

Timing Is Everything

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Clark is in a bind. He gave Lois his word that he would show up on time for their dates, but when he finds himself running late, he's prepared for the worst. Not for... this.

Seven o'one.

Crap.

He was a dead man. He said he'd be there at seven. It was now seven o'one. And he hadn't left his apartment yet.

Lois was going to kill him.

Clark had to take a quick shower. He couldn't go without it, not after that car wreck— there was so much oil and sweat and blood... it had been awful. And to top it all off, he was covered in said greasiness, and was going to be late for his date with Lois. And he'd been doing so well recently— showing up on time, staying as long as possible, barely running out on her. Lois had certainly seemed to appreciate it. Ever since that one time when she'd made a point of him being there, and staying there, from seven o'clock onward, Clark had done his best to follow through. And now it was seven o'two on Sunday evening, and he didn't want to miss another minute.

He let loose a loud groan and took as fast a shower as he dared. He was out in less than two minutes, luckily. He spun into his dark charcoal grey suit that Lois liked so well on him and gave himself a once over in the mirror. Satisfied, he glanced at his watch, checking the time once more. Seven o'five. Crap. He didn't have time to walk— even a cab would take longer than he wanted to get there. There was only one way to make it and be semi-on time.

Clark groaned again. This night just wasn't getting any better. He didn't like wearing the suit underneath his clothes when he and Lois were alone. Number one, it reminded him that he shouldn't run off at every miniscule cry for help. Number two... well, if he wanted to get comfortable with Lois, it wasn't in the way. Not that they had ever gone so far before, or anything had happened between the two of them where the suit might become visible, but better safe than sorry.

Hoping for no other distractions, Clark spun back into his suit and flew out his apartment window at top speeds.

He landed in an alley about a block away from Lois' apartment complex and spun back into his grey suit carefully, making sure his appearance was perfected in the dark window of an abandoned car before nodding to himself and walking towards her apartment. He checked his watch as he entered the building, his anxiety growing with each passing second. It was now seven-eleven. He climbed the stairs, rather than wait for the elevator, and checked his watch again at each landing. Finally, *finally*, he reached the door to her apartment and let out a long exhale. He glanced at his watch one last time— it was seven-thirteen now— and mentally started preparing himself.

"Just a minute!" Lois' voice wafted out through the door of her apartment. Clark let out a small sigh of relief. Good. She didn't sound like she was entirely ready, either. That might work in his favor. That, and the fact that it was actually Lois who had them reschedule for tonight in the first place. Lucy had been visiting and naturally had wanted to spend time with her sister on the one Saturday where Clark had literally nothing to do and no crimes to stop. And so, their date had been bumped, and here he

was. A day where there actually was things he had to do and people he should probably arrest out there.

Clark waited patiently as he listened to her heartbeat, listened to her feet running back and forth across the apartment, smiling as he eventually heard her approaching the door and unlatching all of her locks.

The door swung open and Clark's smile dropped, his expression changing to one of confusion at the sight that met him.

Clark took in her appearance. She was more than not ready. She was practically in a state of undress, wearing only a robe and towel wrapped around her head. She was obviously only halfway through applying her makeup, as only one of her eyes had been done and she still held some supplies in her other hand— several that looked like colored pencils and something that looked like miniature meat tongs, which Clark could only imagine being quite painful if it actually had use for the face. Then again, the idea of Lois having anything to do with cooking sounded more preposterous, so he stuck with the assumption that it was in fact a crucial piece to the puzzle that made up Lois Lane.

"Clark?" Her voice had a lilt of confusion to it.

"Lo-Lois?"

"What on earth are you doing here?"

Clark blinked several times, processing her reaction and trying to form his own response. "You said... I mean, I thought... Did you not reschedule our date for tonight? Because, um, I can go, if you don't want me here..."

Lois sighed and opened the door wider for him. "Come on in."

Clark just stared, not sure what to do. She wasn't ready for their date. Which either meant she needed to finish getting ready, because she was running late herself, or she didn't remember their date was tonight and wasn't expecting him. Either way he should probably let her be while she at least finished getting dressed. "I-I'll just... wait out here, if you want. Or I can go—"

Lois rolled her eyes and, grabbing him by the sleeve of his jacket, tugged him inside. She let the door close behind him as he stumbled in. "Geez, Kent. I'd rather not be standing out in the hall with nothing but my short little robe to cover me."

Clark's eyes widened and his jaw dropped slightly as he tried to keep his gaze from straying across her body. He failed to do so, of course, as he croaked out in a high pitched tone, "N-nothing at all?"

Lois rolled her eyes at him again and crossed her arms over her chest, which drew his eyes back up to her face.

"I-I should go. You- You're not... I mean—"

"You sure are dense, sometimes. Clark, did I say I didn't want you here?"

"Well, no, b-but—" He stammered, confused.

"Exactly. I asked what you were doing here, I didn't tell you to go away."

"B-But our date," Clark swallowed, trying to get his stammering under control. "Our date is tonight. I just thought you'd be more... excited about it, or something."

Lois let out a short little laugh. "Clark, I'm perfectly excited about it. That's why I'm getting ready. I was just curious as to why you're here so early."

Clark frowned and consulted his watch once more. "Early? It's seven eighteen. If anything, I was late. But you're not even dressed."

It was Lois' turn to frown. "Seven eighteen? That can't be right. I just got out of the shower, and the clock only said six o'five. I mean, I know people say women take hours to get ready, but I'd like to think I'd have done more than curl my eyelashes in an hour!"

Ah. So that must be the tong-looking device in her left hand. Made much more sense now. Still... "I don't understand," Clark replied. "I mean, I was freaking out on my way over, thinking of

how late I was going to be. How could you... How could I... What—”

Suddenly, Lois' eyes lit up and a smile spread across her face. She started to laugh, growing more and more hysterical at her boyfriend's increasingly confused appearance.

“Lois?” Clark asked, putting a gentle hand on her shaking shoulder, trying to calm her laughter. “What's so funny?”

Lois wiped away a tear as she took in a deep breath and got herself back under control. “Clark, it's Sunday.”

His brow furrowed. “Uh, yeah. I know that. That's kind of why I showed up.”

She shook her head quickly, righting the towel on her head as it started to slip off with the motion. “No, I mean, it's Sunday. Remember? Haven't you been listening to all of Jimmy's announcements about turning back the clocks this weekend and how thankful he is to Benjamin Franklin for coming up with the idea in the first place—”

Lois could see it on his face the moment realization sunk in for Clark. “Daylight Savings? You mean it ends *this* weekend?”

Lois grinned. “Yeah. Bet you're glad we fall back instead of spring forward, otherwise you would've been an hour late.”

Clark let out a laugh. “Fall back. Of course! That actually makes a lot of my day make a lot more sense now. We gained an hour.”

“*You* gained an hour,” Lois clarified, still smiling, not upset in the least. “Apparently, somehow I lost time. So, if you'll excuse me, I'll go finish getting ready, and you can just wait out here for a few minutes...”

Clark nodded. “Right, right. Take all the time you need. You've still got about forty minutes until our date anyway.”

Lois shot him a quick grin. “You know, if I had known all along that all it would take to get you to show up anywhere on time is to mess with your clocks, I'd have been breaking into your apartment and changing your clocks constantly.”

Clark chuckled. “The tricky one to get would be my watch. How would you get it off me to reset it?”

Lois gave him a downright wicked look. “I think I'd find a way,” she trailed off as she walked to the back of her apartment to finish getting ready.

Clark took a minute to compose himself after her comment, his overactive imagination running into overdrive thinking of all the possible ways she just might distract him enough to do that. After shaking himself out of it, he reset his watch according to Lois' clock, chuckling at his good luck.

Maybe this night wasn't going to be a loss, after all.

THE END