

My Secret Hero

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Rated: PG

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Summary: When Lois gets into trouble yet again, she realizes who her true hero is.

Author's Note: This is my first LnC fanfic. I wanted to show a bit more of what could have been going through Lois' mind as she starts to come to terms with her feelings for Clark and Superman and what would happen if she found out his secret as these feelings emerge. My main statement is for her to recognize who her real hero is — Clark. Anyway, I hope you enjoy!

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I give up on the Superman fantasy. I mean, I will still have moments when I am in awe of him or grateful to him for getting me out of countless jams ... But I want so much more than just a rescue — well, at least more than a physical rescue. I am in need of a broad shoulder all right, but one to cry on now and then and someone to talk to. I need someone who will always be there for me, not just in the nick of time and for a moment, but someone ...

I am daydreaming at my desk, not realizing until this moment that I am staring right at Clark. He is deep in his work, but a glance up, and he catches my stare. I turn, knowing my cheeks are red with embarrassment. Have I really been daydreaming about *him*? Preposterous! I scoff to myself and quickly turn back to the story, another criminal put behind bars after another mythical feat by Superman.

OK, so hard at work ... [[Jeremy Binder's mastermind scheme came to its rightful demise when, thanks to Superman, authorities discovered his hidden lair under Metropolis' streets.]]

"Lois?" Clark comes over and peers at my work. God, those kind eyes ... why haven't I ever noticed them before?

"Yeah, Clark? One moment, let me just finish." I actually am finished. I just need a moment. Something is niggling in the back of my mind about him. Can Clark be the one who I've been —

"Lois? Perry wants us down at the Mayor's office, pronto. Seems he's giving a press conference about Binder. There might be more to add to the story before it's put to bed."

"Oh? Right, let's go." I smile and get my coat. I don't have time to analyze my emotions too deeply, but I think I'm starting to realize that my partner in crime might mean more to me than just a friend.

As we head down to the Mayor's office, I'm noticing all these little things. He's constantly looking out for me. Getting the door, holding my coat, constantly putting me first. Have I really never noticed it before?

In the cab, I'm completely lost in my thoughts. I should be going over the story, but I can't help thinking ...

"Lois, is something the matter?" he asks.

I blurt out at the exact same time, "Do you want to go to dinner tonight?"

Oh my God, where had that come from? But it is too late. Can I back out at all?

"I mean, you know, we've been working this story for almost a week now. It might be nice to take a break. Or not. It's Friday. You probably already have plans —"

"Lois." He holds my gaze for a minute. I recognize his kind

understanding, and he smiles at my blabbering. "I'd love to go to dinner," he answers softly.

Whew. We're at City Hall. Thank God. I am so embarrassed. We can focus on the story now.

I'm tapping my pencil on my pad, waiting for the conference to start. I'm trying to concentrate on reading my notes from earlier, but all I can think is I've asked Clark on a date. A DATE. Is this nuts? We're best friends — surely this can't be a good idea. But it could be a best friend date, right? Surely that's normal. Best friends of the opposite sex can have dinner. Together. On a Friday night. Nothing untoward about that. Right? I ask myself, knowing full well the answer.

I can't sit still. I can feel Clark looking at me. He knows something's up with me. I just know it.

"Lois? Are you OK?"

"Fine, Clark. Just ready to have this one bagged and tagged, you know?" I say, just a little too caustically. Oh, yeah, I'm in dangerous territory here.

Finally, the Mayor comes out and makes his statement. Nothing earth shattering, but he does name two other accomplices whose mayhem rounds out the story rather nicely. It will be a good tagline to the piece I'm writing.

"Well, that's a wrap. Let's get back to the Planet," I say, walking fast to avoid looking directly at Clark.

We're stopped by the Mayor himself.

He reaches out to shake our hands. "Lois Lane and Clark Kent! So nice to see you two again. Please tell Superman that we appreciate the work he did in taking down Binder. And I hear you two were no slouches either!" he says, winking at us. "You two make quite a team! Metropolis is very proud to have you two ace reporters working at the Planet."

"Thank you, sir," I say.

"Yes, thank you. We're just doing our job. And I'm certain Superman feels the same way. We all do what we can to make the world a safer place." Clark smiles kindly.

Clark is a lot like Superman in some ways — I mean, minus the powers. Clark is always striving for the same principles, the same ideals. If you think about it, he sort of is a Superman who in real life a girl could —

Just then, a thug appears out of the crowd, pointing a gun. Security guards squirrel away the Mayor quickly into his car and get him out of the way. I turn, but Clark has disappeared. Sigh. He probably ran to call in the story.

Just then, blue and red streak the sky. I smile a little. My little girl crush may have dissipated a bit, but I am always glad to see Superman on the scene.

He lands and walks toward the thug, his arms crossed on his chest. He is the only man in the world who can pull off intimidating in spandex. "Put the gun down, now."

The thug doesn't waver. He has a look in his eye that gives me a sick feeling. Something else is going on here.

Superman uses his heat vision to sear the gun out of the man's hand. As he approaches to apprehend him, Superman falls suddenly to the ground. Oh no. The sinking feeling again. Kryptonite.

The man holds up the gruesome green gem and then suddenly looks at me. Wait. Me? What does he want with me?

"Lois Lane," he says in a voice that makes me wish I had another name. "I want Lois Lane to come with me."

"Why?" I ask. Another criminal to deal with. Superman out of sorts. And Clark nowhere to be found ...

"For ransom, of course. You will come with me now." He grabs my arm roughly, pulling out another gun, and then says to the crowd, "If anyone attempts to follow us, Miss Lane dies. City of Metropolis, I will give you my orders within the hour."

So much for worrying about a Friday night date with Clark. It seems I have other plans.

So, another Friday night. Another criminal's lair. This is starting to get old ...

My captor, it turns out, is BFFs with Binder and his crew. He has asked for their release in exchange for my life. The city has until midnight to release them.

I look at the clock. It's seven. I could have been getting ready for dinner with Clark — no matter how awkward or nervous I would have been, it would have been preferable to this. My mind goes to Superman. I've only seen him once affected by Kryptonite, and it was very disturbing indeed. I hope he is going to be all right. I don't understand exactly how it works, but I know if he can get away from it, then he should recover fairly quickly.

Which leads me to my next question. Where would a small-time criminal like this guy even get the stuff? It was kept under lock and key at Star Labs, and though some small stones turn up now and then, this guy would have had to do some heavy searching to find any. He must have friends higher up than I suspect.

I look down at my feet. The bastard had left the Kryptonite under my chair. Just in case Superman tries to come rescue me. It is frustratingly behind my feet, which are bound, and hidden inside the wooden base of the chair. My mouth is covered, so I can't warn Superman if he does try to rescue me. What on earth can I do — can *any* of us do?

I trust Superman will try to rescue me, but I worry about the Kryptonite. Can I get it away from him fast enough if he gets close enough to save me?

7:37 PM. Is anyone doing anything? Where is Clark? I assume he's on the story, one way or another. But I know the city won't release Binder and his gang just because the best reporter in town (if I do say so myself) is being held as ransom.

I sigh. I am a bit worried as to what will happen. But, somehow or another, Superman always rescues me. And should I count on that? Do I have a right to? What if Superman is still incapacitated by the Kryptonite? What if I never get to go on that date with Clark?

The thug who captured me has left me in a tiny stock room. There is a window some five feet above me, but it isn't very wide. If I can manage to —

The window opens. Clark! I am never so happy to see anyone in my life! He barely gets through the frame. Thank God!

He stops, though, about two feet from me. His hand goes to his head, and he soon falls to his knees. What — ?

No, it can't be. Can it? Why is Clark reacting like Superman to the Kryptonite — unless — -Lois, you idiot. Ace reporter, winner of three Kerth awards, and it's taken you over a year to realize Clark *is* Superman!

My breath catches in my throat. In an instant, I see everything clearly: my friend and my rescuer. All those little moments when Clark would dash off with lame excuses but always be there just in time — as Superman — to save the day. And now, I have to save him — somehow.

I throw myself off the chair, trying to roll myself to be able to kick the Kryptonite chair away from Cl — Superman? What do I call him?! My friend, definitely. Clark some days, Superman others.

I forcefully kick both feet at the offending chair, purchasing some distance for Clark from the Kryptonite. I scoot towards him. He's in pain, but he knows I know everything. How could he not? He pulls himself together long enough to use a fizzlely heat ray to break my binds. I'm free. I painfully rip off the duct tape. His eyes plead with mine. [Don't hate me, just help me.] I look at him with compassion. [I could never hate you.]

Plenty of time for talk later. But first things first. I take the Kryptonite and throw it out the window. Clark takes some deep

breaths. I can tell he's feeling slightly better.

"Can you stand?" I ask quietly.

"I think so."

He looks at me, wanting to say something, but there is no time.

"Let's just get out of here."

He's still weak, but Clark — Superman — is strong and moves ahead, ready to handle what's behind door number one.

"I know they left a while ago. But they might be back by now," I say. Words are bubbling under the surface. I still can't believe it. Can the two really be one and the same? It makes sense, really. But I'm torn between laughing at my blindness, wanting to smack Clark — wanting to smack *Superman* — and wanting to get out of there!

Before he opens the door, Clark looks at me apologetically and turns in place, super-speed. He's suddenly the Man of Steel. All I can do is stare. Are you kidding? Unbelievable. I smirk to myself. All those times Clark played the coward to just turn around and play the hero in another guise ... it must have killed him. Now that I know, Clark makes so much more sense. I know he isn't a coward due to all those countless times when he holds his cool until he can run off and be Superman. Even as Clark, he always shows integrity, strength, and goodness.

I quietly watch from the doorway. There's no need for me to intervene. With the Kryptonite out of the way, Superman has no problem dealing with these thugs. I watch him tie them up, intimidate them, and even find out where they got the Kryptonite. Apparently, it was "on loan" from LexCorp. Superm — *Clark* glances at me. Neither of us recall LexCorp having any Kryptonite before ... Well, that will just have to be another story. For now, I have a superhero to sort out.

Superman finishes up, I call the police, and we are out of there in moments.

"Lois? Can, erm, we talk?" he finally says.

"Take me home first." I jump in his arms, knowing he'll catch me, like he always does. And, I hope, always will.

I want to feel him, see him as Superman. And as Clark. I can't quite put the two in my mind as one yet. I feel so safe in his arms. And now, knowing more, I can't help but feel — well, that little girl fantasy has some credibility now. I've always had a thing for Superman, as much as I try to repress it, and I have definitely been falling for Clark. Can I admit that to him? I blush a little and hide my face in his shoulder, thinking about all the times I've mooned over Superman in front of both his personas.

Eventually, we touch down at my place.

"First question."

"All right."

"Why did you come rescue me as Clark?"

"Because of the Kryptonite. I thought I could ... get around it somehow," he answers lamely.

I nod, thinking. I should be angry. I should yell at him for holding out on me. Yell at him for making me feel like an idiot for not figuring it out sooner. But all I can do is think of those times ... those countless times when Clark was my friend — and my partner — and Superman was my rescuer, always there just in the nick of time. How can I be mad when he has saved my life so many times over?

And here he has saved me yet again. As Clark this time. Risking everything to come after me. Knowing that Kryptonite could still be present. I look directly at him. I can see it now — how much he cares. God, what a fool I've been!

"Um ... Clark?"

"Yeah?"

"About that date ..."

THE END