



**SUPERMAN**  
RETURNS

## ***CHAPTER 1***

### ***New beginnings***

BOOM! An earthquake shook the planet Krypton.

Jor-El and his wife, Lara, stood looking at their baby son, Kal-El.

‘Quick, Lara! Soon Krypton will be destroyed!’ the man said, ‘We must save our son. We must send him to the planet Earth. He will find a new home and be safe.’

‘Why Earth, Jor-El?’ asked Lara. ‘He will be different from everyone there. Life will be very difficult for him.’

‘The sun will help him,’ Jor-El replied. ‘It will help him to fly and to move fast. It will help to protect him.’

‘He will be all alone,’ Lara said.

Jor-El put the baby on a little bed, in a spaceship made of crystal. ‘He will not be alone. He will never be alone,’ he said.

He showed Lara a large crystal. Then he put the crystal on the bed next to the baby and closed the spaceship door.

The spaceship carried the baby far into space. ‘Sleep my little Kal-El,’ his father’s voice whispered from the crystal. ‘This crystal contains everything I have learned, everything I feel for you. You will travel far, but we will never leave you.’

And while Kal-El slept, Krypton exploded behind him.



And so Superman grew up on Earth. His name was Clark Kent. He tried to lead a normal life as a reporter for

a newspaper. But, it wasn't easy for him because he was also secretly Superman, protector of the world. He felt different from everyone else and he felt alone. He hated lying and living a false life. He couldn't even tell Lois Lane, the woman who he loved. He wanted to tell her the truth, but that was impossible.

Then one day, there was a message from space. It seemed to be a call for help from the destroyed planet Krypton. Superman decided to go back to Krypton. He wanted to help and he also wanted to understand who and what he was. He only told one person he was going away: his Earth mother, Martha Kent. He thought that he would only be away for a few months.

He flew towards the sun to get warmth and light. He had to be strong for his journey to Krypton. Then he climbed into his crystal spaceship and left the Earth. The spaceship was programmed to wake him when he arrived. Once again he slept as he travelled through space.

Superman was dreaming of Krypton when the computer woke him. He felt strange. Where was he?



Suddenly he remembered. 'Krypton,' he whispered excitedly. 'At last.' He flew closer. He looked and listened. He saw that only parts of the planet remained. They were glowing with a scary green light. In the explosion, the crystals of his planet had become kryptonite. Kryptonite could kill Superman.

He felt very ill. His body hurt everywhere.

'Out!' he shouted at his spaceship. 'Away!'

The spaceship moved away from the planet.

'How long have I been away from Earth?' he wondered.



'Time information!'

he said to the spaceship. The information appeared.

'No! That's impossible!' he thought. He hadn't been away for months. He'd been away for *years*.

Suddenly something big hit the spaceship. Quickly he looked out of the window. He had flown into a kryptonite storm!

He fell on the floor, holding his stomach.

'Earth!' he whispered with difficulty. 'Return to Earth! ... Home!'



'Alien!' Martha Kent said. She looked up from the game

of Scrabble.\* 'That's ... seventy four. Now I've got 409 and you've got 280.'

She stopped suddenly. She heard a strange sound. 'I know that sound,' she thought. 'Clark!'

WHAM! A crash shook the house.

'What was that?!' shouted Ben Hubbard. He quickly picked up the phone. 'We need to call the police!'

'It's nothing serious, Ben. It's just a meteorite. They sometimes land here,' said Martha. She took the phone from him. 'Listen, it's late. Thanks for dinner. I'll see you tomorrow evening.'

She walked to the door with him. He got into his truck and drove off. Then she quickly put on her jacket, climbed into her truck and drove off.

When she saw a large hole in the road, she stopped and got out. With her lamp she could see small pieces of broken crystal. She walked into the field ... and there was the crystal spaceship.

'Clark!' she called. 'Son!'

'Mom,' he whispered. And he fell into her arms.



\* Scrabble is a board game. You use the letters to make words.



In a very big house in a rich part of the city of Metropolis, an old woman was dying. She smiled at the blond man who was sitting next to her bed.

'I know you're a good man,' she said. 'When I helped you to get out of prison you promised to take care of me. And you *have* taken care of me.'

The blond man smiled and gave her a large piece of paper. He put a pen in her hand.

'That's why I'm going to give you everything,' the old woman continued.

She started to write her name on the paper: *Gertrude Vander ...* Her eyes closed and she died.



'No!' the man thought. 'Not now! Not when I'm so near!'

He took her hand and finished writing her name: *Gertrude Vanderworth*. He took the paper and opened the bedroom door. The woman's son and his family were waiting. The man took the blond wig from his head and threw it at the woman's son.

'You can keep that!' Lex Luthor laughed as he walked towards the front door. 'Everything else is mine.'