling around.

And then he sighed, resigning himself to the temptation...

He turned on his phone, and his finger drifted right over to Reddit. He pressed the icon before he had a chance to consider the wisdom of doing so.

He glanced at the menu, listing all of his frequently visited subs:

## **Recently visited**

r/Superboy

r/Superman

r/startrek

And then he mindlessly toggled right over to r/Superboy.

His eyes widened as he saw the flurry of activity since the last time he checked in, only a few hours before.

And each topic was even more ridiculous than the next...

## **Superbros**

### *Discussion*

So are we really saying there are two of them now? Are they going to start doing saves together? And is Superboy the older brother, younger brother, or...

## **A Quick Painting I Made of Superboy**

### *Arts/Crafts*



Decided to focus on his adorable face for this one 😊. Let me know what you think...

## **BTS of a Save in Dubai— Blur sighting??**

*News*



Jordan's brow furrowed when he saw the last post. He remembered that save quite vividly, in fact— it was him who did it, not “the Blur,” but he had been so strapped for time at that moment, with a volcano erupting halfway around the world at the same time, that he hadn't even had a second to slow down before he flew back towards Hawaii.

He shook his head. This whole thing was getting absolutely crazy.

## **SqueakyBruce**

Is it just me or is the Blur like crazy hot? Like way hotter than Superboy

### **Pickles579**

Definitely hotter. There's no contest. But anyway, I never thought Superboy was anything special. His hair is too floppy

Jordan's hand drifted up to his hair absentmindedly, and he once again started wondering if he should get a haircut one of these days.

## **Criptoknight**



I like Superboy's hair, actually, it's cute. Anyway, you guys are ridiculous. How could you even think anything about this at all. It's literally just a colorful blur

**SqueakyBruce**

That makes him even hotter!! Like, it's the imagination of what he COULD be

**Criptoknight**

I'm sorry, that's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

Jordan told himself he shouldn't get involved. It was always a terrible idea....

But then his fingers started flying across the tiny keyboard, almost as if they were acting in their own volition.

**ToBoldlyGo612**

I think this is getting a little crazy. All of this is just conjecture— It's probably all just Superboy.

Jordan watched his response get downvoted immediately, over and over again.

**SqueakyBruce**

No, u/ToBoldlyGo612, it's definitely the blur. I mean, anyone can plainly see how different he looks.

**Criptoknight**

Agree with u/SqueakyBruce. But sorry, I know you want to refuse to believe this guy exists for some reason. Nice try.

“Is that Reddit?”

Jordan startled, quickly shutting off his phone and stuffing it back into his pocket before glancing up at the newcomer.

“Uh... no,” he stammered, fidgeting awkwardly with his glasses. “I mean, yes— I mean, but it was—“

“Do you need help with something?” the boy asked, looking intently at him through hooded eyes. He pushed his shoulder length, red hair behind his ear, his intense stare unfaltering. “You look a little lost. And I am not so sure I have seen you here in the past.”

“Uh, no,” Jordan replied. He suddenly couldn’t remember what to do with his hands, yet again. What the hell did he do with them when he was Superboy, and why couldn’t he remember??

“Do you go to school here?” the boy pressed on, narrowing his eyes as he leaned a little closer. “Now that I’m really looking at you I think I HAVE seen you. You look a little familiar...”

Jordan shifted awkwardly. People always said that to him, likely because of how ubiquitous he was when his glasses were off and stashed in the secret compartment of his suit...

Jordan pushed his glasses flat and secure against his face.

“I mean, I’ve been here before,” Jordan said. “I um— Sarah is my... um... my—“

“Cortez, you mean,” the boy said, lifting an eyebrow like a hook. “I see.”

“Yeah,” Jordan replied, shrugging.

And then the boy looked straight into his eyes again, inexplicably bringing a shiver to the surface of Jordan’s skin—

And then he threw his hand out to him, waiting patiently for a response.

“My name is Al,” he said. “I live in the single right at the top of the stairs. I’m sure you saw it.”

Jordan shrugged again. He glanced down at Al’s hand, deliberating taking it and giving it a shake, as Al seemed to indicate he wanted him to do—

And then Jordan heard a very familiar voice, reverberating from the deep hall behind him.

“What the HELL.”

He didn’t even have to turn around to know who it was.

Al’s stare deepened in intrigue, almost as if he were trying to burrow deep under his skin.

Jordan closed his eyes, not bothering to turn around. “I’m not here for you. Even though maybe I should be, especially because you’ve been an absolute dumbass lately.”

“Oh, shut the hell up, Jordan.”

Al’s eyebrow raised even higher, reaching up towards his messy head of bright, red curls.

“So you also know Kent,” he said. “Interesting.”

“I don’t ‘know’ Kent,” Jordan replied, suddenly annoyed. “I AM Kent.”

Al’s eyebrow finally disappeared into his hair.

“Get the hell out of my dorm, Jordan,” Jon said, fuming. “Nobody wants you here.”

“Again, not here for you, jackass— and trust me, Sarah does...”

At that moment Sarah’s door suddenly popped open, and Sarah finally emerged, her hands still messing with her hair, clearly attempting to get it under some semblance of control. Her brow was furrowed in frustration as she glanced at Jordan, glaring at him angrily.

Jon snorted. “Yeah, Bro. The amount she wants you here couldn’t be clearer—“

Jordan turned towards him, narrowing his eyes. “Get the HELL away from me, Jon—“

“Gladly,” came the reply. And then Jon disappeared so fast it almost seemed like he had launched into super speed...

Which maybe he really had.

Jordan swallowed. This whole thing was such a shit show it was ridiculous.

His parents didn’t even know about what had happened in the cafeteria, they didn’t know about the FBI investigation, and they didn’t know about the chaos unfolding on social media.

In fact, they didn’t even know that his asshole brother had powers at all...

Jordan had never been so angry in his entire life. Jon was being an absolute jackass in so many ways, yet every time Jordan even thought about approaching him about it, everything just blew up in his face.

Jordan knew that things used to be different between them, but with how bad it had gotten he even struggled to remember how that had ever been possible...

And then he felt a hand grab his wrist. He startled, blinking several times and finally noticing Sarah right beside him.

“Let’s get out of here, flyboy,” she said.

“It was nice meeting you,” Al said, his dark, beady eyes wide and fiercely focused. “And interesting...”

Jordan felt a shiver wriggle across his skin again. Ok, that guy was WEIRD...

Al watched them creepily as they continued down the hall and towards the stairs, and then Jordan let out a huge sigh as they disappeared into the staircase.

“I guess we’ll head over to the cafeteria,” Sarah said as if Al’s behavior were inconsequential.

Jordan thought about asking about him, but he realized that it just didn't matter.

Al didn't matter, and Jon certainly didn't matter.

Nothing mattered. Nothing, in the entire world—

Except for this girl, of course.

Sarah's dark, curly hair bounced in front of his eyes as they walked, and Jordan found himself reaching for it, the pads of his fingers barely wisping by it before she batted his hand away.

"Just stop," she said.

Jordan sighed. What the hell did he even have with her? Where was any of this going? What was he even doing? Why did he keep coming back, why did he subject himself to this— why did he subject either of them to this, really—

And then Sarah suddenly grabbed his arm, reeling him towards her—

And they came to a sudden stop in the staircase as she grabbed his neck, pulling him down towards her lips—

And as she kissed him, really kissed him, he felt butterflies fluttering around madly inside his stomach, and his heart began to race, impossibly fast—

Oh right. This was why.

He lost himself in the kiss. And the world melted away around them, leaving just Jordan and Sarah.

Nothing else mattered but this girl.

His mind was wiped entirely by the time she released him, and he felt an impossibly wide smile spread across his face, almost stretching from ear to ear.

She immediately noticed it— of course she did— and she smacked his shoulder in response.

"You don't need to gloat," she said, rolling her eyes.

Jordan sighed again.

She grabbed his hand, pulling him towards the front door and out to the grounds. He felt his phone buzzing in his pocket, and he wondered briefly if it was Reddit exploding all over again...

But lunch with his girlfriend was way more important...

Jordan winced.

NOT girlfriend. NOT GIRLFRIEND.

Jordan pinched the bridge of his nose. Man, he was really hopeless...

### Chapter End Notes

I have a feeling this story will end up expanding quite a bit. I asked a few friends for ideas for Reddit threads and I need to find an opportunity to use some of them, because they're pretty awesome 😊. I'll see what happens!

Thanks to Argentum\_LS, blg1987, and Silentevee for brainstorming with me 😊

# Back of the Box, chapter 3

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### Back of the Box, chapter 3

Jordan really did mean what he said in the WhatsApp message. He didn't mean to sleep with her, that was never the plan, and was certainly never his intention when he asked to stay the night...

But the second Sarah found out that her roommate was staying over in her boyfriend's room Jordan felt his stomach lurch...

Sarah pushed him down onto her bed, climbing on top of him as her hands wandered all over his skin.

He shivered, letting his hands drift to her chest—

And of course, she didn't resist.

Shit.

It was amazing. It always was. But when she fell asleep afterwards, not bothering to throw her clothes back on, somehow he felt awful. Absolutely awful.

This whole thing was a mess, just like his entire life, really. He glanced at his clothes, which were in several messy balls on the floor, including his red suit, which he normally wore stealthily under his hoodie...

Sarah always really enjoyed peeling off his suit. It was almost like a special kink to her, and every time she would spend an inordinate amount of time tracing that S...

Ugh. He hated this. He hated all of this.

If the world even had a clue as to what a mess he was they would lose faith in him entirely.

His vision honed in on his suit, which had been tossed across the room in a frenzy. The black S was folded over itself, the long, black legs in a jumbled mess...

*Help, Superman! Help me! Help! Superboy! Please!*

Jordan's eyes shot open wide as his hearing drifted towards the sound, which seemed to be coming from somewhere in New York City.

*Help!! Please!!*

He cocked his head as he sat up in Sarah's bed. Sarah's arm fell off of his chest, hitting the hard mattress with a bounce.

He listened in, taking a second to locate his Dad. If Dad was going he didn't really need to budge...

*HELP!!!!*

And then he found him. Dad was all the way around the world, somewhere in the far East—and from the sound of his rapidly racing heart he was immersed in a save of his own.

Shit.

Superboy to the rescue...

He stole one last glance at Sarah, who was curled up and face down on her pillow—

And then he launched into super speed.

He grabbed his suit with one hand as he sped by, throwing it on and launching straight through the hall, down the staircase, and out the front door of the dorm building—

And then he was in the dark, night sky.

He pushed his fists ahead of him, narrowing his eyes in determination—

And he shot forward, going even faster.

Before he knew it he was approaching New York from the west; he flew straight over the Hudson River, passing over the George Washington bridge, which had cars lined up and barely moving, almost as if it were a parking lot, despite it being in the middle of the night...

Jordan shook his head, remembering how much he hated cities, and especially New York...

And then he was shooting straight through the tall buildings, passing right by the Empire State Building, which was lit up in red and blue, likely celebrating his Dad, who had stopped a devastating earthquake in California the day before, likely saving an inordinate amount of lives.

And before he knew it, he was approaching the site.

He smelled it even before he saw it, since the plumes of smoke were billowing high into the air, spreading mercilessly through the city.

*Help! Please!*

His vision zoomed in on a high window, almost at the top of the building, where a woman was standing there, tears streaking down her face, contemplating the street below. Jordan saw the flames crackling in the floors below her, and the smoke build up was astronomical.

*Help!!!*

He squeezes his fists tightly, speeding up even faster, watching with his telescopic vision as she took one more look at the street far below...

And then she climbed out onto the ledge, closing her eyes...

And as she finally stepped off, he sped up again, now going faster than he had ever gone in his entire life...

And as he finally approached the building, he held his arms out to catch her—

A half a second later Jordan realized that somehow...

Somehow... HE MISSED.

His heart fell straight into the bottom of his stomach.

He has been Superboy for a year now, and he had been lauded over and over again for his actions—

But never, not once, had he missed.

Not even once.

Suddenly terrified, he jerked his head down to the ground, expecting to see her splayed out on the sidewalk, her broken neck and broken limbs sticking out in all kinds of weird directions...

He expected blood. A lot of blood. He knew that serious falls often resulted in pools of blood, but he had never seen it with his own eyes...

Of course he hadn't. Because he never, ever missed.

Taking a deep breath, and mustering all the courage he could find, he rubbed his eyes, zooming in and focusing on the sidewalk below—

But she wasn't there.

His breath hitched as he tried to understand what he was seeing.

He continued floating in the air, high above at the side of the building, as he scanned the area, searching...

She didn't just disappear. She had to be somewhere...



And then he finally found her, watching as an EMT rushed over to her, an oxygen bag draped over her shoulder.

The woman was there— she was really there— and she was standing on the crowded sidewalk down below, surrounded by hoards of people. She was standing, and she was crying, rivers of tears continuing to flow— but most importantly, she was ALIVE.

Jordan blinked several times, completely at a loss as to how this could have possibly happened.

There was no way she could have survived a fall this high.

There was no reason she shouldn't be a flat mess of broken bones, swimming in a pool of blood.

The EMT affixed an oxygen mask to her face, then pulling out a blood pressure cuff and starting wrapping it around her arm...

And the woman took a deep breath.

She was alive. She was breathing—

This made absolutely no sense. This shouldn't be possible...

And then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw it.

He was sure no one else did. It was only because of his super speed that he was able to see it at all...

But the dark blur in the periphery of his vision, appearing for a fraction of a second before it disappeared entirely, was pretty unmistakable.

He furrowed his brow, narrowing his eyes in anger.

He was going to kill him. He was really going to kill him.

And then, suddenly, the crowd below erupted in a large, raucous applause.

He startled, peering back down as he watched them all looking up at him. They were pointing, cheering, calling his name...

For a save he hadn't even done.

*“ Superboy!! Thank you!! ”*

*“God bless, Superboy!!”*

Jordan realized that if his stupid brother hadn't done this—

That woman would probably be dead.

And then, somehow, he hated him even more.

*“ Thank you, Superboy!! ”*

His heart was swimming in his stomach, splashing around in there immersed in overwhelming anxiety, immense frustration, and intense, overriding anger.

Because man. Man, was he angry.

He didn't think he had ever been this angry in his entire life.

*Superboy, Superboy!*

He couldn't be here anymore. He couldn't stomach this. So then, without hesitation, he shot back into the dark clouds of the night, disappearing into the sky above.

He couldn't get himself to go back to Sarah's dorm room. It wasn't going to lead anywhere good, if he had to be honest with himself; and, anyway, he didn't think he could look her in the face.

He was so unbelievably embarrassed. Mortified, really. And he loathed himself.

Superboy was the one part of his life that he really thought he had a hold on. It was the part of his life that made sense, in which he knew he could really excel.

But, in the end, the reality was that Superboy was just as much of a mess as Jordan Kent was.

He flew over the Midwest for a while, just flying back and forth over one nondescript cornfield after another. He avoided the cities, probably as a reaction to what he had just experienced in the largest one of all—

And then he finally found himself hovering over Kansas, their quaint, white farmhouse looming straight ahead down the road.

And suddenly he didn't even want to be flying anymore. Really, he didn't want a single reminder of Superboy. He didn't deserve to be Superboy— not now, not ever again...

And so, before he knew it, he was climbing into his bed in the small room on the top floor of the farm house. He pulled his comforter over his head, retreating into the dark, warm cocoon of his bed, and then he wrapped the blanket around himself tightly.

He closed his eyes, scrunching them tight, trying to block out the entire world around him...

But as he felt his phone buzzing in his pocket, he knew it was completely impossible. The world would always be there, that was the truth, and he would always be compelled to deal with it.

He couldn't run away. Not really. And especially not as one of the two people in the world who actually had the means to save it—

Not two people.

THREE.

Three people.

Because Jon was just like him. He was just like him despite the fact that he refused to admit it, despite the fact that he refused to tell their parents, despite the fact that the world was completely in the dark about it, other than the conjecture about the existence of a supposed “blur.” A “blur” that he fought so hard to deny, especially when this mysterious “Source” was on his tail...

His phone buzzed again and he sighed, reaching deep into the recesses of the hidden pocket of his suit...

He had a few messages waiting for him. The first few were on WhatsApp— apparently Sarah had noticed his absence immediately, and she was checking in. She would probably attempt to deny her panic later...

**Sarah Cortez** : Where the hell are you, Jordan?? Your clothes are still here

**Sarah Cortez** : Jordan, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have done this. I know you didn’t want it, and I did it anyway

**Sarah Cortez** : Look, I take it back. I take it all back. Let’s just pretend it never happened

**Sarah Cortez** : Jordan, please, just answer me. I’m really sorry

Jordan sighed. She was coming to ridiculous conclusions, all of which were completely unfounded. Of course he wanted it, he wanted it just as much as he always did, and just as much as she did. And anyway, it wasn’t the first time he disappeared on her like this for a save, even after sleeping together...

But he always came back afterwards.

Jordan started typing a response.

**Jordan** : It's not you, it's me.

Ok, that was just stupid and trite. And even though it was true, it conveyed the absolute opposite message of what he was trying to say. He deleted it promptly.

**Jordan** : I'm dealing with some Superboy stuff. I'm ok.

He stared at his words before sending them, then realizing that both sentences were outright lies. He wasn't dealing with Superboy stuff, and he was DEFINITELY not ok. He had told himself years earlier, after Sarah found out the truth, that he would never lie to her again. And he wasn't about to start now.

He deleted the message, then letting out a sigh.

It was probably better to say nothing at all, truthfully.

His phone in his hand, and mind racing in a thousand directions, he started mindlessly toggling over to different apps, trying to get himself to calm down before he lost it all together.

Instagram just brought on more fomo, and he regretted peeking there immediately. He closed it, then wandering over to Snapchat, not surprised to see he had zero snaps to peruse. It made sense, he had an equally zero number of friends to send them...

And then he was on Reddit. Truthfully, Reddit was a gift in so many ways. On Reddit he was anonymous, an entirely new person, someone who was actually respected in these forums as an intelligent, thoughtful, and interesting person. Someone whom even theSource respected (whoever he was, it was very clear that he wasn't just some random nobody).

He didn't frequent so many subs on Reddit. He was a pretty regular commenter on the Star Trek sub, which was a space where he could finally be free to be true to his Trekkie self. He drifted over there for a moment—

But as always, it was the same obsessive crap. Jordan thought if he saw one more post about Tuvix he would probably lose his shit all together...

He almost clicked on r/Superboy, completely out of habit— but then he stopped himself. Superboy was what was causing his distress in the first place...

So he headed over to a slightly safer place. He knew his father never had anything to hide, and absolutely nothing to be ashamed of— like the total, polar opposite of Jordan, basically.

r/Superman

**Superman sighting in Detroit!!**



## **12 reasons why Wonder Woman is the mother of Superman's sons**

### *Theory*

I know this is discussed pretty much constantly on here, but the more I think about it the more convinced I am. I pulled together some of the most compelling evidence and wrote it all up into an essay...

## **Hear me out—I think I figured out Superman's secret identity!**

### *Theory*

I know it sounds absolutely crazy. Like beyond, batshit bonkers. But I did some photoshopping of him, added a suit...

Jordan's heart suddenly launched into a gallop, his heart beating loudly in his ears...

He couldn't have clicked faster.

The post continued:

*I know it sounds absolutely crazy. Like beyond, batshit bonkers. But I did some photoshopping of him, added a suit, and it couldn't be any more obvious.*

*Hold onto your pants, because here it is, the truth, at last, after all these years...*

*Superman is none other than... Henry Cavill!*

The responses were pouring in so fast that Jordan couldn't keep up; but the whole thing was so hilarious, as well as so utterly absurd, that Jordan was suddenly laughing, despite everything. And soon he had tears gathering in his eyes, and he was laughing even harder.

Oh man. He really needed this.

### **Criptoknight**

Sorry, I mean, I know Cavill is good looking and all of that— but no, not even possible. Why would Superman waste his time pretending to be a human when he could just fly around and do crazy shit with his powers instead? This makes absolutely no sense.

### **Superfan1000**

This isn't even news, OP. Everyone knows that Superman is Cavill. Look at the man— he looks like a god.

### **Pinkybrain32**

I always thought Superman would be someone who flew under the radar, so to speak. And maybe he would have a job that would let him be the first one to hear the news. Like a reporter for a newspaper— something like that

### **Reddesteyes**

Not even remotely possible. I mean, can you imagine SUPERMAN wasting his time like that sitting at a desk when he could be, you know— FLYING? But I digress. If Superman was going to have any job it would be something glamorous. Like Cavill, for example.

### **Pinkybrain32**

You know what— you're right. There's no way he would be something so trivial like a reporter... an A-list actor makes way more sense...

Jordan snorted. Well, all of this was good for a laugh, anyway.

He scrolled down some more, straight past a bunch of fan art, as well as posts about personal encounters with Superman. And then he quickly skimmed yet another post wondering about Superman's past relationships, which obsessed over the identity of the mother of his children, as well as if Superman was still single, and if he would be interested in dating... the original poster...

And then his eyes widened as he saw a post he hadn't expected to see— not on THIS sub, anyway...

u/theSource

### **The Blur is at Metropolis University**

*News*

I am pleased to report that I now have compelling evidence not only that the Blur really exist — but that he is in residence at Metropolis University, one of the most prestigious colleges in the entire world.

And no, this is not conjecture.

For I, my friends, have seen him. Not only at the now infamous “cafeteria incident” that has exploded all over the social media world— but IRL as well.

The world needs to know the truth. And so I will be sending this as a press release to the world's most prominent newspapers.

In case the Blur is reading this, he should know this:

Your days of hiding in the shadows are numbered. Your days of anonymity— coming to an end.

And before long— the world will know the truth.

(This has been cross posted with r/Superboy, r/Krypton, r/superheroes, and r.aliens.)

## Chapter End Notes

Ok I fully admit I made that identical post on Reddit the other day for “research” for this story. I’m putting way too much thought into this fluff fest of a story, don’t mind me. 😊



# Back of the Box, chapter 4

## Chapter Notes

Climax is ramping up.... Buckle your seatbelts!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## Back of the Box, chapter 4

After Jordan came across that terrifying post from theSource on the Superman subreddit, he spent an inordinate amount of time trying to trace him down, meanwhile checking the Daily Planet app at least once every half hour. At first he expected the story to break imminently; but when a day went by, and then another, and then a third— Jordan realized that theSource was probably full of it.

He couldn't actually know as much as he claimed, or he would have exposed Jon already, days earlier.

And so, his obsessive refreshing of the Planet app slowed down. At first he was refreshing it only every hour, then a few hours would go by and he wouldn't even think of it. A week went by, and at one point, after several hectic saves in a row (all of which he was convinced he would screw up, which thankfully and miraculously didn't come to pass), he realized a full twelve hours had gone by without even thinking about it.

It had all been nothing but a bluff. And theSource was clearly a nobody, masquerading as a somebody in an effort to dig deep under Jordan's skin. Jordan couldn't let it bother him, Jordan couldn't let him win...

Besides, he had much more important things to worry about...

"Superboy, maybe stand a little further to the left. Chin up slightly. No, too much, chin down. Flatten your chin, raise it another quarter of an inch— no, too far again... turn your head slightly to the right, again, too far, turn back towards your left a little, no, not that much..."

Yes. Very, very important things.

He didn't even try to hide his trepidation about this whole situation, and his father had offered to accompany him— as Superman, of course.

But that wasn't necessary. Jordan wasn't a child. He was a professional—he was Superboy! And if he couldn't handle a small public relations getup on his own, then really he had no business parading around in his suit at all.

“Ok, Superboy, perfect. Just cross your arms over your chest, just like you always do... and perfect! Are you ready?”

Was he ready? No, he definitely wasn't ready. He had never felt less ready, in fact, or less sure of himself. He still couldn't get that failed save out of his mind; part of him knew he needed to confront Jon about the whole thing, but doing so would only admit to his own failure, something that was far easier to just deny, deny, deny...

Jordan crossed his arms over his chest, letting his face settle into a tight, determined glare...

And then the cameras started flashing.

“Perfect, Superboy, just perfect. And now how about some with your arms out to the side, show off that magnificent, black S...”

Jordan unfolded his arms, letting his hands fall awkwardly... and then, suddenly, he couldn't figure out what to do with his hands...

Or even what to do with his face. His bottom lip felt awkwardly huge, and he sucked it in slightly, trying to make his face feel less dorky.

He couldn't remember how to stand, he couldn't remember how to smile, and somehow he couldn't remember how to be a person at all.

He knew it was all in his mind; he was sure that the photographer wouldn't even notice...

He looked up at him, surprised to see his eyebrow cocked severely. “Superboy, is everything all right?”

Crap.

He didn't know what he was thinking when he agreed to this. To any of this.

And he didn't just mean the photo shoot.

He had no business being Superboy. He had no business wearing the suit, parading around the world, acting like he had even an inkling of how to save someone. He had no business wearing the S, or associating himself with Superman in any way. Really, Superman was a freaking god, and Jordan had no hope whatsoever of ever living up to his potential—or even coming close.

Jordan was vermin. He was worse than vermin. He was a parasite, a mongrel (as theSource had so eloquently put it), a creature the world should ever have been exposed to in the first place.

“Er... you know what, Superboy, I think it’s fine. We don’t need that pose, we have everything we need.”

Thank god.

“Good, that’s good,” Jordan spit out. He forced a smile onto his face, which probably looked more like a grimace...

And the photographer’s eyebrow drifted even higher in response.

Jordan sighed.

He needed this to be over. He honestly wished he could go back in time and avoid coming here in the first place. All of this was so antithetical to who he really was, and he didn’t even want to think about what it would be like when the box actually got released on the supermarket shelves...

And that was when he started feeling his phone buzzing, deep within the recesses of the hidden pocket of his suit.

It started with one buzz— but then it was constant, buzzing over and over and over again, and making him antsy, almost ready to jump right out of his skin.

And then his hands flew up to his ears as a high pitched buzz started ringing in his ears...

It was the ELT.

Ok, whatever was happening, it was getting real— and fast.

Jordan’s eyes shot open wide, as he continued to clutch his ears, the ELT’s squeal continuous and uninterrupted...

“Superboy?” the photographer said inquisitively.

But Jordan just vaguely shook his head. “I have a... a um...”

“Oh, you have an emergency, do you?” the man squealed. “Well, good luck to you, and I look forward to reading about your ventures in the news!”

Jordan raised his eyebrows— hopefully he would be reading about Jordan in the way that he feared...

He tossed a slight nod to the photographer, and then, in a blink of an eye, he disappeared into a blur of color and wind...

His phone was still buzzing in his pocket, but he knew the ELT had to come first. The ELT always had to come first...

He launched forward towards the shrill sound, feeling it grating in his bones as he approached it, coming closer and closer to the origin...

And then he came to a sudden, abrupt stop.

He looked up, catching a familiar pair of bright, blue eyes, and he wasn't surprised in the least that his Dad had effortlessly beat him there, his arm still draped around Mom, whom had been brought there right along with him.

They were in a back room of the DOD, in an area only a select few knew to exist: and there, right in front of them, was Granddad.

Granddad's finger was still pushing hard against the button of the ELT, and his expression was serious and stern, his brow furrowed with deep creases that stretched from the corners of his eyes and up into his forehead.

Jordan felt his jaw drop, at a total loss for words in this clearly emergent situation— and once again he felt deficient.

Of course, his Dad exhibited none of these struggles. “What is it?” Dad asked.

Granddad stared at him in response, silently at first— and then he started shaking his head slowly.

“Dad?” It was Mom, and her voice was laced with worry— she never had any trouble reading Granddad's emotions.

Not that it was hard to do so at the moment...

“I'm just going to cut right to the chase,” he said. “No sense of beating around the bush...”

But he was doing just that. He was stalling, and very obviously...

“Dad, out with it,” Mom urged.

“The DOD received an alarming message from an anonymous source,” he said. “It was a message— for Superman.”

Jordan's head pivoted to Dad, whose eyes widened in intrigue.

There was a long, uncomfortable pause, almost as if Dad was afraid to continue.

Mom narrowed her eyes. “So... what did it say?”

“It said— ‘I have your son.’”

As all eyes turned to Jordan, their stares burning deep into his skin, Jordan knew what he was going to say next.

“And it was signed,” Granddad continued.

“Signed?” Mom asked, still clearly confused as she glanced repeatedly at Jordan, the only widely known son of Superman. “By whom?”

Granddad shook his head again. “It was signed by an anonymous figure who called himself ‘theSource.’” Granddad paused again. “But Jordan can probably tell you more about that...”

And all eyes were on him again.

Except he had no idea who theSource even was...

“I don’t understand,” Jordan admitted.

“Really?” Granddad replied. “Don’t you?”

“TheSource doesn’t know anything,” Jordan insisted. “He’s been bluffing— just bluffing...”

But Granddad just glared at him in response. “Oh believe me, Jordan, that FBI investigation was no bluff...”

“Bluffing?? About what?” Mom exclaimed. “What are you even talking about??” She paused, turning to Granddad. “And what is this ‘Source’ even talking about?? Superman’s son... Superman’s son is right here!!”

Grandad’s eyes widened incredulously. “He sure is— but I’m sure you didn’t forget, Lois, that Superman doesn’t only have one son.”

“To the world he does!!” Mom countered.

And then Dad stepped forward, taking Mom’s arm gently in his hand. “Unless the world knows more than we realize.”

“That can’t be,” Mom argued, “we’ve been so careful. There was no reason for the world to know about Jon— so they don’t. And they never will...”

She trailed off, ending in silence, as a pregnant pause completely engulfed them.

Jordan took a deep breath. “I’m sorry,” he croaked. “I’m sorry—“

“No...” Mom collapsed onto Dad, who caught her in his arms, wrapping his arms around her and pulling her against his body. “No, please, no...”

“Superman’s second son isn’t a secret,” Granddad said. “It’s been a bit of a mess if I’m going to be honest. The FBI already got involved, but from the intelligence I’ve been hearing their involvement was nothing compared to the situation exploding all over the internet—“

“So you’re saying— you’re saying that people actually know that Jon exists!! So Jon— someone has him. Really has him!! Someone who wants to hurt him, someone who wants to KILL HIM—“

Granddad startled at that. “Lois, let’s not get ahead of ourselves. We don’t know anything yet, we don’t even know if any of this is true—“

Dad rubbed her arms comfortingly with the palms of his hands. “Have you tried to contact him? He must have his phone with him—“

“Of course,” Granddad replied. “And no, he’s not answering.”

There was another pause. Jordan peered at Granddad, who was leaving just as much out of this story as he was. He knew his parents deserved the whole picture, and not just part of it—but for some reason Jordan couldn’t get himself to be bearer of this news. He knew it really had to come from Jon—they weren’t desperate enough yet for him to get more involved in that whole mess than he already was...

And anyway, he knew he could solve this without that.

“I’ll find him,” Jordan said. “I’m sure all of this is nothing. TheSource has been trying to ruffle feathers for weeks now— Jon is probably facedown and unconscious in his bed right now, sleeping off a rough night of partying...”

Except that Jordan knew that he wasn’t. Jon really didn’t act like that, and at this point he wasn’t even sure if alcohol would even affect him anymore.

“What are you talking about??” Mom replied.

But Jordan just reached into the hidden pocket of his suit. He felt the edges of his phone, grabbing it and sliding it out.

“TheSource is a username for an anonymous user on Reddit,” Jordan said as he toggled over to the app. “He also happens to be the software developer of Met U’s private forums, or so he loves to claim.”

He pulled up the Reddit profile for theSource, turning it to show to his parents. “As you can see he’s been posting pretty regularly all over the site about Superman’s second son—“

“Based on what?” Mom asked. “What would make him even think Jon exists in the first place?”

Jordan cleared his throat. “Based on a save that happened at Met U,” he said. He really didn’t want to get into it more than that...

“So you saved someone when you were visiting, and somehow this got pegged on Jon,” Mom said, cocking an eyebrow.

He needed to change the subject. They were treading in dangerous waters...

“You know what, let me message theSource— maybe he can clear this whole thing up—“

“Wait a goddamn minute,” Granddad said, “you KNOW theSource??”

Know? Ok, that was a generous word. “Um... I know his username,” Jordan replied, his cheeks flushing. “But he doesn’t know who I am— it’s totally anonymous on there—“

Granddad’s brow furrowed. “To the software developer of an entire online database? Doubtful.”

Jordan’s eyes widened as he wondered if Granddad was right about that...

He took his anonymity for granted on Reddit— but what if it was really just a facade all along...

He shook his head, then pulling up messages. TheSource didn’t know anything. He was confident he didn’t. There was just no way...

“Let me see what I can weasel out of him,” Jordan said. He glanced at his parents, who were staring at him, totally on edge— and then he began to type.

“You’re just— messaging him?” Mom asked. “And you think he’s not going to suspect anything?”

## **ToBoldlyGo612**

You need to stop spreading these false rumors about Superman’s sons. It’s creating absolute chaos, and spreading lies like this is going to help no one.

Jordan glanced up at Mom. “He’s not going to suspect anything... trust me, Mom, if he actually does have Jon— I’ll find out.”

Jordan’s eyes widened as he watched a message appear almost immediately.

## **TheSource**

Deny the truth? That’s laughable. I thought you knew me better than that.

Jordan felt his stomach churning. He started typing a response— but then theSource beat him to it.

**TheSource**

I don't think I need to remind you about Footballguy's confession. You saw it with your own eyes.

**ToBoldlyGo612**

The screenshot you sent me was meaningless. It was clearly fabricated— either by you or by this Footballguy person. Maybe he was even drunk when he sent it.

**TheSource**

I don't think you really believe that.

Jordan's breath hitched as he started wondering just how much theSource really knew... and if there was something he missed about all of this.

"What's wrong?" Mom asked, not missing a beat.

"Let the kid do his thing, Lois," Granddad interjected.

**TheSource**

In fact, I think you have much more at stake than you care to admit.

Jordan's head started spinning and he frantically started typing. But once again, theSource beat him to it.

**TheSource**

The time for debate is behind us— far, far behind us. I don't know who you are, Boldlygo, but it doesn't even matter. Because I DO know that the Blur is real.

**TheSource**

You see, I know who he is.



Jordan's heart skipped a beat. There was no way that could be true...

### **ToBoldlyGo612**

I don't believe you. How could you possibly know that.

### **TheSource**

Oh, it's quite simple. You see, Superboy led me right to him. Superboy— his BROTHER. I suppose they are not such a loving family, are they...

Jordan's heart was speeding up in his chest. TheSource was lying. He was clearly lying. He hadn't even been anywhere near Jon as Superboy— except for the missed save, of course. But no one had seen Jon, he was quite sure of that...

He knew then that he had to go for it. He had to ask him directly— and hope that theSource was done playing games.

### **ToBoldlyGo612**

So tell me. If you're so sure this Blur guy is real. Tell me— who is he?

### **TheSource**

I would tell you— but it would be so much easier to show you, instead...

Jordan was pretty sure he had stopped breathing all together as he waited...

But thankfully he didn't have to wait for long.

A photo appeared on the screen— and his heart immediately plummeted into his stomach.

The photo was Jon— it was very clearly Jon. And his eyes were clenched, almost as if he was in an excruciating amount of pain...

And then he noticed the bright green rock taped to his chest, right under his chin...

And his head started spiraling. TheSource wasn't bluffing. He wasn't lying. He really did know as much as he said— and, not only that, his claim was actually true.

It was actually true.

And somehow— all of this was Jordan's fault.

He was shocked. He was reeling. He had no idea how this had happened. He had never even met theSource in his life— at least, he hadn't in real life, anyway. How could this have happened?? And how could it have been his fault??

He started shaking— and, of course, his Mom once again noticed immediately.

“What is it?” she asked.

But he didn't respond, and instead he just continued trembling, trying to force his fingers to type the words that he knew theSource needed to see.

**ToBoldlyGo612**

Who is that? What are you doing?? Did you kidnap a kid??

**TheSource**

Oh trust me, Boldlygo, this boy is no kid. And his reaction to the green meteorite seals the deal.

**TheSource**

This 'kid' is an alien. A Kryptonian. There is really no question.

**TheSource**

This alien lives in the shadows, much unlike his more widely known brother. But soon enough the entire world will know the truth.

Jordan started typing feverishly.

**ToBoldlyGo612**

The truth?? What truth?? You realize you can get arrested for kidnapping someone without cause!

But he didn't even have a chance to send it before another message came in—

### **TheSource**

This, my friend, is the boy more commonly referred to as “the Blur.” But you see, I wasn't wrong. He really is a student at Metropolis University. And his name is Jonathan Kent.

### Chapter End Notes

I have a really busy week ahead and I'm writing two stories at the same time (also one on the Lois and Clark fandom— go take a look if you're interested), so I'll see when the next chapter goes up. I'll try my best!

# Back of the box, chapter 5

## Chapter Notes

Well, surprise surprise, this thing seems to have expanded on me. 😊

Sorry for the delay, I had wicked writers block this week for some reason I can't explain. But thankfully 3500 words later that seems to be behind me 🤪

Hope you enjoy!

## Back of the Box, chapter 5

### r/Superman

u/theSource

### Superboy and the Blurs' Identities Revealed

*News*

Over the past few weeks, Reddit, as well as the internet as a whole, has been spiraling with news of a mysterious new superhero lurking in the shadows. Many have questioned if this individual even exists at all.

But I can assure you all that yes, he absolutely does.

For this individual has now been identified, as has his more famous brother, revealing the most startling truth of all:

Both Superboy and the Blur have been hiding in our midst, masquerading as normal humans, and have been hoodwinking us all into thinking they are mere college students.

My friends, here it is, the ultimate truth:

Superboy and the Blur are actually Jordan and Jonathan Kent, twin sons of Lois Lane and Clark Kent.

Which leads me to my even larger revelation.

After all these years, and two decades of mystery, the ultimate truth has come to light:

Superman has a secret identity.

And that identity is no other than Clark Kent.

(This has been crossposted to r/news, r/Superboy, r/superheroes, and r/krypton)

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Panic took over them all in an instant, completely taking Jordan off guard. Mom and Dad were usually so good at keeping their heads, but for some reason when it involved either him or Jon they lost their ability to cope entirely.

Granddad, on the other hand, reacted as he always did, throwing himself right into action. A moment later his phone was slapped against his face, and he was barking orders right into it.

Jordan knew he should try to focus, he should try to keep on top of what was happening around him— but all he could think about was Jon. Jon’s face, clenching in pain, at the mercy of this unknown entity of a psychopath that he couldn’t even begin to identify...

And he wondered why he was even fighting with him in the first place. He couldn’t pinpoint exactly why he had thought it was worth it— all the silences, the anger, the animosity. He was suddenly terrified he would never see his brother again... and, in comparison, all of those feelings felt like an absolute joke.

Jon was his brother. His twin.

God, Jordan had been so stupid.

“All right, they traced his IP address,” Granddad said. Jordan blinked, trying to force himself back into reality. “Wasn’t easy, he scrambled it, of course, and then even after all of that it was only vaguely tracing back to the Met U student center—“

“Wait,” Jordan interrupted, “you know how to do all of that?”

“Well, no,” Granddad replied, cocking an eyebrow. “But the DOD sure does... but anyway, he tried to post something on some kind of cock and bull social media site. But don’t worry, it was blocked—“

Jordan shook his head. It didn't even matter what kind of havoc theSource was attempting to create over on social media at this point. Ultimately it paled in comparison to the fact that he had Jon strapped to a chair somewhere with a chunk of kryptonite taped to his chest...

Jordan shivered at the thought, his mind running in circles as he tried to come up with a feasible course of action.

Something. ANYTHING.

"I'll fly over the campus," Dad said. "I can't imagine it will be too hard to find Jon—"

"Clark, just be careful," Mom said. "Don't forget, this guy has kryptonite."

"Don't worry, I'm basically immune at this point. This will all be over by lunchtime..."

But, of course, it wasn't. Dad came back a few minutes later, his eyes bulging out of his skull, clearly at a total loss. He had scanned the entire campus, and then the entirety of Metropolis, just to be extra thorough—

But Jon was nowhere to be found.

Mom was completely beside herself at this point, and Jordan wondered if his disappearance four years earlier at the hands of his uncle had elicited a similar response. It probably did—but it was so hard to watch them like this, when they were normally so level headed, so put together, so capable of functioning despite any stressor thrown their way—

Except, apparently, when that stressor involved their children.

"I'll find him," Dad promised. "And soon enough Jon will be sitting in our kitchen, complaining that your scrambled eggs are too dry..."

Dad was clearly trying to lighten the mood, but Mom didn't even seem to notice. Instead, she just buried her head in his shoulder, as if she was trying to block out the entire world...

A few minutes later Dad once again took to the skies, Jordan following behind him. Dad headed west towards the west coast, directing Jordan to try checking in the New York City region.

He stretched his arm ahead of him, tightening his fist into a ball as he shot forward towards the rising sun, which steadily rose higher and higher in the sky as he shot eastward. A few minutes later he was finally approaching the city, passing right over the steep, rocky cliffs of the Palisades and streaking over the George Washington Bridge, which had cars lined up in yet another of its endless series of traffic jams.

And then he was finally hovering over the city. He looked out towards the horizon, spotting several bridges dotting the outskirts of the city, the magnificent Empire State building standing tall, straight ahead...

And there were people. Tons and tons of people, darting around in all directions, flooding the streets, lining the staircases in the subway, holding onto the railings inside the crowded

subway cars. Even though Jordan had grown up in a city not unlike this one, he had grown so unaccustomed to the rote routines and hustling and bustling and endless arrays of crowds, and he felt his stomach squirming anxiously...

But he tried to ignore his discomfort, forcing himself to focus on his task. He needed to scan, search, X-ray, and somehow find a boy who was trying as hard as he could to not be found...

“Where the hell are you, Jon??” he muttered under his breath.

Apparently, not in New York City.

But he knew before he got here that it was going to be fruitless. Dad’s search plan didn’t really make a lot of sense when it came down to it— it really did feel like he wasn’t thinking straight at all.

He knew then what he needed to do. He needed to search Met U— not from the skies, as his father had already done—

But from below. From a student’s perspective. From a human perspective.

And he knew exactly who could help him in his efforts.

“Superboy! Superboy! Hi!”

His eyes widened as they darted to the street below, where he spotted dozens of people waving frantically at him, their faces turned towards the sky.

“Way to go, Superboy!”

“Superboy!!”

Jordan’s face reddened in response to the attention that he didn’t feel like he even deserved. For a moment he just hovered in the air, frozen in place, at a total loss of how to respond...

And then he threw them a small, casual wave, which elicited a huge, raucous applause...

Ok, that was good enough.

He couldn’t have shot back towards Metropolis any faster, flying so fast he was nothing more than a blur. The city below him soon transformed into suburbs, which then gave way to a more rural landscape of farms...

And then he was finally reaching another set of suburbs, which gradually increased in density until he reached the city limits of Metropolis.

He saw the famous, large Daily Planet globe straight ahead, and several blocks further, past Centennial park, was the tall gate at the entrance to Met U.

He dropped behind a dumpster in a narrow alley between two brick apartment buildings, and as he emerged from between them he pushed his glasses against his face...

And then, before he knew it, the impressive front gate of the University was looming before him.

He skirted straight through it, trotting right past the student center. It was a beautiful fall day, the air crisp and perfect, and as a warm breeze blew across his face he understood exactly why there were so many students lined up on the benches along the pathway. Normally he would have probably taken a few minutes and enjoyed the refreshing morning air, but he really didn't have time for that...

So he continued running, Jon's pain-ridden face featured front and center in his mind as he stumbled forward, throwing one foot in front of the next...

And then, suddenly, and completely out of nowhere, he tripped.

Realizing that he was surrounded by people he let himself fall, splattering right onto the grass and taking in a mouthful of dirt in the process...

"Will you watch where you're going??"

Jordan brushed the grassy dirt off of his face, pivoting his head to glance sideways at whatever had caused him to fall in the first place—

It was a foot, which was jutting out from one of the many benches lining the path. He followed the foot upwards, until he was finally looking a boy straight in the eye—

And he noticed that the boy was glaring at him.

The boy looked strangely familiar, as if Jordan knew him from somewhere. Jordan stared at him, and at his curly, red hair... But something about him was creepy and incredibly unsettling, and he found that for some reason he couldn't bear to look at the boy any longer...

Jordan cleared his throat as he hopped to his feet, brushing off his shirt absentmindedly.

"Oh, um, sorry—"

He glanced back up at the boy, surprised to see that his expression was completely unchanged, his brow furrowed in frustration and his eyes narrowed severely.

"I'm really sorry," Jordan said. "I'll just go..."

"Just don't get in the way of any more stationary objects," the boy said, his voice low and threatening. "If you know what's good for you... KENT."

Jordan jumped. Clearly the familiarity wasn't just in his imagination...

And then it suddenly dawned on him where he had seen the boy before—the dorm. The hallway.

"Al," he said.



He HAD seen this boy before— and he had seemed just as creepy in their last encounter as he did today.

“Keep your eyes on the ground, Kent. You wouldn’t want any ROCKS to jump out of nowhere and trip you again...”

Al was still glaring at him— but then Jordan thought he saw Al toss him an elusive, wry smile and a subtle wink...

But Jordan blinked, and Al’s expression was suddenly just as unreadable as it had been before.

Jordan shivered. Ok, that guy was just officially really, really weird...

“Er... thanks...”

Jordan scampered away, hurrying down the path as quickly as he could, until he finally reached the dorm building. Without hesitating, he lowered his glasses, unlocking the front door with his heat vision—

And then he was finally inside.

He trampled up the stairs, and as he continued onward he felt his heart racing faster and faster under his ribs, banging against them as if it were clamoring to burst out of his chest all together...

Because the reality was that if this didn’t work— Jordan really had no further options. This truly was the end of his rope— and if she couldn’t help him, Jon was probably as good as dead...

As Jordan finally emerged from the staircase, traipsing right past Al’s door and down the long hallway, he felt a stray tear escape from the corner of his eye...

It couldn’t end like this. It really couldn’t. Not after all the crap and complete stupidity that had happened between them...

How could he have been so shallow all this time??

None of that crap mattered— none of it. Jon was his brother. His BROTHER. His TWIN. None of that bullshit was worth it when it came down to it...

And suddenly he wanted nothing more than to throw his arms around him, bringing him in for a huge, deep hug.

“I hate you, Jon,” Jordan muttered under his breath. And it was true; however, though he couldn’t say the words out loud, he knew that he hated him most for how much he cared about him...

How much he loved him.

“Shit,” he said, “when this is over I’m really going to kill you...”

He was knocking on her door a minute later, bouncing on his heels from his pent-up energy. He thought about looking straight through the door to check if she was inside, but before he even had a chance to deliberate if it was a good idea or not the door suddenly swung open...

And as he peered down and straight into her dark, brown eyes he heard her groan loudly.

“You didn’t even text me first,” she said. “What the hell, Jordan, remember those boundaries I defined for you—“

But Jordan just didn’t care right now. None of that mattered; he pushed past her, stumbling into her room.

“Jordan!!”

“Look, Sarah, I know. I know— but—“

Her eyes widened as Jordan suddenly collapsed onto her bed.

And then she was next to him, her arm snaking comfortingly over his shoulder...

And he found himself falling right against her...

Falling, falling, falling, as if he were tumbling straight down into an impossibly dark, bottomless pit...

But Sarah was here. She always was, at least when it mattered the most...

She tucked his head under her chin, wrapping her arms around his back, pulling him close...

And suddenly, he felt himself fall apart.

He was crying, softly at first; but pretty soon his crying turned into heaving, and he was shaking violently, wrapped securely in her arms, feeling the warmth of her presence all around him, the soothing smell of her cheap shampoo still lingering in her dark curls, the low, comforting rhythms of her heart beating rapidly, ringing gently in his ears...

“Jordan, whatever it is, I promise— you’ll get through it. You always do. You’re the strongest person I’ve ever met—“

Jordan scoffed at that. “You know, I appreciate that you tried— but that’s total bullshit. I’m a mess.”

Sarah laughed softly in response, rubbing his back as he continued to lean against her. “Oh, I know that, flyboy. You’re a huge mess. In fact, I don’t think I know anyone in the entire world who is a bigger mess than you are—“

Jordan felt his stomach rumble as the truth of her words settled deeply within him.

“Except for maybe me, of course,” she continued, shrugging. “But don’t you get it, Jordan? You’re a mess— but look at what you’ve done despite all of that. What you always do— and what you will continue to do. Honestly, if you stop and think about it— it’s nothing short of miraculous. You’re a mess— but you’re incredible. Absolutely incredible. The most incredible person I’ve ever met...”

He pulled out of her arms, peering deep into her eyes.

“I love you, Jordan,” she said. “And I promise you, you WILL find a way...”

Jordan stared at her for a moment, floored by her devotion... but he was even more of a mess than she could probably imagine.

“Do you want to talk about it?” she asked.

He closed his eyes. Did he want to talk about it? He didn’t even know. Saying it out loud would make it even more real, and even more frightening than it already was...

He sighed, and then he opened his eyes, finding her continuing to watch him devotedly.

“It’s—“

And at that moment the door suddenly flew open, and Sarah’s roommate, Lori, catapulted inside.

“Lori!” Sarah exclaimed.

“Sorry,” Lori said, her face reddening. “Sorry, I didn’t notice a sock on the doorknob... I’ll go...”

Jordan’s face was now reddening, too...

“Oh, no! That’s not what this is,” Sarah replied quickly.

Lori turned to leave. “Don’t worry, it’s fine...”

And then a thought occurred to Jordan. He had seen Lori with Jon a few weeks earlier, when he ran into Jon at the museum. He didn’t know if Lori would have any ideas on how to track him down but it certainly didn’t hurt to ask...

She was halfway out the door when Jordan finally found the words to shout to her.

“Wait!” he exclaimed. “Lori, wait—“

Lori stopped in her tracks, not bothering to turn around.

Jordan felt Sarah startle on the bed next to him.

“Look— I’m um... I’m dealing with something. Something a little crazy. I was um... I was wondering— I mean, I thought you might be able to help—“

“REALLY,” Sarah interjected. “Lori?? Have the two of you even met??”

The truth was that they had—and even more than once. Of course, the first time Sarah had been drunk and unconscious after a party, and there was no way she would ever remember that; and the second time, at the museum, Sarah hadn’t even been there at all.

Lori turned around slowly...

And then Jordan suddenly realized that Lori appeared to be just as devastated as he did.

Her eyes were wide but they were red and bloodshot, and the skin around her eyes was swollen and purple, almost as if she had been crying for a really long time, and losing her mind with worry...

Lori nudged the door closed with her foot, still staring at Jordan expectantly, as if waiting for him to make the first move.

Jordan suddenly wondered just how deeply Lori was involved in all of this... and if she could possibly know as much as it seemed she did...

And then, suddenly, everything clicked into place.

“You’re her,” Jordan said.

Lori blinked several times.

“‘Her’? What the hell are you talking about??” Sarah exclaimed.

Lori didn’t respond, but she didn’t look even remotely confused, either. She knew EXACTLY what Jordan was talking about—

But, clearly, she needed him to say it.

“You’re NotaMermaid.” He continued staring at her, and he could feel the heaviness of his words hovering over the small room. “Aren’t you.”

There was a long, pregnant pause, and Jordan couldn’t have peeled his eyes away from her if he tried.

Until, finally, she spoke. “Yes,” she said simply.

“Ok, I’m clearly missing something right now,” Sarah said.

But Jordan barely even heard her. “You’ve been talking to Footballguy,” he continued. “On the forums.”

“Yes,” Lori replied, barely louder than a whisper. “I have...” And then she paused, taking a deep breath. “I have... and I... I know who you are.”

Jordan swallowed heavily.

“How could you... what are you TALKING about, Lori??” Sarah asked, exasperated.

But Jordan knew. “You do,” he said.

“You’re...” she paused, almost as if she were afraid to say it.

But she knew. Jordan knew that she did.

“Superboy,” he finished for her. “Yes, I am.”

Her eyes widened at that, even though it clearly hadn’t been a surprise...

However, the same couldn’t be said for Sarah.

“Have you lost your mind??” Sarah exclaimed. “Lori, look, Jordan doesn’t know what he’s talking about right now, I think he must have had a drink too many, or maybe several too many.” She nudged him in the shoulder. “Right, Jordan?”

Sarah was thrown for a loop by all of this, and clearly she deserved an explanation— but right now there just wasn’t any time...

“Look,” Jordan said, still staring at Lori. “I can’t... Jon is missing.”

Lori didn’t even blink. “I know.”

Jordan’s eyebrows shot up towards his hairline. “You do?”

“Of course,” she said. “He disappeared at some point last night— and it’s really bizarre, he said he was going to come with me to the cafeteria for breakfast...”

Her face became scarlet yet again.

“He didn’t just... disappear,” Jordan said. “He was...” He swallowed heavily. He didn’t even want to admit it, it was so terrifying... “He was kidnapped.”

“WHAT???” Sarah exclaimed.

But, again, Lori didn’t seem surprised. “I actually figured it was something like that,” she said. “He wouldn’t just... not show up...”

The red color on her face deepened even further.

“Don’t you have like... resources?” Lori asked. “You know, you and your... um... your Dad...”

“You mean Superman,” Jordan said.

“Jordan!!” Sarah screeched. “What the hell!!”

“Yes,” Jordan replied. “My Dad and I— we’ve both scanned the city, and then we split up. My Dad is flying over the west coast right now— I think. I was supposed to be searching the

east coast— but somehow I ended up here instead.”

Sarah’s eyes were wide as she grabbed Jordan’s arm. “Look, Lori, Jordan doesn’t know what he’s talking about—“

“I just think he has to be here,” Jordan continued, ignoring Sarah as she continued to nudge his shoulder. “I mean, I searched the area. My Dad searched the area. But when it comes down to it— theSource was traced back to the Met U student center. I don’t think that was random, even if it we’d clearly a misdirect—“

“Wait,” Lori interrupted. “Did you say theSource? How could he be involved in any of this?”

Jordan raised his eyebrows. “TheSource has everything to do with this,” he said. “TheSource is the one who kidnapped him.” He reached into his pocket, pulling out his phone. “The only problem is I have absolutely no idea who theSource even is. So Jon could be anywhere, really...”

He pulled up Reddit, toggling over to messages—

But just as he opened the photo, gearing up to turn his phone around to show it to Lori—

The palm of her hand suddenly landed right on top of his fists. He startled, his eyes pivoting upwards to meet hers—

“You said theSource has him,” she said. “Has Jon, I mean.”

Jordan took a deep breath. “I did.”

“And you can’t find him— because you don’t know who he is...”

Jordan noticed Sarah’s eyes widening out of the corner of his eye.

“Well...” Lori continued. “I do.”

# Back of the Box, chapter 6

## Chapter Notes

Sorry for the delay, I'm still having some wicked writer's block for some reason. It was also a bit of a crazy week in my real life so that totally could have contributed, I guess. Hope you enjoy!

### Back of the Box, chapter 6

**Mom** : How's the search been going? Did you finish the East Coast? Dad is heading west over the Pacific to start looking in Asia. Maybe you should move on to Europe.

**Mom** : Unless you have another idea...

Jordan stared at his phone screen. He should tell her. He knew he should.

So he started typing.

**Jordan** : I have a lead on Jon. Also, I know who theSource is. I'm going to go ahead and follow his footsteps. I should have Jon home by lunchtime — might want to get started on those eggs!

His finger hovered over the send button as he read it over... But then he remembered just how overwhelmed and anxious his parents had gotten earlier that day. He knew that once he sent this they would insist he step back, and they would insist they be the ones to "handle it from here."

But there was no way they could. They just weren't keeping their cool, and Jordan had a funny feeling that if he let Dad take this one, it might end up being the last time he ever saw him.

Al had kryptonite, for crying out loud.

He deleted the message quickly, then typing out a new one.

**Jordan** : No, thanks, that's a good idea. I'll do that

**Mom** : Great. We'll plan to regroup at the house in an hour.

**Jordan** : Can we make it 2?

**Mom** : Why, is there something you're not telling me?

Jordan typed a response as quickly as he could. He needed to cover for himself — fast.

**Jordan** : No, Mom, of course not.

**Jordan** : I'm just not so fast at scanning stuff. I'm not as fast as Dad, not yet anyway

“Jordan, you coming?”

Jordan glanced up from his phone, looking a very nervous Lori Lemaris straight in the eye. She was bouncing up and down on the balls of her feet, clearly eager to get going.

“Yeah, one second—“

**Jordan** : Sorry Mom, I'll get it done as soon as I can

**Mom** : Don't be ridiculous, I would never ask you to try to match up to your Dad. Take your time—you can always text me and we'll figure out where to meet.

**Jordan** : Ok, sounds good

“Jordan?”



“One second, I just have to shake my mom off my tail...”

“Wait,” Sarah said. “You didn’t tell your parents?”

How could he possibly explain to her why it would be such a huge mistake in a way she would understand...

The answer was that he couldn’t. He couldn’t explain it to her — and truthfully, he could barely even explain it to himself.

**Mom** : I love you. Be careful.

**Jordan** : yeah, love you too, Mom...

The truth was, Jordan didn’t really have a spectacular plan. He was never great at the investigative aspects of the superhero job, usually leaving that side of it to Mom (and sometimes Dad, too, when it got too dangerous for her, not that danger ever really seemed to deter her). He stuffed his phone back into his pants, then starting to drift down the hall and towards Al’s room, when suddenly Sarah yanked him backward by the shoulder.

“What do you think you’re doing, Jordan??” she asked.

Jordan stared at her, his mouth gaping. “Um... I THOUGHT I was going to rescue Jon—“

“Do you really think Al is keeping him locked up in his room? You already scanned the area, right?”

“Yeah, twice—“

“So you know he’s not.“

Jordan raised his eyebrows. “Ok, fair point. So what do you suggest?”

Sarah didn’t have a response to that.

“Well, let’s put our heads together and figure this out,” Lori said. “Maybe he’s using some of his connections. There has to be somewhere he has access to because of it...”

Jordan furrowed his brow. “Connections? What connections? You mean because of the forums?”

Lori’s eyes widened. “ *No* , I mean his... you know. His family connections?”

Suddenly, Jordan didn’t like where this was going.

“Family connections??” Sarah exclaimed. “What are you talking about, Lori??”

“Wait—you don’t know who he is?”

“Al?” Sarah replied.

Jordan’s heart couldn’t have plummeted any faster in his stomach.

Because it suddenly dawned on him what “Al” stood for.

“Yes, Al. Al is short for Alexander...”

Jordan really didn’t want Lori to continue. Maybe if she didn’t say it, it wouldn’t be true...

“Alexander Luthor—“

“*Luthor* ??” Sarah yelled.

“—Junior.”

The silence that rang through the room bounced off the walls and filled Jordan with a foreboding sense of dread.

He knew now that the time for niceties had passed. Anything Luthor-related was *way* above his pay grade, and pretty much guaranteed to end in disaster. He had heard some of the stories throughout the years, and he knew that even his father had been flummoxed by Luthor many, many times, and had almost lost the fight against him entirely. He knew he shouldn’t face this alone — and that he really, *really* needed to tell his parents.

He whipped his phone out of his pocket. Ever since he became Superboy he no longer carried an ELT, but he still had a pretty reliable way to reach his Mom.

“What are you doing?” Lori asked.

Jordan sighed heavily. “I’m enlisting the cavalry.”

**Jordan** : Hey, Mom, I need to tell you and Dad something. It’s about Jon. I know who has him.

He sent the message, and then he started typing again.

But Mom responded faster, almost as if she were the one with superspeed. The messages came in in rapid succession.

**Mom** : What do you mean? You figured out who theSource is?

**Mom** : Did you also figure out where Jon is?

**Mom** : Did you find Jon?

**Mom** : Is Jon ok? Or is he in pain?

**Mom** : Are you ok? Are you safe?

**Mom** : You need to be careful, he has kryptonite. It can kill you, don't forget that.

**Mom** : Jordan?

**Mom** : Jordan. Tell me where you are, Dad will come.

It was almost as if Jordan could predict the future. She was losing her head already, and he hadn't even said anything of substance...

**Jordan** : Mom! Just slow down for a second. I'm fine. I just wanted to give you a heads up.

**Jordan** : But it's more complicated than we thought. It's about who has Jon.

He paused, almost afraid to continue. But somehow, Mom seemed to sense his fear, even through his text messages.

**Mom** : Jordan— it's going to be ok. I promise. Whatever it is, we can handle it. We have 25 years of experience with this sort of thing. And I promise you, at this point there's nothing too dire or too menacing.

Jordan swallowed heavily. She had no idea...

**Jordan** : Mom.

**Jordan** : Mom — you don't get it. This isn't just anyone.

**Mom** : Jordan, take some deep breaths. In and out. It's going to be ok, I promise it is.

Jordan suddenly realized that he was indeed hyperventilating, and he wondered if Mom had some kind of premonitory powers that she had never divulged.

He needed to do it. He just needed to tell her.

**Jordan** : Ok, Mom. I'm going to tell you. But you're not going to like it.

**Jordan** : It's Luthor.

As Jordan continued typing his phone buzzed frantically, over and over and over again, as Mom sent a barrage of text after text...

But Jordan just ignored it. He knew what he had to do.

**Jordan** : His name is Al— Alexander Luthor Junior. And he lives on Jon's floor at Met U.

But then, just as he was about to send it, Jordan felt a sudden, sharp tug behind his eyes, so strong and so severe that his phone slipped right out of his fingers.

But before he had a chance to internalize what was happening, the pain ramped up, pushing itself throughout his body and down his back, where it squeezed through his muscles like knives. And then it continued slithering into his arms and legs...

And he finally collapsed onto his knees just as his phone hit the floor.

But he didn't even care. The pain was continuing to build, and his vision became cloudy, just as his ears seemed to fill with cotton balls...

And then, somehow, the pain got even worse.

The room was spinning around him, but it was so blurry that he wasn't even sure if it was his imagination... And then he thought he felt something cold and hard close around his wrists.

"Leave him alone!!" he thought he might have heard.

"What, this alien creature? Why, is he your *boyfriend*? Trust me, little girl, I'm doing you a favor. I'm doing the *world* a favor. The world has never needed an alien invader to 'rescue' it. Much less two..."

"*Stop it!* He didn't *do* anything!!"

Jordan clenched his eyes tightly, trying to drown out the pain. It was so bad he was shaking, and he didn't know how much more of this he could bear...

"Oh, my dear, of course he did. Isn't his *existence* enough?"

He was spiraling around the edge of a deep, dark hole, but the pain was so intense that he welcomed it. He was begging for a respite, clamoring at the edge...

And then, as he finally fell right into it, the world became black, and he knew no more.

---

Something was smacking him in the face. Something hard. It felt like the palm of someone's hand — maybe Sarah's? But it was hitting him way too hard to be her hand. When she smacked him he barely felt it, and it was almost as if he had been whacked by a solitary piece of paper. This was different— this had power— almost like it was—

His eyes shot open, and he was not surprised to be looking straight into a familiar pair of bright, blue eyes, which sparkled right at him under the harsh, fluorescent lights. The lights almost seemed to have a slight greenish tinge, though it was so slight that Jordan wasn't sure if that was just his imagination playing tricks on him.

"Jon!"

Jon narrowed his eyes. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"Um... rescuing you?" Jordan replied, as he pushed himself up to sitting.

Jon stared at him for a moment. "Rescuing me. Really. Man, this sure is some rescue—"

And at that, Jordan felt a sudden wave of pain shoot through his temples and he clenched his eyes, grimacing.

“That’s the kryptonite,” Jon explained. “It’s embedded in the ceiling lights. Just enough to keep us under control, not enough to kill us... yet, anyway...”

Jordan opened his eyes again, surprised to see Jon’s hand hanging before him, reaching down to help him up.

“What’s this?” Jordan asked as he grabbed onto it.

Without hesitation, Jon heaved him to his feet. “I don’t know, I must be having a weird moment.”

“Huh,” Jordan replied, as he brushed off his gray hoodie. “I thought ‘weird’ was *my* thing.”

“Oh trust me, bro, it definitely is...”

“Look,” Jordan said, peering down at his feet. “I’m sorry, man. Like — really. I really don’t want to be fighting, it’s all just totally stupid.”

Jon shoved his hands into his pockets. “Not a big deal...”

“Um, it actually is, though—“

“No, it isn’t,” Jon interrupted, his expression fierce. “Despite everything that went down between us, I know we’re really the Fraternals... deep down, anyway. And I know that whatever happens, whatever bullshit either of us says, there’s *nothing* that could change that.”

Jordan stared at him, taken off guard by what he said, and then he scoffed under his breath.

Jon cocked an eyebrow in response. “What?”

“Oh, nothing—“

“You’re so full of crap—“

“Ok, fine, it was just — you called us ‘the Fraternals.’” Jordan raised his eyebrows. “Like seriously, man, I haven’t heard that term in years...”

Jon stared at him for a moment, and then he whacked Jordan on the shoulder even harder, causing Jordan’s face to spread into a wide grin. “Just... shut the hell up, Jordan...”

Jordan started surveying the room. It was a nondescript, bare space, approximately 10x10, with bright white walls that almost looked green as the green fluorescent ceiling lights reflected off of them. There wasn’t even a stitch of furniture, and the only thing that broke up the monotony of green and white was a solitary door in the corner that didn’t even seem to have a doorknob affixed to it. Jordan leaned against the door, testing its strength—

“Oh, trust me, I’ve tried that,” Jon said. “I don’t know if the green crap sapped out all my powers or what, but it wouldn’t budge.”

Jordan sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose.

“Great, that’s great,” Jordan said. “So what now? We just — wait here till freaking Lex Luthor Junior finally gets around to *slaughtering* us?? We hope that however he chooses to kill us will be quick?? You know what, there’s no way it will be, if Luthor senior ever wanted anything it was to see Superman suffer. I can’t imagine it’ll be any different with Luthor’s son — or with Superman’s.”

Jon shook his head. “Jordan...”

Jordan didn’t want to be angry — he really didn’t. He knew full well that it just wasn’t worth it. But as he felt fury start to build behind his eyes, it suddenly transformed into something else entirely. It was heat — and it was burning.

When he peered up at Jon and watched as Jon’s eyes widened in response, Jordan knew that his eyes were a bright, fiery red. It was taking all of his effort to keep it contained, and to keep the heat from bursting out of him, almost as if he had traveled back in time and was fourteen-years-old all over again. As he struggled to contain his out-of-control emotions, his heart started racing, beating harder and faster and emanating throughout his body until it almost felt like the pulses in his wrists were about to leap out of his skin.

And then, finally, he snapped. Though he felt the heat behind his eyes finally beginning to dissipate, the same couldn’t be said for the anger simmering underneath; and then, finally, it all started spilling right out of him.

“No, I’m serious!!” Jordan exclaimed as he threw his hands into the air. “We’re talking about fucking Luthor! My *god*, Jon...”

Jon cleared his throat. “Look, Jordan, listen—“

“No. *You* listen! This never would have happened if you had just kept your mouth shut! Or I guess your fingers—“

Jon swallowed, pausing for a moment as he was clearly trying to absorb his words. But then he slowly narrowed his eyes. “Oh, just shut the hell up.”

“Why the *hell* did you even do it?? You know, it’s not hard to keep all of this a secret. I’ve been doing it for years now—“

“That’s bullshit, you told Sarah *years* ago—“

“Oh cut the crap, you know I didn’t tell her. You know it wasn’t my fault that she found out. But that’s the difference, isn’t it. I wanted to tell her— but I didn’t. I didn’t!! But what — you’re just too excited that you actually have powers now that you just go around boasting about it to every single random person you see??”

“Lori is *not* a random person,” Jon interrupted. “And besides — it’s...complicated...”

Jordan scoffed. “Oh, sure, isn’t it always?”

As anger started to consume him, Jordan struggled to remember why he had thought it wasn’t worth it. Because suddenly even looking in Jon’s direction filled him with disgust.

He was Superboy — one of the premiere superheroes in the entire world. He was treated with reverence and respect wherever he went, like some sort of celebrity, or even a god. It wasn’t supposed to end this way...

And it was all because of Jon. Jon, who had the audacity to become a closet superhero, performing rescues from the safety of the shadows while refusing to even tell their parents he had powers at all. It was ridiculous, when it came down to it. Jordan knew it all along, and by staying silent he only ended up complicit in all of Jon’s mistakes.

So, in a way, by helping Jon keep his secret, all of this was Jordan’s fault, too.

“I should have just told Mom and Dad,” Jordan said. “I should have told them *weeks* ago. I really don’t know why I didn’t. Just because you’re an asshole doesn’t mean I should have been.”

Jon slumped against the blank wall, pinching the bridge of his nose. “No, *I* should have told them. *Me*. Don’t try to blame this one on yourself, Jordan—“

“So why didn’t you?” Jordan pressed. “What did you think was going to happen, exactly?”

Jon blinked several times. “What did I think was going to happen? Nothing. I knew nothing would happen. But I still couldn’t—“

“Jon, that’s ridiculous—“

“I guess,” Jon continued, looking at the floor. “I guess telling them would have made it *real*. Mom and Dad wouldn’t have just shrugged it off like it’s no big deal. Dad would have gone crazy, dragged me to the fortress for tests, all that shit. I just... I was just so not ready for it to be *that* real — you know?”

Jordan stared at him for a moment. “You have to be fucking kidding me. It wasn’t *already* real? It wasn’t real enough that you’re going around and saving people’s asses?”

Jon sighed, closing his eyes. “I know, it’s really, really stupid.”

“You’re definitely right about that.”

Jon opened his eyes again, peering right into Jordan’s. Jordan opened his mouth, gearing up to throw another insult Jon’s way...

When suddenly he heard something.

Jordan cocked his head, focusing his super hearing as he listened in. It sounded like heavy footfalls, one heavy footstep after the next, and they were slowly making their way down the hall and closing in on their position.



Jordan was suddenly filled with immense sense of dread as he tried to imagine what was coming. He could have any number of horrible kryptonite weapons that he had heard about over the years. He wondered if he would appear bearing a gun loaded with kryptonite bullets, or if he would instead elect to use a kryptonite dagger like John Henry preferred to use when he was fighting Kryptonians in his own world. Jordan swallowed heavily, imagining how it would feel to be stabbed by one of those daggers, the green blade slicing right through his skin and in between his ribs... and then how much pain he would be in as the kryptonite coursed through his veins and he lay on the floor, dying...

The footsteps got louder and louder and then, finally, Jon's eyes widened, too. Jordan tried to peer through the walls but his X-ray vision wasn't working properly at all, probably as a reaction to the kryptonite still emanating from the ceiling lights.

"We're going to die," Jordan said. "Oh my god, we're going to die!!"

"Shut up, Jordan, we don't know that," Jon snapped. "We don't know anything... I've been trying to glimpse through the walls but I can't get a good view, the kryptonite's making my vision wonky... I'm sure it's nothing. Don't panic."

"Nobody even knows we're here, Jon!! What else could it possibly be??" Jordan was panicking now, and he was so jittery from the adrenaline shooting through his body that he started shivering uncontrollably. "We're going to die!! He's going to kill us!!"

Then, suddenly, Jon was standing right next to Jordan. Jon stood there silently for a moment, staring at Jordan with wide eyes, and then, finally, he reached out. His hand was just there, dangling in front of him, as if he were reaching out to him on so many levels, trying to close the distance that had come between them. "Jordan..."

Jordan stared at Jon's hand for a moment, feeling panic start to consume him from within.

But then, finally, he made a decision — and he grasped Jon's hand, holding onto it as tightly as he could.

The effect was instantaneous. Though the footsteps continued to approach, Jordan felt the panic inside him ease; and even though their situation was still dire, it no longer felt insurmountable.

They would face it together — and that made all the difference.

The footsteps were now impossibly loud, and then they came to a sudden stop on the other side of the door.

Jordan glanced at Jon, discovering that Jon was already looking at him.

"Fraternal," Jon said.

Jordan snorted. "I hate you."

There was suddenly a heavy banging at the door. Jordan's head snapped towards it, his heart filled with trepidation and fear...

And then the banging repeated, and finally a latch inside the door released. The door started creaking open slowly...

And Jordan felt Jon's grip on his hand tighten even more.

The door continued pushing open... Jordan craned his neck, narrowing his eyes to try to get a glimpse of the green weapon that was inevitably coming for them...

But then the door suddenly swung open violently—

And Jordan gasped.

There was no weapon.

And it wasn't even Al.

"Mom??"

Mom pushed her long, dark hair behind her shoulder, then turning around to face someone still lingering in the hall.

"Babe, just stay outside. There's kryptonite in here, just as we suspected..."

She then turned back to them, her brow furrowed in seriousness.

Jordan stared at her, completely flummoxed. "What are you... how did you..."

Mom just shook her head. "Let's just say I used my investigative skills — and my prior Luthor knowledge."

Jordan stared at her, floored that she had managed to do this. He hadn't even sent the message about who Al really was and how they knew him.

But Mom just shrugged, as if she could read his mind. "The word 'Luthor' was all I needed."

"Remember boys," Jordan heard Dad say from the hallway. "Never make the mistake of underestimating Lois Lane."

Jon raised his eyebrows. "Oh, I would never even think of doing such a thing," he replied.

Dad tried to peek into the room but Mom just shoved him away. "Seriously, Babe! Kryptonite!" She rolled her eyes, and then glanced at Jon and Jordan, flashing them a pursed grin. "Well??" she said, motioning to the open door. "Are the two of you planning on coming?"

# Back of the Box, chapter 7

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### Back of the Box, chapter 7

“Well, he’s officially gone.” Granddad scratched his chin, shrugging as he stuffed his phone back into his jacket pocket. “I talked to every bozo worth his weight at the DOD. And nothing — he didn’t even leave a single scrap of evidence that he ever existed at all, even in that god forsaken dorm of his.”

Dad fidgeted uncomfortably with his glasses as he leaned back on his palms, bracing himself on the edge of the counter. Mom snaked her arm around his lower back comfortingly, giving him a little squeeze.

Jordan was sitting at the table, a cup of coffee sitting untouched in front of him and growing colder by the second. But he couldn’t get himself to even take a sip — he couldn’t get himself to do anything at all.

Because this whole thing had been an absolute shitshow.

And it had been entirely his fault.

He had made a serious mistake when he neglected to tell his parents about Jon, and an even bigger one when he thought he could handle a Luthor on his own. Not only did he almost get himself killed, but he gave Al enough time to clear out of the dorm, and completely out of society all together.

When they regrouped at the farmhouse, all it took was one stern look from Mom and everything came pouring out of Jon as if she had opened the floodgates. Hearing the entire story this way, spoken with such openness for the very first time, surprised even Jordan. He hadn’t realized that Jon had been struggling with his powers for over a year already, and had put in an exorbitant amount of effort to keep it all under the wraps for the entire time.

“We really should get you to the fortress,” Dad had said.

“See, this is *exactly* why I didn’t tell you!!” Jon exclaimed. “I knew you were going to do this. I’m *fine*, the last thing I need is to be examined by holo-Grandma in Atlantis or whatever—“

Dad sighed. “Jon, it could be dangerous. We don’t know how much solar energy your cells have been absorbing, or the level of control you currently have over your powers.”

“Well, I *do* know I have enough control to save someone’s ass—“

Dad’s eyes widened at that.

Jordan rolled his eyes. “And to be spotted doing it, dumbass.”

And then the rest of the story followed after that. Eventually Dad and Mom were both glaring at them, their arms crossed over their chests, until Granddad finally arrived, throwing his heavy briefcase onto the floor and immediately launching into his in-depth investigation into Alexander Luthor Junior.

Once the focus shifted over to Al, everything else seemed minor in comparison, especially in the light of the fact that he had up and vanished all together.

But people didn’t just vanish. He was out there somewhere, biding his time until he could find an opportunity to strike again...

And Jordan had no doubt that next time, Al would be even more prepared, and he would be a much more imposing and difficult opponent to beat—

If they managed to beat him at all.

Jordan had a funny feeling that Al would ultimately be a thorn in his side for a very, *very* long time.

“I’m sorry this happened,” Jon said. “It was a total mess and I trusted him when I shouldn’t have. I messed up pretty badly.”

“That’s not even the issue, Jon,” Mom said. “Luthors are sneaky, they’re sly. Trust me, I’ve been hoodwinked by Luthor more times than I can remember. That’s not where you went wrong — where either of you went wrong.”

She took a deep breath. “I just want you to remember something — both of you. Your Dad and I are here for you — always. And it is *so* important that you’re honest with us. So please. Next time — just tell us what’s going on. Tell us the truth. Don’t hide something like this from us, even if your Dad can be a little annoying about it.” She glanced at Dad through the corner of her eyes.

“What?” Dad asked.

Mom rolled her eyes. “And I’ll work on that with him, that’s not something you need to worry about. Ever. I don’t ever want you to feel uncomfortable coming to us with any problem or for any reason. Okay?”

Jon stared at her for a moment, then nodding. “Okay.”

“Whenever you’re ready, let me know, and I’ll bring you to the fortress,” Dad said. “We can even do some training—“

Mom elbowed Dad in the ribs.

“Uh, I mean,” he stammered, “never mind...”

A few minutes later, Jordan suddenly heard the ground cracking in California and Dad immediately flew off to address it. And then, two minutes later, Jordan heard a shriek coming from the UK, followed by the sound of a helicopter falling precipitously out of the sky...

Jordan didn't even glance at Jon before he disappeared in a rush of wind. He managed to make it across the ocean so quickly that he caught the helicopter with plenty of time to spare, still hovering a good forty feet off the ground, with the belly of the helicopter resting on the palms of his hands.

But as the onlookers down below started cheering for him, applauding, and calling his name —

Suddenly he wondered what the hell he was even doing.

He wasn't good enough for this — for any of this. He was a fake, an imposter, and such a huge screw up that he had almost led to his own brother's demise...

As well as his own.

As he descended slowly in the air he felt himself falling deeper and deeper into a pit of despair...

And by the time he finally placed the helicopter on the ground he was completely lost in its depths.

He saw a police officer trotting in his direction but he couldn't even look at him — he couldn't look at any of them...

So he shot back into the clouds, disappearing into the sky above.

---

Jordan spent a lot of time in his room after that.

Sure, he responded to emergencies, just as he always did. But his heart just wasn't in it anymore. Every single time he would question every move he made, riddled in self doubt and wondering why anyone would allow him to intervene at all. As time went on he became more and more convinced that sooner or later he would end up stepping down from the mantle all together — and he hedged his bets on sooner.

Of course, all of Jon's excited chatter about his impending entrance into the world as the Blur, Superman's second, superpowered son and the world's newest champion, contributed significantly. Somehow, Jon was confident, shockingly so, and over time Jordan realized that Jon's entrance might be a perfect time to bow out.

He really wished he could just disappear under his covers and be left entirely alone, but Sarah seemed determined not to let that happen. Though she wasn't bombarding him with texts she

definitely contacted him fairly regularly, giving him gentle nudges to try to coax him back into the world.

**Sarah Cortez** : Hey, sorry you were busy the other day, do you want to come over tonight? We can stream that new Batman movie about the Joker — I heard it got horrible reviews, should be awesome.

Jordan didn't even know what to respond anymore. He was running out of excuses — not that Sarah really bought any of them.

**Jordan** : Sorry, I can't. I have to study.

**Sarah Cortez** : BULLSHIT, Jordan. Just come. I'm worried about you.

**Jordan** : please don't worry about me. I'm fine. I promise.

There was no way she bought it, but she usually let it go after that.

And so, somehow, Jordan dragged himself through the monotony of life, punctuated by sheer terror as he stumbled through saves he didn't even want to attend to. He knew his time as Superboy was numbered, and he found himself counting down to the day that his family had decided would be Jon's official entrance.

And then, finally, the day was here. Jordan watched on the small TV in the kitchen, enraptured by the sight of his father, clad in his widely recognized red and blue suit, as he calmly addressed an audience of reporters at a press conference at the White House. Until, suddenly, there was a bright, blue blur—

And there he was.

The Blur.

Jordan's super hearing picked up on a collective gasp, emanating throughout the entire world. Hundreds of millions of people were watching the press conference on live TV, which was simultaneously broadcast on tens of thousands of TV channels and websites.

Jon's suit was very different from Jordan's or his Dad's. Though he, too, wore a large S on his chest, his suit was a solid, royal blue, and he had decided to forgo a cape all together. In

addition, much unlike Superman and Superboy before him, the Blur was wearing a mask strapped securely across his face.

Jon leaned towards the microphone, grinning from ear to ear, confident and determined. He was not only ready for this — he seemed to be genuinely thrilled.

Jordan pinched the bridge of his nose as he continued watching. Great... let him take the job. One less thing for his screwed up twin to mismanage...

“Good afternoon,” Jon said, Jordan hearing his voice echoing on millions of TV screens around the globe. “I’m the Blur. And I just want to say what a privilege it is to be here today, addressing the world for the very first time...”

Jordan felt his phone vibrating in his pocket. He tried to ignore it, but it only continued, and it was starting to drive him a little crazy...

And then, before he knew it, his phone was out and in the palm of his hand.

He noticed immediately that he had about a dozen messages from Sarah, and he knew he probably should look at them, but he didn’t feel like actually addressing his feelings about all of this as she probably wanted him to. So, instead, he found his finger drifting over to Reddit.

He knew it was a mistake, but he couldn’t stop himself, and then, before he knew it, he was opening the Superboy subreddit. He didn’t know what he expected, truthfully — maybe a bunch of posts about how excited people were that there was finally a better alternative to Superboy, maybe a post wondering if Superboy would finally go back to where he came from, or maybe a post talking about how much hotter the Blur was (this was the internet, after all).

But that’s not what was there at all.

**r/Superboy**

u/justdonuts

**Welcome to The Blur!**

*News*

As the entire world now knows, Superboy is officially no longer the only son of Superman! This news is pretty groundbreaking and exciting, see photos from the press conference below...

u/kryptonforever

## **Superboy appreciation thread**

### *Discussion*

As the news of the Blur seems to be overwhelming every conversation, I just wanted to stop and talk about how amazing Superboy is. We are so incredibly lucky to have him — and I only hope the Blur can even come close to living up to his example. Here is a list of just a dozen of Superboy's most impressive moments from the past year...

u/Criptoknight

## **Will the Blur be as dependable as Superboy?**

### *Discussion*

As excited as everyone seems to be, I can't help being anxious about it. We already know that Superboy is an incredible asset, as he has proven to us over and over in the past year...

Intrigued and confused, Jordan clicked the link, opening the post to read it further.

u/Criptoknight

## **Will the Blue be as dependable as Superboy?**

### *Discussion*

As excited as everyone seems to be, I can't help being anxious about it. We already know that Superboy is an incredible asset, as he has proven to us over and over in the past year. But how do we know that this new superhero will be the same? Sure, he's the son of Superman, but we have already learned that Superman's other son is completely different than he is (but no less incredible). I have to say, I'm nervous. The Blur is a total unknown, and he's been hiding for too long.

## **IamSuperboy**

I definitely hear you, u/Criptoknight. We already learned the hard way five years ago with Morgan Edge and his cronies how dangerous Kryptonian powers can be in the wrong hands.



There definitely is good reason to be nervous. Honestly, Superman and Superboy were handling the world just fine on their own, and I would vastly prefer it if it stayed that way.

### **Criptoknight**

I agree. Superboy was a force from his first day on the job. He always struck me as incredibly genuine, in a way that even Superman couldn't match. But this "Blur?" He feels as fake as fake can get.

### **IamSuperboy**

I know. That smile he had at the press conference worries me. It couldn't have felt any faker. Superboy never pretends like that, we always know how he feels — and I actually appreciate that we do.

Jordan frowned. He never could have anticipated a response like this. It was hard to believe anyone appreciated him at all...

### **ToBoldlyGo612**

Look, guys, Superboy isn't all he's cracked up to be. He always looks so nervous, and he screws up all the time. Also, the Blur seems pretty awesome. And I can tell he's not fake. He's there for the right reasons — I know he is.

The downvotes came in so fast that Jordan actually started worrying about his karma.

### **Criptoknight**

You're clearly trolling right now, u/ToBoldlyGo612. Lay off or I'm going to report you.

In contrast, Criptoknight's response was upvoted in a storm.

Jordan's eyes widened as he toggled back to the main page of the subreddit.

u/SqueakyBruce

## **Superboy remains hottest superhero in the world**

### *Discussion*

I know I suggested in a previous post that the Blur might be hotter than Superboy, but I take that all back and more. Now that we've actually seen the Blur, Superboy is undoubtedly the hottest. Of course, the Blur isn't too terrible looking himself...

Jordan didn't click that one. Suddenly he couldn't take Reddit anymore and he closed it, watching as yet another notification from Sarah popped up on the screen. He sighed — he couldn't ignore her forever.

**Sarah Cortez** : I know you're probably going through hell. You can't fool me, Jordan Kent. And you're avoiding dealing with it, which, for the record, is very unhealthy.

**Sarah Cortez** : But I'm not your psychologist. I'm not your Mom. I'm not going to force you to face all of this, even if I probably should.

**Sarah Cortez** : I promise I won't. Listen — just come to Met U. We'll go on a walk. That's it.

**Sarah Cortez** : I just want to see you. Please, Jordan, don't ignore me.

Jordan stared at her messages, which finally stopped pouring in, as if she were waiting for a response.

And then he sighed.

**Jordan** : Ok

**Sarah Cortez** : Jordan!!!! OMG, thank god, I didn't think you'd ever respond!!!

**Sarah Cortez** : I'm so worried about you. Are you ok??

**Jordan** : Look, Sarah, I'm just not ready to talk about this.

**Jordan** : Just a walk. Ok?

**Sarah Cortez** : Right. Ok. Sorry, Flyboy. 🧑♀️

When he finally got to Met U a few minutes later and emerged from behind the tall science building, pushing his glasses back against his eyes, he spotted Sarah waiting for him on a bench along the walkway. She flashed him a small grin as she waved to him a little too eagerly and he sighed, taking a deep breath as he pushed his feet forward.

He didn't know if he could do this. He really didn't. All he wanted was to retreat back under his covers and hide away from the world yet again...

But then he suddenly felt a warm breeze blow across his face. Once again the weather was perfect, and he could feel the pull to just be present in the outdoors, if for no other reason than to enjoy the unusually perfect day. He glanced around, noticing just how many students were picnicking on blankets, sitting under trees with their laptops open on their knees, and just wandering around campus, with no apparent destination in mind. It was one of those days...

And as Sarah approached him, slipping her hand right into his, suddenly he wanted nothing more than to spend it exactly like this. He felt butterflies fluttering around in his stomach, almost as if this whole scene had been ripped right out of a romance novel.

And then he gave her hand a small squeeze.

Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed her mouth curving into a slight grin; and then, a moment later, *they* were the ones strolling around with no real destination.

And it felt absolutely perfect.

They meandered around campus like this for a while, not saying a single word. But they didn't even need to anymore; they were so comfortable with each other, so content in each other's company, that their silence wasn't even slightly awkward. Instead, it was serene.

But then Sarah suddenly veered off the path, heading straight for the student center.

Jordan raised his eyebrows. "Going somewhere?"

"Oh, um, yeah. Just to the market," Sarah replied, her cheeks flushing.

There was a small market nestled inside the student center, conveniently located for students who suddenly realized they needed a cup of instant soup, a bag of chips, or a bottle of soda — that sort of thing.

“You know, I’m happy to pick up anything you need from a regular supermarket,” Jordan offered. “The prices are probably ridiculously high here — it’s not like they have any competition.”

But Sarah just ignored him, now starting to drag him through the entrance of the student center. It was pretty empty inside the building, probably due to the sheer multitude of students who were choosing to be outside instead; and then she veered to the right and straight through the front door of the market.

“Sarah,” Jordan whispered as he glanced at some of the prices. “Seriously, this place is price gouging. Just give me a list and I’ll grab it all from Walmart—“

Sarah’s finger was suddenly on his lips. He stared at her, shocked by her audacity.

“Quiet, Flyboy,” she murmured, her eyes blazing.

Jordan snapped his mouth shut, suddenly entranced...

And then he started following her, getting more and more intrigued by the second, as she weaved past people and through the store. She acted like she knew exactly where she was going, and she didn’t even hesitate before she turned another corner—

And veered right into the cereal aisle.

Jordan blinked several times, confused for a moment—

But then his eyes landed on a very obvious, bright orange box...

“Oh, no...” Jordan muttered.

But Sarah’s eyes were glittering like crystals as she stepped forward, mesmerized, her lips spreading into a wide grin.

She reached for the orange box, but Jordan was too taken off guard and stunned to even think of stopping her. Her hand slipped out of his as she leaned towards it, and she yanked it right off the shelf, staring at it...

And Jordan’s eyes immediately snapped towards the floor.

“Oh god...” Jordan said as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Jordan, I can’t believe you didn’t tell me about this. I only discovered it by accident the other day when I came in here looking for some microwave popcorn—“

“About the most mortifying thing I’ve ever done?” he somehow got himself to say.

“Seriously??” He didn’t even look at her — there was no way he possibly could. “I don’t even know what they were thinking when they asked me, I’m like the last person in the entire world who deserves something like this—“

“Mortifying?” Sarah interrupted. “Jordan, what are you talking about??” She paused, almost as if she were shocked by his words. And then she slowly took his hand again. “But as far as deserving it — oh, Jordan... of course you deserve it...”

Jordan finally looked up at her, expecting her to be joking—

But she wasn’t. She was serious.

And she was staring at him, deep into his eyes, and with such incredible intensity that Jordan couldn’t look away.

“You’re incredible, Jordan. That’s the truth. And the world knows it, I’ve seen all the evidence of it, there really is no doubt. So whatever self-doubt you’ve apparently been experiencing lately — trust me, the world doesn’t share those feelings...”

She paused, and somehow her gaze burrowed even deeper, until it was coming dangerously close to his soul.

“And neither...” Sarah said, taking a deep breath as she mustered the courage to continue. “Neither do I. Jordan, what you’ve done — what you’ve always done — it’s nothing short of amazing. I can’t help it — I’m blown away by you. And... I love you.”

Jordan peered down at the box, which was still resting nonchalantly in her hand.

“I don’t know what you’re thinking, really. And I don’t know if any of what I just said will be enough. But I—“

“It is,” Jordan said. He jumped, startled by his own words—

But then he realized that they were true. They were actually true.

Sarah was all he needed. And her love would get him through — because didn’t it always?

“I love you too,” Jordan said as he reeled her in and pulled her against his body. “And believe me — your words mean more than I can even say.”

“I meant them,” Sarah replied. “They’re all true...”

Jordan nodded, then taking the box from her hand, glancing down at it in wonder.

“It really is great,” Sarah insisted.

Jordan raised his eyebrows, and then he carefully placed the box back onto the shelf. Someone would inevitably stroll by at some point, spotting the box out of the corner of their eye, and then they would feel inexplicably inspired by it. They might even end up buying it so they could experience that feeling all over again, and from the comfort of their own dorm, using it as a source of inspiration over and over again...

And somehow Jordan was fine with that. He was comfortable, he was content — and it was all because of Sarah.

“I know you don’t want to talk about it,” Sarah finally said. “But just know — I’m here. And if you’re worried that you might not be able to—“

“I really, *really* don’t want to talk about it,” Jordan replied, shaking his head. “But don’t worry — I’m not going anywhere...”

Jordan’s eyes widened as he suddenly realized this — and then he realized that he was officially stuck. He couldn’t even imagine leaving the mantle as Superboy anymore—

Nor did he feel particularly heartbroken about it.

He was Superboy, through and through, and no matter what other crap was going on in his life, that was never going to change.

He shrugged, then squeezing Sarah into the crook of his arm. He bent towards her hair, letting his lips brush softly against it.

“Let’s get out of here,” Jordan suddenly whispered.

Sarah didn’t hesitate, grinning in response. “Anywhere in particular?”

Jordan shrugged again. It really had been a while since they had done this — but suddenly the destination didn’t even matter. All that mattered was this girl being there right along with him.

“How about,” Jordan said, his voice low and a mere hush of a sound. “How about — the sky.”

Sarah didn’t respond at first, and Jordan felt his heart start racing in nervousness. But then she craned her neck upwards, and as her lips skated by his ear he felt his heart speed up even more — but this time it had nothing to do with nerves...

“The sky?” she repeated. “Oh, flyboy... take me up.”

## Chapter End Notes

Just an epilogue left after this. It’s already written so it’ll go up tomorrow. 😊 thanks so much for sticking with me through this whole thing, I hope you’ve been enjoying it!

# Back of the Box, epilogue

## Chapter Notes

This is just an epilogue. If you didn't notice, I left a tiny piece of the story unattended to — but what you didn't realize is that I actually did that intentionally. 🤪 AI attempted to out Jon and Jordan on Reddit via a post, but Sam managed to block it before it caused any damage.

Or so we thought...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## Epilogue

Even after all these years, Jimmy was always given the crappy assignments. He was given the ones no one else wanted to go near, the ones that were guaranteed to end in dead ends, or in tiny sidebars buried deep inside the paper, at best.

For a while he thought that Mr. White must have a grudge against him. Even as the years went by, and Jimmy slowly became one of the most experienced reporters in the bullpen, nothing changed. He had hoped it would when Mr. White finally retired and Sam Foswell came in, bright-eyed and energetic and full of fresh, new ideas.

But, unfortunately for Jimmy, one of those ideas was not reinventing Jimmy Olsen.

He sat at his computer, his eyes starting to glaze over, as he started sorting through some of the back avenues he had learned to search when looking for a story. It never really amounted to anything, he already knew it wouldn't...

And yet, he had to try.

He hopped onto Reddit, where he knew there would be absolutely nothing of note, and headed straight to r/news—

When suddenly he saw a flash of a headline, which disappeared just as quickly as he had spotted it.

He blinked. Maybe he had imagined it...

He scrolled up and down, searching fruitlessly for the words that may have never been there at all...

But they WERE there. He was sure of it.

Moments later he had his phone slapped against his ear, as he waited for his old buddy and former college roommate to answer his phone.

“Hey, Jimmy! Woah, you’re the last person I expected to hear from today. It’s been a while—hasn’t it. Maybe even years—“

Jimmy shook his head. He didn’t have time for this.

“Hey, Ryan. Yeah. Listen,” he said, skipping the niceties. “I have a weird question for you...”

Back in college, Ryan had been known as a huge computer geek, a whiz at cracking into any system, no matter how seemingly impervious it was to hackers. There was never a system he couldn’t get into. Never.

And Jimmy knew— if Ryan couldn’t figure this out, no one could...

“I was wondering if you could help me with something. It’s something I’m working on for the Planet, you know how it is...”

Jimmy trailed off, waiting for a response.

“Oh, I see how it is. I don’t hear from you for what— five years? Ten? And then you appear out of nowhere and reach out — why? Because you need something. You couldn’t even ask me how my kids are doing first—“

Jimmy’s heart fell. “Uh, look, I mean, um, Ryan, I’m sorry, man—“

But then Jimmy heard a low chuckle emanating from the speaker of his phone.

“Seriously, man, I’m just teasing. I mean, of course I will. Anyway, I think you earned it after what you did for me back in ninety nine.” He laughed. “So... what do you have for me?”

Jimmy let out a huge sigh in relief, which prompted a deep guffaw in response.

And Jimmy went on to describe what he saw on Reddit — or thought he might have seen, anyway...

“Don’t worry, Jimbo, I’m on it,” Ryan said as his fingers clacked rapidly across his keyboard. “If it was ever there, even for a millisecond — I’ll dig it up for you...”

Jimmy waited for what seemed like hours, and his mind was soon spiraling in a thousand directions. He started tapping his foot on the floor anxiously, and then that wasn’t even enough, so he started squirming in his seat...

And soon enough time had gone by that Jimmy started to become convinced that he had entirely invented the whole thing. Ryan was inevitably going to come up blank, because there had been nothing for him to find in the first place...



But then his phone suddenly dinged as an email came in.

His eyes widened as he refreshed his email, seeing a brand new message from Ryan sitting right there, ready for him to peruse.

“Ok, it’s done,” Ryan finally said. “It was really a scrambled mess, almost as if someone with a lot of experience in this stuff got involved. Is that possible?”

Frankly, Jimmy had no idea.

“Look, I’m going to be honest with you, man, I didn’t read it,” Ryan said. “And I’m not sure I want to. This has FBI written all over it — or maybe even the DOD — and I’m not going anywhere near any of that. I have too much at stake with my job — and with my family.”

Jimmy raised his eyebrows. “Uh, yeah, of course.”

“But best of luck to you. I really mean that. Oh — and it’s probably better if we never had this conversation.”

“Uh, right—“

And Ryan suddenly hung up with an abrupt click.

Jimmy’s stomach started churning as he stared at the message, still sitting in his inbox unread. Ryan’s response to all of this had been cryptic and a little disturbing, and part of him wondered what he was getting into...

He thought about it — and it occurred to him that he should probably just delete it. There was no way this was going to end well...

But it was thinking like that that had made his career so stagnant in the first place. He was very aware of that.

He needed to fight this impulse to be forever mediocre. He needed to fight it with every possible bit of strength that he could muster. He needed to live up to the famous, accomplished journalists who had walked through these halls, and who he had grown to know and admire over the years of working here. Journalists like the legendary Lois Lane and Clark Kent, whose shoes were so hard to fill that their absences were still palpable even years after their departure.

So finally, taking a deep breath, he clicked the email...

His eyes widened as they scanned the title, and as he made his way down the body of the post his eyes continued to widen even further...

**r/Superman**

u/theSource

## **Superboy and the Blurs' Identities Revealed**

*News*

Over the past few weeks, Reddit, as well as the internet as a whole, has been spiraling with news of a mysterious new superhero lurking in the shadows. Many have questioned if this individual even exists at all.

But I can assure you all that yes, he absolutely does.

For this individual has now been identified, as has his more famous brother, revealing the most startling truth of all:

Both Superboy and the Blur have been hiding in our midst, masquerading as normal humans, and have been hoodwinking us all into thinking they are mere college students.

My friends, here it is, the ultimate truth:

Superboy and the Blur are actually Jordan and Jonathan Kent, twin sons of Lois Lane and Clark Kent.

Which leads me to my even larger revelation.

After all these years, and two decades of mystery, the ultimate truth has come to light:

Superman has a secret identity.

And that identity is no other than Clark Kent.

(This has been crossposted to r/news, r/Superboy, r/superheroes, and r/krypton)

It couldn't be true. There was no way...

Except for the fact that it completely and totally made sense.

It really, REALLY did. And it explained SO many of the odd moments that he had witnessed over the years...

Maybe part of him always knew...

And then he realized — this was it. The moment of a lifetime, the moment that he would look back on as the turning point of his entire career. It would be with this story that he finally

clawed his way out of obscurity, finally achieving the goals that he had been dreaming of for over twenty years in this business.

It wouldn't take much. He had all the evidence he needed. And Foswell would lap it all up, throwing it right onto the front page in big, bold letters with Jimmy's byline right underneath it.

He stared at the email. Really stared at it, marveling at its sheer power and enormity...

And then, without hesitating, he pressed on the tiny, gray trash can in the corner of the screen...

And he watched, right before his eyes, as the email disappeared.

Just to be sure he headed straight to his trash. The email was still there, but it wouldn't be for long...

He emptied his trash, supremely confident that it was truly gone forever.

He then continued to stare forward at his computer — but this time his eyes weren't glazing over.

Because, after all this time, the world made sense. The world finally and completely made sense. And he knew now that he, Jimmy Olsen, had truly been a part of keeping it that way, despite the enormous sacrifice that he had to make along the way...

He closed his eyes. "Good luck, C.K.," he muttered softly under his breath. "And I'll see you later, I'm sure... in the skies..."

## Chapter End Notes

Thanks so much for sticking with me through this whole thing!!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!