

The Man's Undershirt

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Summary: Whoever said Saturday afternoons at the Daily Planet were dull clearly had never worked in the bull pen with Lois Lane.

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Oh boy, about a year ago, Wendy issued this First Lines Challenge:

http://www.lcficmbs.com/ubb/ultimatebb.php?ubb=get_topic;f=3;t=000824.

I laughed hysterically at it, but apparently wrote 3/4s of this fic... and totally forgot about it for about 365 days, until there was a plea for new Archive material. Thank you to my GE and to all of you for putting up with my utter silliness. You're all the only reason I take the time to submit this. ;)

You'll quickly figure this out, but I wrote from Clark's POV, which is something new for me.

"Jimmy, are you wearing a bra?!"

The words rocketed out of my partner's mouth, and I momentarily squeezed my eyes shut at the impending situation that would somehow involve me without my consent. Whoever said Saturday afternoons at the Daily Planet were dull clearly had never worked in the bull pen with Lois Lane.

I think I'm slightly afraid of my partner.

I know, I can bend steel and catch bullets. But I cannot stop the things that come out of Lois Lane's mouth. I'm not even sure *she* can, which is why, on this slow Saturday afternoon, I was sitting at my desk fiddling with my cup of pencils simply waiting for a bomb to drop. For all of the investigative skills Lois has, her people skills aspire just to get into the negative category. Last week she pissed off an anonymous source, and the week before, a government contact cancelled a fax in the middle of processing because she felt the need to share her thoughts on global warming during a conference call.

So when the majority of us failed to find any late-breaking scoops today, I latched onto my pencils. Possibly in anticipation, but mostly in fear. They were a small amount of protection, and just maybe I'd look busy enough to not get sucked into whatever Lois had her teeth in.

"Clark, take a look at this!" Lois called from Jimmy Olsen's desk, where she was hunched over his shoulder.

No such luck.

I stood slowly out of my chair, making the walking process over to the researchers' section take as long as humanly (or inhumanly, I suppose) possible.

"What's up, Lois?" I asked, interested. "What do those financial numbers look like?" Maybe if I could steer the conversation into what we were supposed to be doing, namely, tracking a politician's suspicious campaign money, she'd forget about Jimmy's apparent lingerie.

"Oh, those numbers can wait till later," Lois waved them off. "Doesn't this look like a bra strap?" She pointed at a scrap of cloth underneath Jimmy's sweater, and he glared up at her from

his desk chair.

"Lois, I'm not wearing a *bra!*" Jimmy admonished. "It's a man's undershirt! It's part of the new line in Men's LexWear. You are so behind the times."

I took a hard look at the off-white material underneath his brown sweater. "I don't know, Jim," I finally gave in, as we stood around his desk. "It does look rather... lacy." I cannot believe what a day this has suddenly turned into. Inspecting a colleague's clothing? Thank God, the Chief is on a phone call right now instead of watching our fashion scrutiny. Who's next? Eduardo? Me?! I screeched my thoughts to a halt and felt my chest. Whew. The Suit's still in the dryer.

"Clark, the shirt is puckered so the fabric will breathe, and the manufacturers mixed rayon into the cotton so it's softer and a better fit." Jimmy rationally explained this to me, but honestly, his shirt strap reminded me of the time when I was 8 on the farm and I got punished for stepping on the rhododendrons. Mom assigned me laundry for a whole weekend, and some of her black under things crept into the wash. To this day, I have trouble mentioning unmentionables.

Nonetheless, I'm still the guy who wears underwear on the outside of spandex, so when Lois pulled out her camera phone to start airing Jimmy's man-shirt, or whatever you want to call it, to half the newsroom, I heaved a sigh and prepared to step in. There would be deep ramifications, but with my lightning speed, I plucked the phone out of my partner's hand and slipped it into my pant's pocket. Jimmy slumped in relief, and Lois of course looked ready to kill me with one of my pencils and make it look like an accident. I crossed my arms in my best superhero pose and laid out the options. "Two choices, Lois. We can work on the campaign scandal, or you can come get this phone out of my pocket."

"Oh, really!" Lois scoffed. "I've escaped terrorists. What makes you think I won't jam my hand into your pockets to find that phone?"

I can't believe I got myself into this. "Because...I'm...out of underwear," I confess with minor grit. "Today was supposed to be my laundry day until Myers called in sick."

Lois' determined face was completely erased with a shocked look of defeat. Her line of sight whipped back and forth—at my face, at Jimmy's ridiculous shirt, at my pockets...

"Ugh, Jimmy, what do those numbers look like?"

I grinned in victory. It seemed like my own late-breaking scoop would save the day.

THE END