

The Yodeler's Song

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Rated: PG for some language

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Summary: Perry White thinks about how he figured out Superman's real identity. This story is set at the beginning of Season 3 after "We Have A Lot To Talk About."

Disclaimer: This story was inspired by the characters created by Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster and portrayed on the *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* television series developed by Deborah Joy LeVine. Many thanks to the writers on the show, especially John McNamara and Dan LeVine, from whom I quote directly. This story is entirely my own.

I lean back in my chair and smile. Yes, sirree, they hadn't made me Editor because I can yodel.

The rush of discovery, the thrill of knowing I'm right ... And I know I am right – not that I have the cold hard facts I insist my reporters have before they run with a story. But I am not going to publish what I know. This is a great feeling, having worked out a puzzle, knowing that this old Hound Dog still has it.

How did I work out that Clark Kent is Superman? It was the little bits and pieces at first. They both arrived in Metropolis around the same time. They both have brown hair and eyes. I guess they are roughly the same height, but that's been hard to prove because I have never, and I mean never, seen them together. How could I have?

Clark would rush off to phone the police – not the best trait for a reporter, leaving the scene of action, but always admirable – and Superman would soon arrive to save the day. Then Clark would return only after Superman had flown off. Yet – and this was the curious part – Clark always had the story, which inevitably included a quote or two from the Man in Blue.

I received most of this information secondhand, piece by piece, over the two years I had known Clark, from my other reporters. I need to leave the office more often, I realize. I had only verified it myself the other day while looking out the *Daily Planet* window. Clark sure has the art of distraction down to a T. The flash of that blue, red, and yellow costume sure makes it hard to look anywhere else. It took several tries before I – yes, me, Perry White – could force my eyes off Superman and try to keep them on Clark Kent.

I had wondered how Clark was able to get the story every time. Nobody is that good. OK, Lois Lane is that good, but she has a different type of excuse. She is usually the one Superman is saving. I shake my head. Lois doesn't have a reverse. It is forward, onward, into battle with that one. I chuckle. Not that she minds being rescued by Superman. Nope, not at all. She must have been madder than a nest full of hornets when she finally figured out Clark's secret. I don't envy the boy that conversation, that's for sure.

Yet it wasn't Clark's appearance, his timing, his stories, his disappearing and reappearing acts or even his handshake that had given him away to me, his editor. It was his love for Lois. Or namely, her love for him. Or actually a combination of the two.

Clark had fallen in love with Lois from the first moment she had barged into the middle of my interview with him. I'm no

fool. I had seen the boy glance at Lois and half-stand up at her entrance – dang, that boy had manners, a rare trait in this day and age – and the stars were in Clark's eyes before he had sat back down. Lois, on the other hand, didn't give poor Clark a second thought.

Lois should have thanked her lucky stars that Clark came into her life. Before him, she couldn't get a man to call her for a second date or even show up when he did. Clark Kent – or actually his alter-ego, Superman – changed all that. He turned that aloof, top-buttoned, nose-to-the-grindstone, feminist reporter into the most desired woman in Metropolis. Every single man in the city, and some of the married ones, too, suddenly took a second and a third look at Lois Lane and liked what they saw. Men finally saw what I had seen for years. What Clark had seen in that first instant.

And what had made the men of Metropolis finally sit up and notice Lois? Well, frankly, it was the way Superman looked at her, which was – of course – like she was the most beautiful creature in the universe. If a man like Superman thought Lois Lane was someone worth saving, worth admiring, worth kissing (or, technically, accepting kisses from) repeatedly, then there must be something to her worth checking out. Oh, sure, Lois did start putting her feminine side out a little more after Superman showed up. I mean, she put a little more effort in her appearance, but I still think it was his attentions towards her that made the other men follow suit.

If Clark had only known that by creating Superman, he was also creating all the competition for her love, he might have given the decision a second thought.

I reconsider that analysis. Probably best that Clark hadn't known. Metropolis – hell, the entire world – had become a better place when Superman flew into our lives. The news business surely hadn't been hurt by the influx of what I once heard described as a "hot man in tights." I nod. Cat Grant had called Superman that.

Dang, I miss that woman. Cat always livened up the bullpen with her somewhat tasteless – and sometimes fabric-less – dresses, her sharp wit and her in-depth knowledge of everyone worth knowing in the city and the country. I only wish that the *New York Post* hadn't lost their society columnist shortly after Luthor blew up the *Daily Planet*. I sigh.

We lost a lot of good talent because of that man. Sure, we had been able to lure some of it back when Stern rehired the Globe. I wonder whatever happened to Jack. I'll have to ask Clark or Jimmy one of these days. Clark will know; he practically adopted the boy when he came to work for us. Never did tell me where they met. I shrug, putting it on my mental to-do list.

Now, Lois Lane had fallen for Superman that first time he saved her aboard the *Prometheus*; at least, I guess that's when she did. I wasn't in the room at the time. What did she say at that morning meeting shortly after he flew her into the bullpen? Oh, yeah. "He's mine!" I chuckle.

And Lois hardly gave poor Clark Kent the time of day. I don't know what changed her mind about Clark, whether it was almost marrying that snake-oil-salesman, Lex Luthor, or if it was something else. Maybe it was Mayson wanting to give Clark not only the time of day, but also the time of night. Or was it that time she thought Clark had died, when those gangsters from the past shot him right in front of her? Of course, Clark hadn't really died – I realize – not if he is Superman.

I shake my head. And Clark with his constant "errands" kept making undesired reservations with Lois at the Heartbreak Hotel. If he had just come to the "colonel" instead and asked for my advice... I sigh. Young folks these days don't know what's in their best interest.

I chuckle, knowing exactly what Alice would say if I said that to her. "Some old folks don't know what's in *their* best interest,

either, Perry." I really ought to take her somewhere nice on vacation this year. Remind her how much I love her. But that would mean leaving the paper – my baby – in someone else's hands for a week or two. I shiver at the thought. Well, Alice, sweetie, there's always next year.

I smile, thinking again of Lois and Clark. Ah. To be young and in love again, thinking you're invulnerable... I chuckle. Come to think of it, Clark *is* invulnerable in all ways but one. If that young man would stop wearing his heart on his sleeve... Well, that man had been lucky that Lois saw past Scardino's playful charms and decided to give Clark a second – or was it twenty-second? – chance. Damn lucky.

I don't know what happened the other day, but one moment Lois was looking like she really was going to kill Clark – I had honestly thought that was the end of Clark's romantic dreams – but then, the next morning, they were tighter than two rabbits in mating season. I had even hazarded a guess to Jimmy that they had eloped.

What had I been thinking? That they "flew" to Las Vegas and back in the twelve hours since I had last seen them? It's not like Lois and Clark could marry in Metropolis without the three-day waiting period after getting a license. That – of course – had been before I realized "flying" to Vegas and back would be a snap for Clark with him being Superman. Jimmy really should have called me on that flaw in my reasoning. Attention to detail, son. Attention. To. Detail.

Only Lois and Clark would look past each other's sins to get a story. And what a story it had been! Nigel St. John killed by old Mazik's – of Mazik's Jewelry – son. Where they stumbled across that story, I don't know. I reckon something more must have happened that they weren't sharing – more to the story, something to do with Superman, perhaps – but their lips were sealed tighter than Lisa Marie's trust fund.

Then the Church Group all but wiped out the crime and news in Metropolis. And Clark and Lois weren't talking again. I shake my head. Their relationship has had more bumps and itches to scratch than I did after running half-naked through a poison ivy patch as a kid. I grin, looking back. Ah, to be young and in love again. I sigh.

Lois practically – and most cryptically, I might add – admitted that something major had happened in their relationship despite her denials that her frustration at Clark had to do with anything more than a disagreement about their story. Humph. Jimmy hadn't bought that load of malarkey any more than I had. Something is definitely cooking between those two.

They hardly spoke a civil word to each other in days, and then at the Church art party, they were acting all strange again. Clark with all his shouts of "Lois" and "Lane" – and Lois crawling under a table and defusing a bomb! Does that woman even know the meaning of the word "fear"? I should have known something was up then. It should have smacked me in the face with a frying pan, but no. I was still blinded by Clark's glasses and good old Kansas manners.

No, what gave them away – and I do mean them – was how they looked at each other after that former Church Group chap held us up in the elevator the other night. The way Lois stared at him – Superman – was with a look she usually reserved for her boyfriend, Clark. And the way Superman looked at Lois was Clark's usual loving gaze. And then the Man of Steel had spoken.

There was something in the way Superman said, "Lois, can I speak with you a moment? ... There's something I'd like to show you." It wasn't Superman I heard talking to Lois, but Clark.

It wasn't Superman I saw, but Clark. Clark stood there, outside the elevator, holding out his hand for Lois. I remembered thinking, with a silly grin on my face and a shake of my head, "Gosh, I hope those two crazy kids make it work."

I had taken two steps out of the elevator when it hit me: I

hadn't seen Superman holding out his hand to Lois, I had seen Clark – Clark in a Superman suit. Clark is Superman! Suddenly, all those details that I hadn't put together until that very moment rang in my ears like a chorus of bad Elvis impersonators. But when I turned to look at Lois and Clark again, they were already gone.

I wondered how Jimmy, standing right next to me on the elevator, hadn't seen it. Attention to detail, son. Attention. To. Detail.

I, Perry White, have figured it out – all on my own – the secret identity of Superman. I lean back in my chair and lace my fingers behind my head. This old Hound Dog still has it. I grin. "Yo-de-lay. Yo-de-lay. Yo-de-lay-hee-who."

Looking out my office window to the bullpen, I see Lois typing away at her computer. Clark isn't anywhere to be seen. I wonder if I should let them know that I know. I smirk. Now, where would be the fun in that?

I stomp to my office door and throw it open. "Lane! Kent! Where's that follow-up copy on the Church Group?" I demand; then I look around. "Where's Clark?"

Lois subconsciously glances over her shoulder at the TV screens in the corner of the room. Superman is helping with mudslides in Columbia. She turns back to me. "He went out for coffee," she replies matter-of-factly. God, I love that woman. She has cojones. Lying to me, straight to my face. It's all I can do not to burst into laughter.

"Copy, Lois," I repeat with a two-finger point. Returning to my office, I shut the door and grin. Oh, yeah. What would be the fun in letting them know I know? This is much better. "Yo-de-lay. Yo-de-lay. Yo-de-lay-hee-who."

THE END