



It had been a week since the signal at the North Pole had called Captain Future to Earth. It had been a week since the System's President, James Carthew, had sent the brilliant young man to the newly discovered ruins upon Venus. Only one member of the archaeological team that had stumbled into that long forgotten place had come back. He had spoken of hidden traps and ancient dangers.

After a second team had vanished, the archaeological committee of Venus had beseeched the President to ask Curtis Newton, the man known to the Solar System as Captain Future, to solve the riddle of the *Ruins of Sudden Death*.

Now –a week later– the scientific wizard had returned to Earth, bringing with him many artefacts that would keep the archaeological community occupied for years to come. The best archaeologists of Earth had praised the young Earthman when he had met them in the President's office to report the at least partial success of the mission. After three hours crammed with questions the scientists were shooed away by North Bonnel, the President's secretary. Finally they had let the tired man and his crew go.

The dashing Captain and his unique companions were accompanied to his swift space ship atop the government tower by the beautiful secret agent Joan Randall. The girl and Otho, the android, were trying to cheer up the Captain, but thus far had had no success.

"I should have been more careful. I should have placed more support beams, especially since I knew that the floor in the *Chamber of Inscriptions* wasn't as stable as the rest of the ruins," Captain Future mused.

"Lad, setting up the beams probably would have upset the balance earlier. We saved more than half of the tablets and have pictures of almost all of the rest," answered Professor Simon Wright.

"Yes, Captain, it would have taken Superman to save every last of them," consoled the Earth girl.

"Superman? Who is that?"

"Don't you know Superman? He is faster than a bullet, invulnerable, and can fly like a bird. Every woman wants to be his Lois."

Seeing the blank expression of her hero and his inhuman comrades a blushing Joan continued:

"You have access to the public information network? Take a look. There should be quite a few entries."

The five had reached the roof, but only four boarded the *Comet*, the fastest ship in the solar system. The young secret agent girl stayed behind and watched the tear-drop shaped ship gracefully rise into the skies.

A month went by.

Night had fallen over the sleepless City of Great New York. Joan Randall was sitting in her apartment reading the latest security bulletins. She became aware of reading the same sentence for the third time without understanding what it was saying. Something was gnawing on her concentration.

After a few moments the secret agent ace had pinpointed the problem. Little clicking sounds from her window kept distracting her. She drew back the curtains.

There was a man – in a skin tight, blue dress, red cape and a large

"S" on his chest. Joan stared for a few seconds and then she recognized the man hovering in front of her. Curtis Newton!

The astonished girl opened the window to allow her nightly visitor to enter.

"Good Evening, Joan," came the unmistakable voice of Captain Future.

"Curtis?"

The grinning dashing young man landed softly just inside the glow of the lamp on a nearby table. His hair had been dyed black.

Joan walked slowly around him, awed by what she saw. He looked very handsome in his usual gray zipper suit, but this ... this ... thing showed off his perfect body in a truly outrageous way.

The young woman came to a stop in front of the Champion of Justice and tried to not let her eyes stray from his.

"Why can you fly? There are no wires! You look amazing! And the cape looks terrific! Although I like your real hair colour better!" exclaimed Joan touching the red cape.

"Thank you, Joan. May I invite you to a flight over New York?"

Wide-eyed the young woman just nodded and took the proffered hand. Curtis Newton-turned-superhero simply picked her up. The agent put shaking arms around the neck of the grinning young man. It took her a few moments before she became aware of the window falling behind and the gentle evening breeze playing with her hair.

Suddenly they shot upward. Joan gave a low scream clutching the Captain's neck tighter. She could feel and hear the laughter coming from her companion.

Curt looked at the many lights spread out beneath him. Joan was cheek to cheek with him and pointed with overjoyed awe to all the landmarks familiar to her.

"It's unbelievable how beautiful New York is. I have seen it so often from the balcony of my apartment and from space ships, but this is just incredible. The stars above and the sea of light beneath. It's perfect. Thank you, Curt."

The man in tights was awarded a little kiss. He had to agree: New

York was beautiful. The weather was nice and his companion delightfully impressed by the ride. Yet, in contrast to the super-powered alien he had read about, Curtis Newton was only a man and after flying Joan around for half an hour, he needed a little rest.

Softly alighting on a skyscraper he set Joan down. The dark-haired girl went to the edge of the roof to take a possessive glance over the metropolis spread out at her feet. Her hero in his outlandish garb stepped behind her and put the large red cape around both of them to keep the night chill away.

Both stood there in silence, revelling in each others presence.

"Joan, this place has a great advantage," he whispered in a mischievous voice, "I'm your only way off this building. You can't get into trouble if you stay here."

He disentangled himself and stepped over the edge to hover a scant two meters away from the secret agent girl. He could see the emotions flicker over her face: surprise – understanding – incredulity – ... – outrage.

"CURTIS NEWTON! You come back here this very instant!"

The unrepentant space farer hovered slightly farther into the night.

"I will not be left behind, wondering whether you are well or in the clutches of some space scum!"

He grinned at the flustered, beautiful girl. A grin that gave way to a shocked expression when he found her in mid-jump and only his fast reflexes allowed him to gather her to his chest, away from the deadly fall to the walkway far beneath.

"JOAN! What were you doing? That was utter insanity!" exclaimed Curtis keeping a tight grip on the girl in his arms.

"I knew that you would catch me. I'm alright," came the quiet voice of the girl and a soothing hand was stroking his hair.

"Don't you *ever* do that again. Never scare me like that again."

*Beep*

"Joan, I'll bring you home now. The batteries are low."

Silence had descended upon them.

Joan was still pondering her jump from the roof. Curtis had been

shaking like a leaf and he appeared to be genuinely panicked. She was sure that with the grip he kept her in he wanted to never let her go, though he quickly returned to his logical old self when the beeping of the batteries distracted him.

A question that had been at the back of her mind for a while now finally demanded an answer.

"Curt? How exactly do you fly?"

"Simon," came the absent-minded reply.

"What!" Joan was shocked. "You keep Simon under that cape."

She tried to twist in his arms and get a peek under the cape, but she was immediately caught in a death grip like the one he had on her earlier after her jump. The blink of an eye later he relaxed somewhat and gave a low chuckle.

"No, I don't have Simon with me. Your Superman remark just made me think how a man could fly without obvious devices keeping him aloft."

He smiled mischievously at her:

"You know, there is already such a man – Simon. His tractor beams allow him to fly quite freely. I spent the last three weeks creating a more powerful, yet much smaller version."

Joan tightened the arms around his neck.

"Oh Curtis! You went through all this trouble just so that I could fly," she cried delightedly.

"Nonsense, Joan. It was no trouble at all and I quickly realized that these large scale tractor beams could be used for many useful things. I fitted them to the *Comet's* system. She is now a lot more manoeuvrable and faster in a planetary atmosphere. We could also have used supports on tractor beams in those Venusian ruins, there would have been no disturbance in static and the fragile floor and the ruins would still be intact."

"So I was just the second thought in all of this," the secret agent said disappointed.

"But Joan, you inspired the beams and there are so many areas where they will make a big difference."

"Being relegated to second place is not something you should tell a

woman. If we weren't this high up, I'd jump out of your arms." She was once again drawn into a vice-like embrace, just as the Captain floated them down to her window.

The moment they were through the window Joan jumped out of his arms and turned her back on him. He uncertainly settled his hands on her shoulders and tried unsuccessfully to turn her around.

"No good-knight kiss for a man who doesn't know, how to properly woo a woman," came Joan's cold goodbye.

Curtis softly kissed her hair and quietly left the way he had come.

After a moment Joan turned to look out of the window and at the luminous moon.

She sighed:

"Oh Captain. You can visit me any time and any way you want, I'd gladly inspire you more often."

*Beep Beep*

*Beep Beep*

Captain Future saw her searching for the sound and drew back into the shadows. He hoped she hadn't seen him hanging next to her window. The beep warned him that the tractor beam batteries were very low.

The young man flew hastily towards the space port. Every time he closed his eyes, he could see the moment when the beautiful young girl had jumped off the skyscraper trusting that he would catch her.

Rarely had he been more afraid.

The wizard of science flew faster.

There was much he had to think about.

2004, Sabina

*Disclaimer: Neither I do own Captain Future and any associated characters nor Superman. I do not derive any kind of profit from this story. Additional characters, places and the story are my idea.*

*Annotations:*

*1. Remember the advice to CF writers: Make the universe consistent, but if need be, use the forgotten ruins upon Venus or so.*

*2. Although the story idea sprang into being after I saw the first Superman movie once again, it has been heavily influenced (tights and all) by the numerous interesting stories the FoLCs created. (FoLCs = Fans of "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman")*

*Once again, I'd like to thank Harraps for her kind help with this story.*