

T.O.G.O.M. 2013 – With a Little Help From Their Friends

By Tank Wilson <tankw1@aol.com>

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Summary: Lois and Clark get some help from their future friends. A Lois & Clark/Castle Crossover fic.

1994

Lois Lane pulled the oversized rollers from her hair and ran a brush through the dark, silky strands. It crossed her mind that it was getting to be time for another trim. She took a few minutes to finish up her makeup; not too much, but enough to cover up the flaws. Flaws which Clark would just tell her she didn't have. She moved her head from side to side and gave herself a critical once over. A smile appeared on her face. She looked good.

She quickly moved to the bedroom and started looking through her options for a dress for tonight. She frowned as she quickly chose, and then rejected, everything in her closet. She couldn't believe that she didn't have anything she wanted to wear. Suddenly she was struck by the thought that she was acting like some moony-eyed teen ager getting ready for her first date.

What was wrong with her? This wasn't a date. It was an undercover operation, and it was just Clark she was going with. It wasn't a date. He was her partner. They did this kind of stuff all the time. So why was she so concerned about how she looked? It's not like she cared about what Clark thought.

As soon as that thought escaped she knew it was a lie. She cared very much about what he thought of her. She mostly liked that fact that he thought she was intelligent and dedicated to her profession, but she would be lying if she didn't admit that she liked it when he complimented her looks. He thought she was attractive. He'd even called her beautiful on occasion and coming from one of the most gorgeous men she'd ever met that was pretty heady stuff.

Sometimes she pretended that these undercover assignments were actually dates with Clark. He was fun, and attentive, and handsome. It was good for her ego the way he treated her when they acted like a couple. It wasn't like she dated much. Actually she hadn't dated anyone since the Lex fiasco. Not that she cared. She hadn't really felt any desire to go out with someone else. She spent most of her day, and many of her evenings with Clark and that was enough for now. Clark was her best friend and she enjoyed his company, even when they weren't on a story. Why complicate things by dating someone.

But they were on a story. A really confusing one and she had to get ready because Clark would be here soon to pick her up. She didn't want him to show up with her only half dressed. A sly smile tugged at the corners of her lips. Though, maybe that might not be so bad either.

She turned her attention back to her closet and finally pulled a simple red dress from its hanger. It wasn't fancy, but it was nice. With the right accessories it would fit the bill for tonight perfectly.

She was just slipping on her shoes when the knock came at her door. She glanced at her watch. Right on time; why was she not surprised?

She opened the door and her mouth formed a silent 'O'. He looked great. He was wearing a charcoal colored suit with a crisp white shirt and a typically loud tie. She still didn't know why he had such a strange taste in ties, but it worked for him.

"Hey, Clark, right on time I see. I'm ready to go."

Clark seemed to have trouble clearing his throat. It took him a couple of tries to finally get some words out. "Wow, Lois, you look terrific."

She smiled at him. "Thanks, but we'd better get going." She stepped out into the hallway, pulling her door closed behind her. "It might take us a while to find the right place. Bobby said it was an illegal gambling club run by someone called Georgie Hairdo."

Clark nodded as he walked along side her. "Yeah, we have an address but it might be a bit tricky getting into the place. They tend to be pretty careful about who they let in."

Lois patted his arm. "Don't worry, Clark, I'll get us in."

Clark smiled. "Of course you will, Lois."

2013

"I can't believe you cut my hair!"

Detective Kate Beckett looked at her reflection in the steam misted bathroom mirror. A look of dejected disgust was on her face.

The shower door slid open and Richard Castle poked his head out. "Excuse me?"

Kate glared at him, and then sighed. "Okay, I can't believe I let you cut my hair."

Castle stepped out of the shower and pulled a towel from the rack, placing it around his waist. "Who was it that wanted to 'up the stakes' for the final showdown hand last night?"

Beckett frowned as she passed her brush through her, now considerably shortened locks. "Yeah, well I ran out of gummy bears."

Castle smirked at his frustrated fiancée. She glared at him again. Since it was clear that she could never compete monetarily at the poker table with the wealthy writer, she often came up with unusual bets to 'make things interesting' on some of the hands. Normally they'd just play for gummy bears, or some other handy confection, just to keep score. But occasionally she liked to add a bit of drama, or even a little danger to make the hand more exciting.

Last night she had been on a hot streak and decided to really up the stakes. She wanted Castle to put up a year without his X-Box so she had to come up with something that he would see would be equally important to her. In a mad moment of daring she had put up 12 inches of her hair. One inch for every month he'd have to forgo his gaming. She'd been growing it out for the last several years so he'd know that it would be something she felt strongly about.

She'd been confident. She had been holding a very good hand so she wasn't worried about suggesting the bet. Initially she had been surprised when Castle agreed and had called. Still, with only one card left to show the odds that he'd be able to beat her full house were slim at best.

And so, after the final card was dealt, with a big smile of triumph, she laid down her cards. Castle's brow had risen and he commented on how not many hands could beat her full house... except for the four of a kind that he laid down.

She fixed her lover with a hard stare. "Why didn't you throw your hand, like you've done in the past with me? It would have been a nice gesture."

Castle chuckled as he shook his head. "I learned my lesson a long time ago. Never patronize Kate Beckett. And really, it was only you and me; there were no friends around, so no one needed to save face for the other. No, you made it perfectly clear that you wanted to beat me straight up, so no more Mr. Nice Guy." He grinned. "Besides, you don't really think that I'd willingly give

up my X-Box for a whole year just so you could have more hair to fuss with everyday.”

She turned her back to him. “I thought you liked my hair long. You’ve played with it enough in bed.”

Castle grinned and shrugged. “I readily admit that it has been fun, but you, my dear detective, have been blessed with a hotness that doesn’t depend on a single hairstyle.” He walked over and planted a kiss on her hair. “Witness the myriad of styles you’ve worn since I’ve known you, and the fact that you looked great in all of them. It’s still longer than when we first met.” He circled around her so he could plant a kiss on her lips.

“Don’t worry, Kate, after all you’ve already caught your man.”

Beckett punched Castle in the arm. “Yeah? But what if I decide to dump you for someone richer and more ruggedly handsome?”

Castle stopped and looked thoughtful for a moment, then he shook his head. “You might find someone richer... but more ruggedly handsome? Don’t think so.”

Kate just rolled her eyes. “Get dressed or we’ll be late.”

“Ooh, I love it when you’re bossy.”

1994

Clark had his hand on Lois’ lower back as they slowed in their approach to the clandestine club. It appeared to be a typical warehouse down near the harbor. There were dozens just like this one within a few block area. There was nothing remarkable about this one. Not unusual; unless you counted the fact that well-dressed, important looking people kept coming up to the single door and after conversing with a face in a window in the door, were let in.

The two of them recognized several prominent businessmen, local politicians, and even a few local celebrities. It was a veritable Who’s Who of Metropolis streaming through the door of the secret club. This had to be Georgie Hairdo’s club.

“This definitely is the place.” Lois turned to Clark and gave him a smile.

“I’m not sure this is a good idea, Lois.” He stopped and turned to his beautiful partner.

“You’re kidding, right? Come on, Clark, Bobby said it was a pretty sure thing that Capone, Dillinger, and Clyde would show up here tonight. He said there was definitely going to be something going down here tonight. We both know that there’s no way that Capone and his goons would let an illegal gambling club exist without them getting in on the action.”

Clark nodded. “That’s why we should just watch... from a distance. It could be too dangerous to actually go inside.”

Lois shook her head and grabbed Clark’s arm. “Don’t wuss out on me now, Kent. Besides, if things get rough, I’ll protect you.”

Clark just shook his head and followed dutifully.

Lois was an amazing woman and every day he counted himself lucky to be able to call her his partner and friend. She was not only one of the most beautiful women he’d ever known, but she was intelligent, and dedicated to her job, and was fiercely loyal to her friends. If she’d just use a little more common sense when it came to her safety he’d feel better.

Of course some of that was his fault. If Superman hadn’t made one of his primary missions to always be there to save her from serious danger she might not think herself quite so immortal. But who was he kidding. He would always be there for Lois. He couldn’t help it... he loved her, even if she only thought of him as her friend. He would always be there for her.

They casually approached the door and the window panel slid open revealing the face of a serious fellow. He asked for the password. Lois threw out several ‘classic’ passwords from literature and movies. Clark realized that the fellow behind the

door was getting fed up with Lois so he stepped in.

“She’s just joking. The fat lady sings.” The fellow nodded and opened the door for them.

As they moved past the doorman’s hearing Lois grabbed Clark’s arm. “How did you know that password?”

He shrugged. “I saw it on an old Untouchables episode.”

Actually he’d heard it from several of the patrons who had preceded them. Super hearing came in handy every now and then. Lois just shook her head and moved quickly into the club.

Once inside they split up in order to better check out the patrons of the club. Clark could only smile when he saw Lois attack a nickel slot machine as if it were a Pulitzer story waiting to happen.

He was standing near the bar when he was hit upon by an attractive blonde. It was Bonnie Parker and she was definitely flirting with him. Clark tried to make small talk but Bonnie seemed to have something else on her mind. He wasn’t sure what he was going to do until Clyde came along and broke it up. He sounded angry and glared at Clark as she pulled her away.

Clyde was certainly going to remember him.

He hurried back to where he had last seen Lois. They quickly found each other but before he could say anything she grabbed him by the arm.

“Clark, I just found out that Georgie Hairdo is dead.”

Clark wasn’t surprised. “Yeah, well, Bonnie and Clyde are here. We’ve got to call the police. Let’s go.” He reached out and grabbed her arm to steer her toward the door.

She pulled out of his grasp. “You go. I’ve got to find a gray-haired lady with a bucket of my nickels.”

Before Clark could respond they were startled by the sound of gunfire. They looked up and at the top of the stairs stood Al Capone. Bonnie and Clyde stepped out of the crowd and Dillinger stood to the big man’s right. A few other faceless thugs surrounded the reanimated gangsters. Clark just shook his head. This was trouble.

“My apologies ladies and gentlemen, for this little interruption. I just came by to announce that Georgie Hairdo has wisely decided to retire from the hospitality business.” Capone took a deep drag off his expensive looking cigar. “So from now on this club belongs to Al Capone.”

Lois had been moving closer to the front while Capone was speaking. Out of necessity, Clark followed. Dillinger spotted Lois and approached her.

“Hey, Al, how’s ‘bout we make this little cutie our new head hostess.” He leered at Lois. “You know I always was partial to a lady in red.”

He reached out and touched Lois on the cheek. She flinched back. Clark surged forward and pushed Dillinger’s hand away.

“Leave her alone!”

“Who are you?” Dillinger glared at Clark. “Her big brother?”

Before the two men could come to blows Clyde Barrow pulled out his revolver and three loud shots rang out.

Clark could feel the slugs hitting his chest and he saw the look of horror on Lois’ face. What was he supposed to do? He couldn’t expose himself as Superman. Not in front of all these people.

Clark slowly allowed himself to slide to the floor. Lois was hanging onto his arm all the way. He could hear her tearful denial of what she saw happening in front of her. She just keep saying his name and crying out ‘no’.

He lay flat on the floor with his eyes closed. He wasn’t sure what he should do now. It wouldn’t be long before someone noticed that he wasn’t bleeding.

“You moron.” Capone was angry. “What did you go and do that for? Now we have to get out of here, and take the stiff.” He signaled to a couple of his henchmen. “I can’t afford to be linked

to no murder.”

Clark felt himself being roughly dragged out of the club. As they left he could hear Lois’ plaintive cry of ‘Clark’; then sobs.

2013

It was a pleasant night so Castle and Beckett chose to exit their taxi a few blocks shy of Castle’s loft. They often took walks in the calm of the late evening; especially after a difficult case.

Beckett liked the fact that the darkness helped their anonymity. She was comfortable with people knowing that she and Castle were engaged, but she hated having her personal life splashed all over page 6 by the overzealous paparazzi.

“What the heck was that?”

Kate turned to see what had caught Castle’s attention. “What was what?”

He gestured toward the back of an alley. “Didn’t you see that glow just a moment ago?”

“I didn’t see anything. Come on, let’s get home. I’m tired.”

She rolled her eyes as he sprinted off into the dark alley.

“Castle!” She had no choice but to follow him.

She went deep into the alley. It was quite dark. “Castle where are you?”

“Back here.”

She glanced to her right and saw him several feet away looking into a garage of some sort. There was no door on the building and it looked like it was ready to collapse with the slightest push. There was a very dusty security light offering minimal illumination. She could see Castle staring at some kind of, for lack of a better description, vehicle.

She came up next to him. He was staring at what appeared to be some sort of sled. A single bench style seat sat in front of a large disc-like structure. There were levers and gages on a simple dashboard in front of the seat.

“Do you know what this is?” The excitement in his voice was obvious.

She raised her brow and grabbed his arm. “Seriously? You actually recognize this... this... Santa’s nightmare.”

He turned toward her; the enthusiasm of a child animated his face. “Haven’t you ever read H.G. Wells’ ‘Time Machine’?”

She frowned at him. “Of course I have, but I was just a kid. What does that have to do with this thing?”

“This is the time machine!”

“What?”

Castle let his hand caress the polished side of the sled. “I have a first edition copy of the book. This is exactly like the drawings from the original book.” He literally gushed. “Someone built an exact copy of Wells’ machine.”

“So what, maybe they built it for a fair or carnival. Who cares? Let’s go home.”

Castle stepped up and sat on the upholstered seat. “Look at the attention to detail.”

Beckett was getting annoyed. “Come on Castle; let’s get out of here before we get into trouble.”

“No, just look at this, Kate.” He grabbed her hand and pulled her onto the seat next to him. “Just feel the workmanship on this control panel. See, that there is probably the destination gauge.” He frowned. “I wonder why it says Metropolis.” He turned to Kate. “I guess they forgot that they were in New York.” He pointed at another glass covered read out. “Look at the date; November 13, 1994. Do you think that’s where the machine came from?”

Kate rolled her eyes again. “Yeah, Castle, I’m sure this thing travelled from nearly twenty years in the past just to materialize in a rundown garage in SoHo.” She punched him in the arm. “Now quit touching things, you’ll break something.”

“I bet this lever activates the machine.” He pulled the largest lever toward him.

Suddenly they felt the disc behind them start to spin. Beckett looked back and saw that as the thing spun faster it gave off lightning like flashes of light. As the light grew brighter she began to hear a humming sound which increased in intensity as the disc spun faster and the flashes brighter and more frequent.

She noticed that the building surrounding them seem to lose focus. It was like trying to see through a heavy smoke screen. She was rapidly getting more disoriented when, suddenly, a loud boom shook her whole body.

It took several moments for her to regain command of her senses. The machine had stopped its light and sound show. She looked around but didn’t recognize their surroundings. She would swear that the sled like contraption hadn’t moved... but they weren’t where they were supposed to be.

She turned to her companion. “Rick, where are we?”

It seemed to take him a few more moments to register where they were. He shook his head. “I have no idea... but we’re not in Kansas anymore.”

Kate grabbed his arm and jumped out of the machine. “Let’s get out of here and see if we can find out where the heck we are.”

Castle just nodded and followed his love out of the alley.

Kate was cautious. She had no idea where they were and didn’t want to end up walking into a dangerous situation. She didn’t know what had happened to them but it was always best to err on the side of caution.

She could smell the ocean so she figured that somehow they’d been transported near the docks. As they stepped out from behind a building, Kate reached back a put her hand on Castle’s chest. “Shhh, I hear voices.”

“Look.” Castle pointed off to their left. They stood in the deep shadows and watched as people approached a side door in what appeared to be an old warehouse. Individuals and couples, all well dressed approached the door and waited until someone from the inside slid back a peep window. Words were exchanged, which they couldn’t hear, then the people were let through.

“I know what this is.” Castle spoke in a hushed whisper.

“This has to be some sort of secret club, like the speakeasies of the twenties. Those people are giving the door guard some sort of password to get in.”

Beckett nodded. “That tells me that something illegal is going on inside.”

Kate scanned several folks as they arrived and made their way to the door. “Hey.” She nudged Castle. “Isn’t that Clark Kent? Who is he with?”

Castle looked to where she was pointing. “Yeah, that’s Clark but I don’t... Omigod, that’s Lois.”

“What?” Kate stared at him.

“No, look; her hair is longer and she looks a lot younger, but it’s definitely Lois.” Castle smirked at her. “Her hair looks a lot like yours does now.”

“Shut up.” Kate studied the woman as the pair approached the door. It definitely was Clark and the young woman with him looked a lot like Lois, but that was impossible. Lois was a bit older than Castle and still a stunning woman, but no amount of make-up or good genes would allow a woman to hide twenty years.

“Didn’t she say she had a younger sister?”

Castle nodded. “Yeah, but Lucy’s not that much younger than Lois, and I’ve met her. The resemblance is not that strong.” Castle’s furrowed brow suddenly smoothed and a huge grin spread across his face. “Oh man, this is awesome.” He grabbed Kate by the shoulders and turned her to him. “Do you know what this means?” She stared blankly at her crazy partner. “It worked! It was a real time machine!”

“Castle, get a grip. There is no such thing as time travel.”

The smug look on his face was too familiar. “Let’s examine the facts shall we, Detective?” He began to count off on his

fingers. “One, we are most assuredly not in New York anymore; two we see a man we both know lives in Metropolis. Add to that, number three; he is with a woman who looks remarkably like a much younger version of his wife.” His excitement level increases. “Do you remember the date on the display on the machine? It said 1994. It all fits, Kate. We’ve travelled to 1994 Metropolis.” He clenched his fists. “This is so cool!”

“This is not cool, Castle. We haven’t travelled back in time; that’s impossible, but there is definitely something fishy going on here and we need to find out what.” She studied the old warehouse for several moments. “If this is some sort of illegal social club then they probably have food, or at least a bar. We just have to find the delivery entrance. Once inside, we can search out Kent and find out what is going on.”

Castle nodded. “Sounds good. My guess would be around back. There is a wider alley back that way which would easily facilitate trucks. If this actually was a warehouse, there should be a dock of some sort back there.”

Beckett agreed and so they made their way around to the back of the building, being careful not to be seen by anyone approaching the place. It only took a few minutes for them to find the buildings receiving dock. Fortunately there were no working lights back there. Obviously they didn’t take deliveries at night.

The two overhead doors were closed and padlocked. There was no getting in that way, which was just as well. The noise that the doors of a building this old would make would alert everyone inside that they had company. Next to those two overheads was a small single entry door; no padlock but it was locked.

“Castle,” Beckett whispered. “Do you have your lock picks on you? I left mine in my police cruiser.”

Castle reached inside his jacket pocket and produced a small leather wallet that held his personal set of lock picks. He pulled them back as Kate reached for them.

“Uh, uh... my picks, my lock.”

Kate rolled her eyes. This was so like Castle. A little boy playing the part of some sort of cat burglar, or better yet, a spy; and she loved him for it.

To his credit Castle was able to get the door open in only a few minutes. The two of them cautiously entered the building. They could hear general noise and voices up ahead of them but the area they had entered was dark. The ambient light from up front allowed them to check out their surroundings.

To their right were the dock doors and a large receiving area. There were several crates and boxes on the dock; obviously supplies for the club. They couldn’t smell any cooking odors so apparently food was not served here.

Quietly Beckett led them through the dark back dock toward the light. A quick surveillance revealed that all the activity, including the bartenders and wait staff were all occupied with their respective jobs. Kate and Castle were able to slip into the club and inconspicuously mingle with the crowd.

Castle bought them a couple of drinks so they’d look more natural as they wandered about looking for Lois and Clark.

Kate looked at Castle in horror. “How did you pay for those?”

Rick looked confused. “What do you mean? I paid with cash. I do have a lot of it you know.”

She grabbed his sleeve. “Rick, you have 2013 cash. Remember, most of the denominations have a different look now. It would be pretty stupid to get caught passing ‘funny money’.”

Castle quickly pulled out his wallet and looked through his cash. A sigh of relief escaped from his lips as he fanned through the bills. “We were lucky. I paid with a five and some ones. The five must have been an older bill and ones haven’t been redone.” He shrugged. “The drinks were cheap.” They walked a couple of steps when Castle stopped. “Hey, if you were worried about the bills that means...” Castle clenched his fists in victory. “You

believe!”

Kate just shook her head... only Castle.

Rick punched her arm. “Look, there they are.”

Kate looked where Castle was pointing. Lois and Clark were standing next to each other having an animated conversation. Before they could move over toward their future friends the sound of gunfire froze them where they stood.

Kate, being a cop, had studied a lot of criminals over the years, both past and present, but nothing could prepare her for the vision of appearance of...

“Is that?” Castle whispered.

Kate nodded. “Yep, that’s Al Capone, and next to him is Dillinger, and over by the railing are Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow.” She looked at her partner. “Castle, what the hell is going on here?”

The couple could only listen and watch as Capone expounded on his acquisition of Georgie Hairdo’s club. As with everyone else in the place they were spellbound by the scene as it unfolded. That is, until the fateful conclusion.

The three rapid gunshots fired by Clyde at Clark caused them to gasp. Beckett and Castle watched in horror as Clark slid to the floor with a sobbing Lois beside him.

“Omigod, Rick, Clark has been killed!”

Castle had to swallow several times before he could speak. How could this have happened? They both had entertained Lois and her husband Clark Kent back in 2013; how could he be shot dead in 1994?

“What do we do?” His voice was barely above a whisper.

Kate shook her head. “This isn’t right, Rick. Something is very wrong here. We just saw Clark shot three times at fairly close range, but that can’t be right. You’ve been to enough crime scenes Castle; what’s missing here?”

Castle frowned for a moment, then his eyes got wider as if he’d just had a revelation, which he had. “There’s no blood. There should have been splatter, and Clark’s shirt should have been soaked through.” Castle returned Beckett’s concerned stare. “Oh, jeez, we have to get her out of here.”

Kate looked around at the chaotic scene. With the shock wearing off, people were running every which way. “Castle, you go to Lois and help her.” Beckett pulled her gun from her back holster. “I’m going to try and follow those gangsters and see where they dump Clark.”

Castle nodded. “Okay, but how will I get in touch with you later?”

She gave him a quick kiss. “I’ll find you.”

After another quick kiss, the two headed toward their assigned tasks.

Tears running down her cheeks, Lois stared at the empty club entrance. Just moments ago, her best friend and partner was killed right in front of her. He had stepped between her and Dillinger to protect her from his unwanted advances and had been shot down like a dog and dragged out like yesterday’s garbage. Clark wasn’t a person to them. He was an inconvenience; a nuisance to be dealt with.

But he wasn’t a nuisance, or an inconvenience. He was Clark. He was the most gentle and caring man she’d ever known; and she would never know his like again.

Her shoulders shook with the severity of her sobs. She couldn’t control the devastation she felt, nor did she want to.

Suddenly, through the fogged haze that was her mind, she could feel someone putting their arms around her and helping her to her feet. She wanted to shake those arms off of her, but she didn’t have the strength.

“Come on, Lois, we have to get you out of here.”

She looked over her shoulder to see an attractive man holding her and trying to guide her toward the door. There was a genuine

look of concern in his bright blue eyes. She could see that he had been fighting back some tears of his own. He made a general gesture at her.

“Were you hurt? I don’t see any blood on you? Can you walk?”

Could she walk! Of course she could walk, but why should she? Lois stopped short, causing the man to stumble against her. “What are you doing?” She said between sobs. “I’m not going anywhere. I need to be here when the police come. I need to make my statement, then I need to see that those bastards pay for...” She couldn’t say it.

The attractive man shook his head. “I don’t think that would be a good idea, Lois. We need to be out of here before the police arrive. They will only complicate things.”

Didn’t this guy understand? She was Lois Lane. She didn’t run from trouble, she met it head on and defeated it. Only, this time the cost was way too high. “What are you talking about?”

“Lois, think about it.” For some reason the look on his face made her realize that he seemed to care about her. It was almost like the looks that Clark gave her. That thought caused her eyes to mist up again.

“Think about what?” It was weird, but somehow she knew she could trust him.

“Lois, there was no blood.” He began to push her toward the door again. “We have to get you out of here before anyone recognizes you, and by extension, Clark.”

Lois was too confused to argue, and too emotionally crippled to resist, so she allowed the man to usher her out of the club.

Beckett quickly followed after the gangsters as they exited the club. She watched as they stuffed Clark’s body into one of two vehicles. A couple of the thugs got into that car while the rest got into a classic 30’s touring car. She looked around for some mode of transportation. She didn’t want to risk losing their trail.

Providence provided for her as an elegantly dressed couple drove up and stepped out of their luxury sedan. They obviously were unaware of the chaos that was reigning inside. She ran up to them, mumbled something about complimentary valet service, and snatched the keys out of the surprised gentleman’s hands.

Once behind the wheel, Beckett slammed her foot on the gas pedal and spun a rooster tail of dirt and gravel from the rear tires as she took off after her prey. The two cars holding Capone’s gang had taken off in different directions but Kate chose to follow the vehicle that Clark’s body had been shoved into. She was sure that she and Castle had deduced the same thing about their future friend, but she still thought it best to follow them just to make sure.

It would be a terrible thing if all she could really do is bring back the dead body of her future husband back to Lois.

Clark had kept himself as still as possible while being manhandled by Capone’s thugs. Suddenly the back door of the car he’d been thrown in was flung open and he was unceremoniously pushed out. He hit the street hard and rolled several times finally ending up in a small puddle. Grimacing, he stood up and readied himself to fly off. His mind was in turmoil over all that had just happened and he knew he should get home and get some advice from his folks.

Before he lifted into the air he was distracted by the squeal of tires and the opening of a car door. He turned to look and saw a beautiful young woman step out from behind the wheel.

“Clark, stop!” She hurried toward him. “Please, stop.”

She tucked an errand strand of her shoulder length hair behind her ear. It was a gesture so familiar to him. She pulled a badge from her belt as she holstered her gun.

“Who are you? Do I know you?”

“I’m Detective Kate Beckett, NYPD. I know who you and

Lois Lane are. I followed you out of the club when Capone, or whoever he really is, had you dragged out of there.”

Clark ran his hand through his hair. “Oh, it’s really Capone alright, along with Dillinger, and Bonnie and Clyde.”

The woman’s face furrowed in disbelief. “Seriously, how?”

Clark shrugged. “It’s a long story, it’s a good thing that old revolver isn’t as accurate as today’s weapons. I was really lucky that all three shots missed.” Clark licked his lips. “I felt I had to play dead so that no one else would get hurt.”

“Uh, huh. That’s your story? That’s what you are going to tell Lois when you see her? That the shots missed? She was standing next to you, and the shooter was only a few feet away.”

“Uh, yeah, that’s what happened.” Clark was sure the woman, Beckett, didn’t believe for a moment that the shots missed. If she believed that; did that mean that she knew... He had to steer the conversation elsewhere.

“What was a New York Detective doing investigating an illegal gambling club in Metropolis?”

The Detective shook her head. “That’s also a long story. Let’s just say that my being there was a lucky coincidence.” Clark frowned. She raised her brow. “Are you going to deny that you were about to fly off and just leave Lois thinking that you’d been shot dead?”

Clark was momentarily flustered by her use of the word fly. “Um, no, I was going to find a phone so I could contact the police to let them know I was alive, then I could get in touch with Lois.”

“I thought you loved Lois.”

“What? Of course I love... I mean, what are you talking about? How would you know how I feel about my partner?”

“I know a lot of things about you, and I know how you feel for your partner because it’s the same way I feel about my partner.” Clark stared at the woman as a tear snuck out of the corner of her eye. “A while back I was shot in the chest by a sniper at the funeral of my Captain. My partner, Rick, tried to knock me out of the way but he was too late. He thought I’d died in his arms. It devastated him, just like the devastation the Lois is feeling right now.”

Clark let his head hang. The Detective reached out and gave his hand a squeeze. “You can’t let her suffer any longer than she has to. You have to tell her the truth.”

Clark jerked his head up and looked the woman in the eyes. She knew! He clenched his fists.

“You’re right.” He grimaced. “But what about all the people who saw me get shot?”

“I don’t think that will be a problem. I doubt if anyone recognized you and I pretty sure no one is going to admit being there even if the police are called in.” She nodded toward the car. “Come on, let me give you ride back to Lois’ place. Rick and Lois should be back there soon.”

Clark nodded and followed the mystery woman who seemed to know more about him than was possible.

Lois sat on her sofa, fat tears of grief rolled down her cheeks. She was so confused. She was sitting in her own apartment instead of talking to the police. She had witnessed the callous murder of her friend and partner, yet the man sitting across from her insisted that Clark was going to be alright. That she just had to be patient and everything would turn out okay.

She needed more than platitudes and empty promises of comfort. She needed answers and she needed them now.

“Who are you and how do you know me?”

The handsome man gave her a weak smile. “My name is Richard Castle. I’m a writer.”

“A writer; you mean you’re a reporter too? Your name seems almost familiar.”

He shook his head. “No, I’m a mystery writer.” He paused, as if he was trying to remember something. “I’ve recently come out

with my first book; In a Hail of Bullets.”

Lois nodded, more to herself. “I think I remember hearing something about that from our book reviewer. It won some awards, didn’t it?” The man nodded. A puzzled look came over Lois’ face. “I thought that book was written by a college kid?”

The man, Castle, smirked. “I look older than I am.”

Lois brow rose. “Really.”

Before she could begin to question Castle further there was a knock on the door.

“Lois... it’s me.”

“Clark!”

Lois leapt from the couch and ran to the door. Flinging it open, she didn’t let Clark even move before she threw herself into his arms.

“Omigod, I thought you were dead. I didn’t know what I would do without you. I was already missing you so much, Clark. Don’t ever do that to me again, please. I don’t think I could stand it. I just want...”

“Shhh.” Clark placed his fingertip over her lips as he carried her into the apartment. She never noticed the other woman who came in behind him and quietly closed the door.

Lois felt tears coming to her eyes again as Clark set her down next to the couch she had recently occupied. She stared up into his deep brown eyes. She saw the love he had for her shining back at her. He had admitted his feelings for her before, but he’d retracted his confession. She knew the retraction was a lie, but never allowed herself to truly feel more than a friendship for him.

How could she have been so stupid? Why did it always take the thought of actually losing something to realize just how much she wanted and needed it? It took the shock of Clark’s apparent death to make her realize that she loved this man more than she loved any other...ever.

“Lois... I ...”

She shook her head. “Not now.” She stretched up onto her tips toes as he lowered his head toward her. She captured his mouth in a hard, desperate kiss of relief and longing. Neither noticed their two mystery guests silently leaving.

Kate dragged Castle from Lois’ apartment and they quickly made it to the street. She indicated the car she’d driven over.

“Nice ride... rental?” Castle smirked at her.

“Loaner, get in. We have to get back and find the machine if we have any chance of getting back where we belong.”

“So, you do admit that we have come to Metropolis in the past and will need the time machine to get us back.”

Kate glared at her partner and lover. “I’ll only admit that whatever has and is happening, revolves around that contraption and logic tells me that it could be our only way back.”

Beckett got in and within moments was on the road back toward the warehouse near the pier that their whole evening had centered on.

“I can’t believe you remember where to go. We’ve only been to Metropolis a couple of times and we weren’t driving.”

She rolled her eyes. “I’m a cop. I have a head for directions.”

True to her word Beckett brought them back to the site of their earlier travails. The place was eerily quiet. Obviously, after the apparent shooting nobody called the police. They had been more interested in getting away before any authorities came. After all, they were in an illegal gambling club. Not the place any upstanding citizen of this fair city would want to be found; especially after a murder.

Kate left the keys in the car as the two of them exited and headed back toward the cluster of run-down warehouses that dominated the area.

“I think we came from that direction.” Kate pointed off to her right and moved down a narrow drive leading past an adjacent building. Castle followed.

It took them nearly a half an hour of blind alleys and doubling back till they finally came across the gaudy sled-like machine sitting in the alley where they had appeared.

Castle quickly jumped into the large bench seat and began to fiddle with the controls. Beckett noticed him moving the dials affecting the time and place.

“Are you sure you know what you’re doing, Rick?”

He patted her hand. “We’ll find out soon enough.” He reached over and pulled down the largest lever.

The giant disc in back began to once again spin at an exceedingly rapid rate. The light show that had originally surrounded them came back. As their surroundings began to blur, Kate closed her eyes and crossed her fingers. She really hoped this would work.

Clark sat next to Lois on her couch. He was looking at her, his mind full of worry and doubt. She wasn’t looking at him. She was staring at her hands folded in front of her. She had stopped crying hours ago, but he could tell she was still in a great deal of pain; pain that he had caused with his betrayal of her trust.

He had confessed his dual identity to her and she had reacted as he’d expected. In some ways it was not as bad as he expected because she had been so happy to see him alive. She was more forgiving of his deceit. But in other ways, it was worse. It was worse because he now realized that his feelings for Lois weren’t a one way street. This experience had shown her and him that she cared for him much more deeply than he’d ever imagined.

If he was being hopeful, he might even say that he thought that Lois loved him; loved him more than just a partner, more than just a friend. He dared to believe that she loved ‘him’.

But where they went from here was up to her. His feelings wouldn’t change, but he knew how big an issue trust was with Lois, and his keeping such a secret from her for so long was a big obstacle for her. He just hoped that she would give him the time to make it up to her.

She raised her head and looked over at him. Her eyes were still a bit misty. “So, where does this leave us, Clark? What are we?”

Clark reached out and grabbed her hands. He held them tightly in his own. “My feelings for you have never changed, Lois. I am your partner, and I am your friend. I always will be. But if you ever want more I’m willing to be more for you; whatever you want, just ask and I’ll give it to you.” He took a deep breath. “I have had my reasons for holding back, Lois, but I never meant to hurt you. You are the last person I would ever want to hurt.”

She nodded her head slowly. “I know, but it still hurts, Clark. Seeing you slumping to the floor ripped my heart to shreds. Do you have any idea how badly I felt? It was all so avoidable if you’d just trusted me enough to tell me the truth; I wouldn’t have had to suffer that desolation.”

“I know, Lois, and I am sorry. It’s not like I planned to keep my being Superman from you forever. I knew I wanted you to know; that you deserved to know. I just never could find the right time.” He ran his hand through his hair and he sighed again. “I know that sounds like an excuse, and it is; but I was scared. I was scared that I’d screw it up and that I’d lose you.”

He placed his hand on her cheek in that oh so familiar gesture. “I could continue with just being your friend and partner if that was all you could give me, but I don’t think I could survive if I drove you away. If you never wanted to see me again I would be lost.”

She finally gave him a slight, sad smile. “That’s never going to happen. This episode has made me confront some of my own repressed feelings and the truth of the matter is simple. I can’t imagine myself without you either.”

His smile lit up the room as he reached for Lois. She stopped

him with her upraised hand. “This is going to take us a little time. I’m going to need some time to get over the hurt and to be able to trust you again. But I know that we can survive this. Our relationship, our future, our...” She hesitated for a heartbeat. “Our love is too important to let this stop us.”

He opened his arms, letting her make the move to embrace him; and she did.

It was only a few moments before their lips sought out each other’s again.

2013

Rick Castle took a sip of his wine and turned toward his lovely fiancée. “Do you think it was alright for us to just leave that time machine where we found it?”

Kate shrugged. “It’s where we found it, and it’s not like we want to have anything to do with it ever again... right.”

Castle expression drooped a bit. “I guess not, but just think of the fun we could have with a machine that could...”

“Castle!” She reached over and swatted him on the arm. “I consider us lucky to have gotten back with no complications this time. I’m not about to tempt fate again just for the fun of it.”

“I guess.” Rick took another sip of his wine. “Wow, do you believe it; Clark Kent was really Superman?”

Kate chuckled. “I imagine he still is Superman.”

Castle gave her a dirty look. “You know what I mean. I can’t wait to call Lois and tell her I know her husband flies around in spandex.”

Kate grabbed Rick by the arm. “I don’t think that would be a good idea. There’s obviously a reason why the world doesn’t know that Clark is Superman. Can you imagine what a complicated mess their lives would be? Take the impositions your celebrity adds to your life and multiple it by a thousand. And can you imagine the extra danger that Lois would be in?”

“Yeah, but it’s not like we would tell anyone, or let it out to the media.”

Beckett nodded. “True, and I know you’d love to show her how clever you were to figure it out, but really, Rick, do you think she needs that added worry on her mind? Even though she knows that you’d never consciously, or willingly, give up the secret, the more people that know the greater the risk to them even if it is unintended.” She took a sip of her own wine. “No, I think it’s best that we keep this little secret to ourselves; at least until such time that they wish to share it with us.”

“I guess you’re right.” Rick set his wine glass down on the coffee table. “I don’t know about you but all that time traveling has worn me out. I think it’s time for bed.” He rose. “You coming, Kate?”

Beckett set her own glass down and let Castle pull her up from the sofa. “It’s too bad you’re so worn out, Rick. I had some ideas on what we might do to really tire us out before we drift off to an exhausted slumber.” She gave him a sly grin.

Castle’s breath caught in his throat. “Suddenly I feel energized. Lead on Detective, lead on.”

1994

“I can’t believe this; this can’t be right.”

“Lois, what’s wrong now?” Clark had come over and was sitting on the corner of Lois’ desk.

“This internet search is getting me nowhere.” She pointed at her screen. “The only writer named Richard Castle that I can come up with is some college kid who wrote his novel while in college.”

Clark leaned over and read the article she had displayed. “It says he wrote “In a Hail of Bullets” while still in college. Isn’t that the name of the book he mentioned to you?”

“Yeah, but look at this picture. They do look somewhat alike, but this kid is barely in his twenties. The guy who took me home

was much older; still nice looking, but older. Why take the name of some kid writer?”

Clark shook his head. “I don’t know Lois. What about the detective? She said her name was Beckett, Kate Beckett.”

Lois shook her head. “There’s nothing about any one named Beckett, Kate or otherwise who is a member of the New York Police Department.”

Lois hit the shut down on her keyboard in frustration; her furrowed brow indicating her annoyance. “Who were those two?”

Clark shrugged, then smiled down at Lois. “I don’t know if we’ll ever know who they were, but I’m really glad they were there for us.”

Neither Lois nor Clark saw the strangely dressed gentleman with a bowler hat smiling at them from the back of newsroom.

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