

Incognito

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Summary: A chance encounter between two strangers leads to Clark's worst nightmare.

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Disclaimer: I own nothing. I make nothing. All characters, plot points, and recognizable dialogue belong to DC Comics, Warner Bros., December 3rd Productions and anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise.

Author's Note: This fic was heavily inspired by Lynn S. M.'s fic, "Rising Star." Thank you, Lynn, for aiding my muse!

"I'll have the tomato and mozzarella salad with the balsamic vinaigrette with the grilled shrimp. And an ice water with lemon," the woman said, folding her menu and handing it back to the waitress, whose name she'd already forgotten.

She pulled out her PDA and checked her schedule for the day. Three short interviews, all thankfully being shot at the same location. She could breeze in, breeze out, and be done in time to get a pedicure before dinner. God, she was in need of a pedicure. And a manicure, she mused, looking at her nails. She was bored with this color already.

She looked around the restaurant, people-watching, as she usually did. After all, she *was* in the business of watching people and finding out their secrets. It wasn't just her job. It was her passion — as she saw it, her calling in life. But there wasn't much to see today. A few families grabbing an early bite to eat, mostly. A few groups of business men and women meeting over lunch. The occasional loner, like herself, one or two among them wrapped up in a book or newspaper. That was about it.

Wait a minute! her brain screamed at her, dragging her eyes back to the gentleman sitting a few tables away on her right side. *Is that who I think it is?*

As discreetly as she could, she studied the man. His eyes, the set of his jaw, the mole over his lip, the lopsided smile that he gave to the waitress as she brought over his lunch. She couldn't see his hair, as it was tucked beneath a Metropolis Tigers cap, but what she could see of it was a familiar shade of black. Even his physical build, hidden under a baggy hoodie and a pair of worn jeans, seemed to fit the profile in her mind.

Yes, she was *certain* of it.

Superman was sitting there, in plain clothes, eating a sandwich. And no one else seemed to be noticing.

So that's what he does when he's not off saving lives, she mused to herself. He goes incognito and mingles with the rest of us. Hmm...I wonder...

Her train of thought was broken as her waitress brought her water and a basket of bread and butter. She nodded distractedly at the woman and reached for a piece of bread as she continued to study the young man. His cell phone rang after a few minutes of her observation. He picked it up and spoke into it for several long minutes, marking something down in a small notebook that he pulled out from his jacket pocket. He gestured a little with the pen as he spoke, but she could not make out what he was saying. Finally, he hung up, made a few more quick marks in his book, and then went back to eating.

She continued her silent vigil, taking in every last detail. How he ate his food. How often he stopped to drink his beer. The way he hung his head, never looking up at the people around him for more than a few seconds at a time. The way he tried to turn away and make it look like a natural movement when a family of seven walked by his table.

The waitress returned with her salad. The woman waited until she went to check on a different table before taking out her cell phone. She hit the first number on her speed dial and waited, impatiently drumming her nails on the table, while the number dialed through.

Ring.

Ring.

Ring.

Ring.

"Hi, this is David Woodruff," a recorded message started to say while the woman rolled her eyes in annoyance. "I'm either on the phone or not in the office right now. But please leave your name, number, and a brief message after the beep."

Beeeeeeep!

"David, pick up!" the woman hissed, trying to keep her voice down, so as not to alert Superman. "It's Diana."

"Diana?" a voice said on the other end, sounding interested. "What's going on?"

"Call an emergency meeting for tonight," she instructed him in clipped tones. "I want to tell you all about Top Copy's newest explosive expose."

Barry Letterman sat eating his steak sandwich, carefully keeping his gaze down on his plate. He'd long ago learned that it was better not to do anything that could be mistaken for eye contact, if he wanted to be left alone. Eye contact, or even just the *perception* of eye contact, seemed to be an invitation for everyone and their mother to approach him. Sometimes, he didn't mind the attention. Hell, it was part of his job. Being a Superman look-alike demanded a certain amount of tolerance for the questions, the insults, the maulings by young and old, men and women alike.

But, sometimes, the attention could be a real pain in the rear-end, especially at times like this, when all he wanted was to eat his lunch in peace before heading off to his next job — pulling the balls at an assisted living facility's weekly Bingo game, followed by a nine year old's birthday party. And his agent had just called with two more birthdays, a bar mitzvah, a car show, three business openings and an appearance at a Boy Scout meeting, all within the next two weeks.

He sighed. It was steady money, and he was grateful for it. Who knew looking like Superman could be so lucrative? But it *was* a bit draining at times. He supposed he could put up with it for at least a few more years. He was going to be recognized anyway — why not make a living at the same time? After all, it wasn't like he was hurting anyone by doing it.

THE END