

A Charred Day's Night

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Rated: G

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Summary: The most dangerous place in Metropolis isn't Suicide Slum... it's Lois Lane's kitchen.

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Because we all need a quick, ridiculous comedy every now and then. ;)

I watched in a sort of mute horror as the living room filled with white smoke. I suppose in a way it was a change from what I normally see, namely, flames and even sometimes a small explosion. Clark's always on my case about the risks I take for a front page Daily Planet story, but I'm convinced my terrible cooking skills are going to do me in way before the criminal element finally has its victory over me.

My name is Lois Lane, and I absolutely cannot cook.

Of course, I'd never tell Clark this. He's only been over a handful of times in the past few months that we've seriously been working together, and I've served takeout at every single turn.

Ahem.

That could just as *easily* mean 'lack of time' over 'lack of talent.'

Anyway, the only real person that could possibly give testimony to the most recent mishaps here is Superman, and he's thoughtful enough to keep his mouth shut about the fires he's put out.

Or possibly, he knows I'd kill him.

I'd find a way.

I sighed and waved the smoke out of my face. There was a calculated method to cooking clean-ups, and it was time to get moving.

I cautiously pulled open the little microwave door and poked at the tarnished dinner plate. It was hot, but not burn-worthy if I grabbed it. Oh my God, did the plate start to melt?! I held it up high with one hand and poked at the white remains on the underside. This was a new one on me, and that's saying *a lot*. But it didn't distract me from seeing the real story here which was the charred remains of my dinner—something formerly chicken, although after this disaster, no one would ever believe it. It actually oozed out into burnt lumps, like...like black bacteria dividing. Or the oil spill that crazy environmentalist tried to toss me into last week.

And boy did it SMELL! It's going to take weeks to air this place out. I switched out the offending cooking experiment in my hand for my Lysol can and gave a few sprays in each room. There's nothing quite like covering up one smell with another, and I'm pretty sure after the last year and a half in this apartment, there's a permanent haze hanging overhead. The whole place still smelled like charred remains of I-don't-know-what, but it no longer made my nose cringe in despair.

The smoke, on the other hand, was probably going to be the lingering issue of the night. I stalked around my apartment and threw open all my windows. I know from previous experience it'll be a while before the haze fades from my sight...

Unless...

I covered my eyes and fought back a groan of distress. I cannot possibly call for help for another kitchen mishap. Our city

superhero has logged in enough fire rescues and asphyxiation saves from my residence alone to ear-mark a whole volume if he ever writes an autobiography. Watch it be something like, *The One and Only Year I Spent in Metropolis Due to Lois Lane's Terrible Cooking*. Maybe that's a bit wordy...

A tapping on my living room window shook me out of my thoughts. I didn't have to think twice about who it was. Who else would be hanging out on the side of my building?

"Come on in," I sighed. I diverted my eye contact as Superman stepped into the smoke-filled apartment. I didn't even have to look to know he was fighting back about five different comments at once. But without batting an eye, there was a gust of activity, a blur outside, and suddenly the handy Kryptonian was standing in the living room of my smoke-free apartment with a satisfied expression on his face.

"You could have called, you know," he opened with a smile.

"Well, I didn't want — I mean I couldn't..." I trailed off helplessly.

I tried to formulate a reply, but nothing was coming, mostly due to my horrific embarrassment that a city vigilante will drop what he's doing every time I attempt something in the kitchen. Maybe they've started holding Justice League meetings on my fire escape just for kicks, and this is a weekly inspection.

And then I burst into chuckles. The whole thing was pretty funny, I have to admit. Superman joined me in my laughter, and the ice finally broke for me.

"Thank you," I said with a grin. "It's been kind of a long day, and now with the failed chicken experiment..."

"Kind of a charred day's night?" Superman quipped.

I groaned at the pun. "Are you *sure* you're not channeling Clark?" I demanded. "He went to see some comedian last night and has been cracking one terrible Beatles joke after another all day long, and..."

I continued to speak, but I can tell when my audience fails me, and Superman had the strangest look on his face.

"Are you okay?" I queried. I swear it's like talking to Clark sometimes. I don't think I've finished a tangent since 1992.

"Yeah, I just have to..." He gestured towards the window, but a trace of the odd look on his face still lingered.

"Well, go!" I encouraged. "Go save someone, especially those who can cook. I depend on them for my take-out."

At that, his face broke into a grin, and he nodded at me as he strode towards my living room window. "Right," he agreed. Superman stepped back out onto my fire escape and turned back to me. I'd forgotten I was still holding the Lysol can until he pointed at it and advised in his best superhero voice, "Just don't get that near your next cooking attempt, or else you'll really be Lois in the sky with diamonds."

I opened my mouth in disbelief, and Superman disappeared with a trail of laughter behind him.

He really does know I'd kill him.

But not if my cooking kills me first.

THE END

Author's notes: This one's for Sue, who recently (and by recently, I really mean 'at least three months ago in a feedback thread') asked me where my latest apartment stories were hiding. If anyone's dying to know, the white congealment on the bottom of the plate is what happens when Saran Wrap melts. ;)