

# Rules of Trust

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Rated: PG-13

Submitted: October 2017

Summary: In the next installment of the “Rules Series,” Lois and Clark have their date and more than just feelings are revealed. As they navigate through the next step in their relationship, criminals appear to have risen from the dead and are committing crimes across Metropolis. Can Lois and Clark stop them? (2 of 10)

Story Size: 36,702 words (203Kb as text)

A/N: Huge thanks to Vicki and Feli for helping me work through the kinks on this one.

This story continues from the events in [“Guy Rule Number One.”](#)

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*Previously on Guy Rule Number One:*

Lois turned to Clark with a shy smile, running her hand over his chest, “I guess it’ll take more than a few terrorists to bring down this paper.”

“With Perry and Jimmy on board? Definitely.” Clark nodded, “So, what do you say we get this article written, sleep for a day and then you have dinner with me tomorrow night?”

“Sleep does sound good.” She smiled, “Are you sure you still want to date a self-absorbed judgmental know-it-all that steals stories from her friends?”

“I have it on good authority she’s worth it.” He reached over to cup her cheek, “So, is it a date?”

She ran her hands up his chest until they were resting on his shoulders and whispered, “It’s a date.”

His smile spread across his face, and he held her gaze, “You won’t be sorry.”

She looked back at him with a smirk. “You seem pretty confident about this date. What if it doesn’t work out? What makes you think I’m not going to have a horrible time and leave?”

“That won’t be possible.” He responded with a twinkle in his eye.

“Pretty sure of yourself there, aren’t you, Kent?”

“I am.”

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*Present Day...*

Lois Lane tapped her hand on the table, recalling her conversation with Clark yesterday morning. They’d stopped Ryan Wiley from hijacking the Hawkeye satellite and rescued her friend Molly. Things were slowly getting back to normal—well as normal as things got for them anyway.

After suppressing her feelings for the last few months and trying to go back to how things had once been between her and Clark before Lex’s proposal, they’d finally talked—and more than talked. She couldn’t suppress the smile as it slowly spread across her face, recalling how heated the kiss in his apartment had been. Things had definitely changed between her and Clark.

They were supposed to go out tonight.

Clark had confidently made her agree to ‘several dates’ after calling a halt to their very heated make out session the other night. It was a new feeling—thinking of Clark like this—being free to think of him like this. After over a year of going back and forth they were finally going to do this—and it scared her yet thrilled her at the same time.

“Lois!”

Molly had called her for lunch and, hearing her old friend’s

distressed tone, she’d agreed to meet her at the local vegan restaurant—a place she’d sworn she’d never step foot in. Lois smiled, waving at her friend from the table.

“Molly!” Lois beamed, watching as she took her seat.

“Thanks for meeting me here. I know it’s not your usual place...” Molly said, taking a scan at the menu, “...but they’ve really got some great stuff. Their Vegan Burger is to die for.”

Lois forced a smile, “If you say so.”

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“Really?”

Clark had to suppress a chuckle at his parents’ joint delight at the kitchen table that afternoon. He’d updated them with a synopsis of what had happened over the last few days—minus the fight he’d gotten into with Lois and her trying to set him up with the pool of interns at the Planet. That wasn’t something he wanted to get into with his parents. He definitely didn’t want to tell them about what had transpired at his apartment between him and Lois. They were close, but not *that* close.

“You’re finally going to tell her?” his mom asked with a wide grin.

“Yeah, I’m going to...” He stopped mid-sentence. “What do you mean, *finally*?” he asked.

“Well, what your mother is trying to say is, we’ve held out hope that you and Lois would...” His dad looked at his mom for help.

“Quit dancing around about how you feel and just tell her already!” his mom blurted out a bit too quickly.

He raised his eyebrows at her, “Exactly how long have you been holding *that* in?”

His mom softened her tone, scooting her chair up to him, “Clark, I know last summer was hard. It was hard for us to watch you go through it and not be able to help...but honey there were times I wanted to knock you upside the head. You let your feelings get in the way of doing what Superman does best...protecting those that can’t protect themselves. All because you were too stubborn to tell her the *real* truth.”

“I told her the truth. She didn’t want to hear it.” Clark argued half-heartedly. He really didn’t want to rehash this subject. It was getting too close to the conversation he’d had with Lois the previous night and right now he wanted to be thinking about his date and how he was going to convince Lois not to hate him for all eternity when he finally did tell her what—according to his parents he should have told her last summer.

“Clark Kent, you’re the most stubborn man I’ve ever met.” His mom interjected, “When you set your mind to something you *always* get your way. If you *wanted* her to hear it you would have found a way.”

Clark looked down, not sure how to respond. “You can’t keep comparing yourself to Superman. You’ll drive yourself nuts.” His dad interjected, guessing that was the reason for his lack of response.

“Well, speaking in the third-person.” His mom mused, “You’re halfway there.”

Clark chuckled, “I know. I guess I was afraid of what would happen if Lois believed Superman about Luthor after not believing Clark. It’s hard living up to the image that’s been built up. He’s just a disguise. A suit and cape I wear to save the day.”

“But to the rest of the world he isn’t.” his dad reminded him. “You *are* Superman, son. The sooner you come to terms with that and accept that the better off you’ll be.”

“I know.” Clark gave him a half-smile. “Believe me I know.”

“What changed your mind?” his mom asked with a twinkle in her eye.

“Lois.” His parents gave him a quizzical glance and he continued, “We talked the other day about... everything. What had happened last summer and things that were said. We worked through *a lot*.”

“And?” his mom asked with a knowing smile.

“And I’m taking her out to dinner tonight. I’m going to tell her everything.” He let out a long sigh, “I just hope she doesn’t hate me when this is all over.”

“She could never hate you.” His mom reassured.

“You don’t know Lois like I do.” He reminded her with a wince.

“I think she’ll surprise you.” His dad reassured him, placing a supportive hand on his shoulder.

“I hope you’re right.” Clark sighed, taking a look at the clock. “I’ve got to get back. I need to squeeze in a patrol before I start getting ready.”

“Good luck.” His mom called after him.

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“Bye Molly,” Lois gave her friend a hug before leaving. It had been nice catching up with her friend and not worrying about ulterior motives or criminals to chase. She’d spent most of the day yesterday resting and catching up on the sleep she’d missed out on during the investigation into Ryan Wiley. She headed for the exit and walked toward her Jeep.

So much had changed in the last few years....the last few days.

She recalled her and Clark’s fight last week. They’d both said things ....done things they’d regretted. She knew she had at least. She’d been so confused after Superman had left her apartment the night of the charity ball. When she’d arrived home that night, she’d been hurt, reeling from the emotions that had risen up watching Mayson dance with Clark. It was yet another reminder of what she couldn’t have...or so she thought at the time. When Superman had arrived and surprised her with a dance, she’d been over the moon.

She’d gone back and forth over the past year with her ‘Superman crush.’ She’d given up hope after she’d practically thrown herself at him the night before she’d accepted Lex’s engagement. She’d put it all on the line and told him how she’d felt and he’d crushed her dreams with one sentence.

<< “Under the circumstances, I can’t.” >>

What he’d meant by that she’d never know. He claimed she didn’t know him. Looking back on the previous year she figured he was probably right. There wasn’t very much outside of the printed stories she knew about him. She had known how she felt and, in her mind, that had been enough. After she’d accepted Lex’s proposal, Superman had disappeared from her life; as had Clark and everyone else she’d thought she was close to. She understood—anticipated Clark’s reaction. Superman’s she hadn’t.

To this day she had questions about what had happened during that time. It was like he had disappeared from Metropolis for a few weeks after her wedding. Her relationship with the man of steel continued to be complicated. She still cared about him, but anything more than friendship seemed like a pipe dream. She’d promised herself she’d never talk about that night at her apartment with Superman again. Things had normalized between them again. He was back to saving the day, and she was back to reporting and doing what she loved. Things were fine.

At least they were until she’d screwed them up again. Her fight with Clark over her misinterpreting the situation with Clark and Superman had caused her to lash out at Superman. She’d never done that before.

<< “You wanted an answer, and I gave it to you as clearly as I could. I’m sorry if you didn’t like the answer I gave you. I never meant to hurt you, but...”

“No? You certainly did a great job at trying to hide that.”

“You were trying to force a decision. Superman belongs to the world and...”

“What did you just say? Why do you keep talking about yourself in the third-person?” >>

<< “Do you have any idea what you were asking? The only

reason you were asking that...The only reason you were asking that was because you were scared that what Clark had warned you about Luthor was true...”

“Is there anything you two don’t talk about?”

“Like you said, we’re friends. We talk.”

“So I see.”

“I wasn’t trying to hurt you, but what you were asking wasn’t something—still isn’t something I can give. Superman—what I do—saving everyone everyday... It’s not a regular job. It’s not something that allows me the freedom to ... I can’t give you what you were asking—not like that anyway.” >>

‘Not like that.’

Those words continued to tease her brain for days. She had no idea what he meant by that. It was obvious he was hiding something. It was confusing. It was draining. The more she thought about it, the more confused she got.

‘Not like that.’

The words continued to nag at the back of her mind on repeat as she parked her car in front of her apartment building. She still felt apprehensive about her dinner date with Clark. It wasn’t like she could just avoid his calls the next day if things went badly.

He was her partner.

He was her best friend.

She’d spent the last few months beating herself up over turning him down in the park. She’d tried convincing herself repeatedly that the feelings weren’t real. It was just a crush. It would go away. She’d even allowed her sister to set her up on a few blind dates last month, but she hadn’t been able to go through with any of them. In the back of her mind, she’d been comparing them to Clark when her sister had sent over the pictures.

It had been painful... watching Mayson throw herself at Clark. It had been even more painful when she’d shown up at his apartment and caught what she’d assumed was a good-night kiss. The subtle reminder that no matter how much time she and Clark spent together or how close they got he didn’t see her like that...at least that’s what she’d thought.

<< “I lied.” >>

She’d never been so relieved to hear two words in all her life. After spending almost a full day of arguing with Clark like cats and dogs she’d gone to him to apologize and gotten the surprise of her life when they’d finally talked about what had happened last summer. When he’d confessed his feelings for her then turned around and taken it back.

Months of suppressing her feelings had fueled the intense kiss they’d shared in the doorway of his apartment. She’d never, ever felt anything like it. Her head had been swimming. All she knew at the time was she never wanted it to end.

How they’d gone from fighting one minute to her in his arms the next she wasn’t sure. Her relationship with Clark had never been like any other she’d experienced. He challenged her in ways others never would have dared to. He found a way to lift her spirit when she was in the most foul of moods. He just seemed to get her. Which made her reasoning for agreeing to marry Lex in the first place all the more confusing.

Lucy’s theory was she was desperate for something familiar amidst the chaos that was happening around her. With the fall of the Planet and everyone she cared about disappearing one by one she needed something to keep her grounded. She’d been alone and trying to find some sort of normalcy in her life. Without the extenuating circumstances of the Planet being gone she never would have accepted Lex’s proposal. She hadn’t been thinking clearly. Which was probably how Lex had wanted it. He’d had a way about controlling everything. It hadn’t been blatantly noticeable until she started looking back on it.

There had been plenty of signs. Clark had tried to warn her about Lex from the beginning. Her first dinner with Lex had been met with Clark doing a complete one-eighty from asking her to

dinner to asking how far she'd be willing to go to land the 'exclusive' with Lex Luthor. She'd been furious with him at the time, but looking back she realized he hadn't been wrong. She never did get the 'exclusive' on the real Lex Luthor, and she'd almost married him.

It was one of the many headlines that had been plastered on every newsstand at the time. How could Lois Lane have missed the biggest story right under her nose? How could she have missed the signs? Being proven wrong about someone was hard enough, but dealing with the fallout in the public eye had made things even more painful. She'd been wrong about Lex. Wrong in a humiliating, egg-on-her-face kind of way. It had been painful to see how wrong she'd been as more and more had come out about his criminal activities. Through everything, Clark had been there to help her through one of the most humiliating experiences of her life.

In the end, she couldn't marry Lex. Something had stopped her—Clark. He'd stopped her from making the biggest mistake of her life, yet not one word of *'I told you so'* escaped his lips. Not once did he get smug with her when news of Lex's underground criminal organization broke. He'd been her friend—just as he always had. The only difference was, she wanted more. After his 'confession' and being forced to see what her life was like without him in it she'd begun to question her own feelings toward him. She'd put up so many barriers after the fallout from Claude. She'd sworn she'd never again let anyone get to her. But Clark had. He'd broken down her barriers without her even realizing it.

She closed the door behind her, glancing at the time. She had an hour before Clark was supposed to arrive. She dropped her things off on the couch and headed for the bedroom to begin getting ready.

*'This is it. 'She told herself. 'No going back now.'*

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Clark finished the final touches for his and Lois' date tonight. He'd gone over and over how he wanted to do this. He needed to do this in private. He had spoken with Dr. Daitch at the EPRAD to help with his revelation. Over the last year after he'd found the globe and discovered more and more about his origins. The new telescope at the Planetarium had been donated by EPRAD and was powerful enough to show the coordinates he'd been given from the globe of where Krypton once had been.

Knowing Lois' inquisitive mind, he figured the best way to tell her everything was to show her. Keeping the date private and just the two of them would allow him to do that with her. Hopefully showing her how much he trusted her would make her forget the fact that he'd lied to her for over a year.

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Lois stared at her reflection in the mirror, tussling her hair for the hundredth time. A date. She was going on a date with Clark. Despite how heated things had gotten between her and Clark the other night she still felt knots in her stomach at the prospect of tonight's date. Normally, the first date was where you got to know the other person. She already knew everything there was to know about Clark—or at least she thought she did.

*<<"I love you, Lois, I don't want a one-night-stand, and I don't think you want that either. I want forever..."*

*"Forever?"*

*"Forever.">>*

*<<"After all this mess is cleared up .... A date."*

*"Several."*

*"Whatever."*

*"Say it."*

*"Fine, several dates."*

*"Are you laughing?"*

*"No, of course not, I just find it funny that you insist on emphasizing these 'several dates' when we've yet to have one."*

*"You shouldn't laugh. You're about to fall head over heels in*

*love."*

*"I thought I already was."*

*"Not yet, but you will be.">>*

*What did that mean?*

She felt a smile cross her face as she recalled the flirtatious way Clark had made her agree to several dates the other night. She'd seen a side to him that was new to her. Feeling free to think of him in a way other than friendship was new to her. For months, she'd been trying to talk herself out of the feelings she knew were there. She'd suppressed the need to hold him, touch him...

Lois glanced at the clock, dabbing a spritz of perfume on her wrist. *'Ten minutes.'*

Clark hadn't told her where they were going. Hopefully, she wasn't overdressed. She looked down at the simple violet dress. It hung loosely on her, allowing the skirt to flow naturally as she walked. The spaghetti straps came together in the back to create a zig-zag pattern on her upper-back. It was sexy yet elegant at the same time.. She ran her hand through her curled hair, checking to make sure nothing was out of place. She couldn't remember a time when she'd been so nervous for a date. Even when she'd thought she was having dinner with Superman she hadn't been this nervous.

*'Breathe. 'She reminded herself. 'Just breathe.'*

A soft knock on the front door penetrated through her thoughts. She glanced at the time. *'He's early.'*

*"This is it."* She told herself, repeating over and over as she approached the door, *"Just dinner. Just dinner."* She took a deep breath before opening the door.

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Clark felt his entire throat go dry as he tried to force his mouth to come up with a coherent thought. *"Hi,"* he finally said, offering her a weak smile. This was it. No going back.

*"Hi,"* Lois smiled back at him, running a hand through her hair nervously.

*"You look..."* He couldn't seem to find the right word to describe how perfect she looked.

Lois blushed, smoothing the sides of her violet dress, *"Thanks."* Panic crossed her face for a split-second, *"I'm not overdressed, am I?"*

*"No, no,"* he reassured, finally finding his voice. *"You look ... incredible."*

*"Really?"* She grinned back at him.

*"Are you ready?"* He asked hesitantly.

*"Let me just grab my purse."* She pointed to the black pocketbook on the table.

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Lois smiled as Clark held his arm out for her to hold, escorting her inside the Metropolis Planetarium. *"What are we doing here?"*

*"You'll see."* He said with a reassuring smile.

*"I thought we were going to dinner."* She reminded him as the doors behind them closed.

*"We are."* He pointed up the spiral staircase.

The room was dimly lit with security lights. Just enough light emitted for her to be able to see her way through the tall staircase that led up to the observatory on the roof. *"How far are we going?"*

*"All the way up."* He answered, pointing up toward the observatory where she could see the reflection from the stars shining through the stairwell.

*"I thought you said I wasn't overdressed."* She shot back half-teasing.

*"You're not."*

*"Why are we climbing twelve stories of stairs?"* She asked.

*"You'll see."* He explained behind her. *"It doesn't have the same effect if you go through the elevator."*

*"If you say so."* Lois sighed, still not sure what to expect when she finally did reach the top.

"I could carry you if you want." He suggested.

The thought had crossed her mind but given that they were now only one flight of stairs away and she'd already made it this far she squashed the idea before it could be entertained. "I, um..." She stopped when she turned toward the final flight of stairs. The glass ceiling showed the night sky with stars shining down on them. The view was breathtaking.

"See what I mean?"

She smiled back at him, uncertain how to respond. He was right. The view was out of this world. She took the final step into the room, leaning back into Clark's arms when she saw he'd already set up a picnic in the middle of the room. "Clark, it's beautiful."

"I told you I'd feed you." He grinned back at her. "And now you don't have to go to the gym tomorrow." She gave a light chuckle and allowed him to guide her toward the blanket he'd spread out, looking up at the stars with a picnic basket in the center. He took a seat on the left side, pulling out a cooler where he offered her a choice of beverage. "There's a bottle of Merlot, or I've got Cream Soda."

"I'll take the cream soda for now." She smiled, taking a seat next to him.

He grinned, pouring her cream soda into a glass and handing it to her. He then poured himself a glass and held it up, "To ... new beginnings."

She allowed her smile to widen at that, "To new beginnings," she repeated, clinking her glass with his. She took a sip, allowing the creamy liquid to dance on her taste buds for a moment. "So, is there anyone else here?"

"Nope." He grinned back at her. "I rented it out for the evening. The request is not as uncommon as you'd think."

"I'd say it's a very original place to have a date." She agreed, staring up at the stars. "but the view is..."

"Incredible. I know." He finished for her. "Are you hungry?"

"What's for dinner?" She looked at him expectantly.

"Glad you asked." He pulled out a familiar looking wooden tote, spinning the lids open and revealing fried rice, dumplings and teriyaki chicken.

"The Chinese takeout we had on our first story," Lois said, looking at the spread of food he'd laid before her.

"You said you really liked it." He recalled, meeting her gaze with a slow smile as he handed her a plate.

"It was out of this world." She said, taking the plate from him. "You know, I've looked all over Metropolis and I still can't find where this place is." She said, eying him as he made himself comfortable on the other side of the blanket.

"I'll have to take you there sometime." He grinned back at her.

"I'd like that." She said, taking a bite of the dumpling. "Still out of this world." She sighed, savoring the taste.

"Good." He took a bite himself, reaching for his own glass of cream soda.

"So, not exactly how I imagined tonight's dinner. Staring up at the stars over Chinese takeout." Lois smiled at him, taking another bite of her food.

"How did you imagine it?" Clark set his glass down, looking at her expectantly.

She smiled, "I don't know. I mean, we've shared hundreds of meals together over the past year. I wasn't sure what to expect."

"Are you...disappointed?" his tone remained hesitant as he looked at her quizzically.

"No," she said softly, meeting his gaze. "Just trying to figure out where to begin."

"I know," He smiled good-naturedly at. "Most first dates begin with getting to know you and we...already do."

She smiled at him in relief, "Yes, exactly. It's like starting out on the fifteenth date...without the dating."

"I know," He smiled at her, "but we still don't know

everything about one another. I don't think even on the fifteenth date we'd know everything."

"True." She reasoned aloud, taking another bite of her chicken. "So, maybe we start with sharing something the other doesn't know about the other? Sorta break the ice."

"Okay," Clark stirred his fork on his plate, taking a bite.

"You go first." She said nervously.

"Okay," He smiled, running his hand through her hair. It was a simple gesture, but his touch had a way of sending chills down her spine. "Let's see, something I haven't told you..." He grew thoughtful, "I hate Double Fudge Crunch Bars. I only keep them around because I know you calm down when you have one."

Lois laughed, "Really?"

"Really." He nodded. "I can't stand them."

Lois smiled at him, "I do appreciate that you keep them around for me...even if you do hate them." She sighed, looking back at him as she tried to think of something she hadn't shared with him yet, "I guess it's my turn. I hate crowded restaurants and operas and ballets and every other excuse to spend an exorbitant amount of money for very little entertainment."

"Duly noted." Clark chuckled. "No ballets. No operas. No crowded restaurants." She smiled back at him and pushed her plate away. He took the plate from her, setting it to the side with his. "I guess it's my turn," He sat up, meeting her gaze. She watched with a smile as he fidgeted with his glasses. "Remember the Godzilla goose chase I sent you on?"

"Vividly," she blushed.

"I actually had changed my mind halfway through. I was trying to stop you from finding it, but you were already halfway out the door." He said with a half-smile.

"Why? I deserved it." Lois shrugged, "I was being a jerk."

"True, but my parents always taught me to keep my cool. I planned that scavenger hunt in the heat of the moment when I was mad at you for stealing Jimmy's idea."

"And your story?" Lois prompted.

"That too." He gave her a good-natured smile.

"I felt really bad about stealing your story." She admitted. "I actually kept Lucy up all night the night before talking about it."

"So you weren't teaching a lesson?" Clark prompted, reminding her of the speech she'd given him to excuse her actions.

"No," she shook her head. "I just didn't want anyone else getting the story. I was more angry at Perry for letting everyone else horn in on the Superman story. I was sure it would have been my next Kerth...or a possible Pulitzer. I'm sorry."

"I figured." He shrugged good naturedly, "but thank you for the apology...even if it is a year later."

She lightly smacked him on the chest. He placed a hand over hers, running his thumb over the back of her hand. "So, whose turn is it now?"

"I don't know." She said thoughtfully, "I guess we lost count."

She stared at him, watching as he looked at her shyly. She brushed a hand through her hair. She'd been so nervous about tonight. Then Clark had put her at ease like he always did. He'd surprised her with a picnic under the stars. It wasn't something she'd expected from Clark. He'd spent the whole evening showing her a different side to him. He'd planned a romantic evening for just the two of them and remained his same fun-loving self. He was still her best friend but different at the same time. He was romantic and charming and sexy. Her stomach was doing butterflies contemplating when and if he was going to kiss her.

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Clark nervously readjusted his glasses, meeting Lois' gaze. The reflection from the stars reflected off her face with a glimmer. He did his best to keep the conversation light while they finished dinner.

"You're full of surprises, Clark Kent." She whispered, leaning back to stare up at the stars through the glass ceiling. "I never

would have thought to have dinner somewhere like this.”

“I thought it would be...unique.” He smiled back at her. “Are you having a good time?”

“Yeah,” she gave him a half-smile. “I’d say date number one is a...success.”

“Good.” He cracked a smile at her, standing up, helping her to her feet with him, “Did you know they got a new telescope here? It was rented out from EPRAD.” He explained, guiding her to the telescope.

“Really?” Lois looked at him in surprise. “I had no idea.”

“Take a look.” He pointed to the eyepiece.

“Okay,” she leaned over, looking through the eyepiece and he adjusted the focuser for her.

“You see that red dot?” He asked.

“Yeah,” she said softly, “What am I looking?”

“It’s the red sun from another galaxy,” Clark explained solemnly.

“Another galaxy?” She looked up at him in surprise. “How is that even possible?”

“Pretty amazing, huh?” He smiled at her.

“Yeah,” She smiled at him.

He moved his hands to her shoulders, moving her back in front of the telescope. “There’s more. Keep looking.”

She leaned over, looking through the eyepiece once more, “What am I looking for?”

“You see the space between those two stars?” he asked, checking the settings as he spoke.

“What am I looking for? There’s nothing there.” She said.

“I know.” He began hesitantly, “You’re looking at Krypton...or what was Krypton.”

Lois’ head shot up, looking back at him in surprise. “What?”

He watched her expression change from surprise to wonder, and he continued, “You’re probably wondering how I know that.”

“The thought crossed my mind.” She said hesitantly.

He moved his hand to cup her cheek, “There’s something I haven’t told you...about me.” He began, fingering the frame of her face with his thumb.

She smiled at him, “I didn’t know we were still playing that game.”

“You know how I was adopted, right?” he began, forcing himself to continue.

“Yeah,” Lois began slowly, running a hand up his chest. He held her hand, meeting her gaze. He wanted to kiss her. He wanted to pick up where he’d left off two nights ago and take her in his arms and never let go.

It would be so easy to just continue the date without saying anything. They’d been having a great time. It had been a perfect date. He knew he could have finished the evening and not told her anything about his alter-ego. He could have, but it wouldn’t be right. They were supposed to be getting to know one another. Part of that would include him telling her everything about himself. He just hoped him telling her wouldn’t ruin what they’d started.

“I wasn’t your typical adoption.” He began hesitantly, diving into his confession full-force, “My parents found me one night when they were driving by Schuster’s Field.”

“Clark...” Lois reached up to stroke his cheek.

He closed his eyes, savoring the feeling of her tender touch. “Please don’t hate me.”

“Mom said they saw what looked like a meteor when they were driving by one night.” He held his tongue allowing the information to slowly process in Lois’ mind.

“A meteor?” Lois looked at him quizzically.

“They found me...Mom said I was maybe seven or eight months old at the time...in a space ship.” He felt like a thousand ton weight had just been lifted off of him as he continued, feeling her eyes bore a hole into him as he continued. “It was around the time of the Cold War. They weren’t sure where I came from. I

wasn’t sure. I never knew anything about where I came from until recently.”

“R-Recently?” Lois echoed, “You w-were in a space ship. You f-found your birth parents?” He could tell from the look on her face she was still processing everything.

“Not exactly.” He continued. “There was something with the ship. A globe...that told me where I came from...who I was.”

“A globe?”

He nodded, reaching for the globe he had placed on the table next to the telescope. He’d brought it with him back from Smallville to show her. Her eyes widened in recognition. “I know you have a lot of questions. I know you’re probably mad and angry, and maybe a little shocked, but you have to understand I spent my entire life trying to avoid people like Jason Trask. My parents spent my entire childhood looking over their shoulder afraid someone would come and take me from them...or worse.”

Her breathing hiked, and he closed his eyes, hoping against hope that she wouldn’t pull away. “The globe. You have Superman’s globe. Why? How? Your parents...”

“I am Superman, Lois.” He whispered, placing a hesitant hand on her lower back and allowing them to float a few inches off the ground.

“Oh, my God.” She looked down, then back at him. “How is this possible?”

“Lois,” he repeated, cupping her cheek, “I’m still me. Superman was just a disguise I created so I could help people.”

“Oh, God.” She whispered softly, “We’re flying.”

“Floating.” He corrected.

“All those lame excuses.” She began to put the pieces together.

“I had to rescue someone.” He explained. “I only started using Superman as a way to rescue people this past year. Before that, I kept moving around when anyone got too suspicious.”

“I guess seeing a man who can fly and put out fires with his breath would be a little alarming. Raise a few questions.” Lois reasoned aloud, staring down at the floor below them. “Can we maybe get back on the ground? I’m still trying to process all of this, and this is just...not helping.”

“Yeah,” he slowly floated them back to the ground.

She let out a long breath and whispered, “Thanks.”

For a moment he thought she was going to run, but she surprised him, turning to look at him with an uneasy expression, “So, why now?”

“What?” he asked surprised.

“Why now?” She repeated, continuing to stare back at him with a blank expression. He couldn’t tell what she was thinking.

“I wanted you to have all the facts before anything between us...started,” he explained softly, moving to cup her cheek. “Lois, I’ve never told anyone this...*ever*: I know this is a lot to take in and I know you’ll need time to think things over. All of this is new to me. Trusting someone with...this secret. It’s not something that comes easy.”

“No, I don’t think it would be.” She looked around, seeming to be still processing everything. “You *lied* to me every day for over a year.”

“I know.” He said softly.

She bit her lower lip, “You let me make a fool of myself for months.”

“You were *not* making a fool of yourself. I didn’t know how to react or what to do. Everyone around me was treating Superman differently. I didn’t realize...” He stopped mid-sentence, seeing the hurt expression on her face. “I’m sorry.”

She stared down at the floor, “You broke my heart.”

“I know. I’m sorry.” He whispered.

“I’m such an idiot. How did I miss this?”

He felt like a knife had just twisted in his chest as he watched a single tear fall down her cheek. “You’re not an idiot.”

“No?” She asked, shaking her head. “I feel like one. It all makes perfect sense. You arrive in Metropolis at the same time as Superman. You’re never in the same place together. You both seemed to know things you shouldn’t...”

“You’re the smartest woman I know.” He said, tilting her chin to look up at him. “If anything I’ve had to work harder to make sure you didn’t find out. The whole point was for people not to connect Clark Kent with Superman.”

“Well, it certainly seemed to work.” She whispered, turning away from him. He frowned, watching as she paced. The shock was slowly wearing off and he could see the glint of anger in her eyes as she spoke, “I spent the last year proving over and over what an honest and trustworthy person Superman was. I put my reputation on the line. Perry put the paper on the line for you. You lied to me! Over and over and over and...I mean, you had so many chances to tell me! Why didn’t you tell me before? I confronted you about the globe in your apartment. You could have told me then. Why now?”

A single tear rolled down her cheek and he fought the urge to brush it off her cheek. He wasn’t sure how she’d react to him touching her right now. “I know I lied. I lied about a lot of things and I’m not proud of it. I did what I had to do to protect everyone I care about.” He said, taking a step toward her.

“Your parents,” Lois said softly, brushing the tear off her cheek.

“And you.” He said, taking another hesitant step toward her. “I was afraid of what would happen if anyone realized the connection between you and Superman...or Perry...or Jimmy.”

“A little late for that.” She said softly.

“I know.” He looked down, staring at the half-foot gap that stood between them.

“All those things about Lex you couldn’t prove?” she began piecing things together aloud.

“Conversations with him and Superman.” He explained.

“You should have told me.” She said in a soft whisper.

“I tried.” He argued.

“You tried?” she shot back. “You didn’t give me any proof. Just your ‘gut’ as if that was supposed to convince me. If I’d known you had actual conversations where he’d admitted...”

“He never came out and admitted anything. He insinuated. Gave veiled threats.” He corrected. “The evidence I had was circumstantial at best. You never would have believed me.”

“You never gave me a chance.” She shot back, stepping toward him angrily as she jabbed her finger in his chest, “What were you trying to prove?”

“I wasn’t trying to prove anything.” He said, “I was trying to bring him down the best way I knew how.”

“Do you have any idea what you put me through?” she jabbed her finger at him.

“I know I hurt you, Lois, and I’m sorry for that, but I can’t change what I’ve done any more than you can.” He reached out to cup her cheek.

“You broke my heart.” She accused.

“I never wanted to do that, but what you were asking for was something I couldn’t give...not like that.” He took a step toward her, closing the distance between them.

“Not like what?” she asked, “What’s changed?”

“This.” He leaned in to kiss her. His other arms moved up her spine, finding his way to the other side of her face, holding her to him as he kissed her thoroughly. He could feel her respond, moving her hands to his hair briefly before letting out a soft moan.

He slowly broke off the kiss and looked at her tenderly, “I’m sorry I hurt you and I know I have a lot to do in earning your trust back. All I’m asking for is a chance.”

“A chance?” she echoed, finding her voice.

“A chance,” he repeated. “I love you, Lois, and I have hated having to lie to you about this. I hate what this secret has done to

both of us.”

“Yeah, I can’t believe what an idiot I was.” She said, shaking her head. “That’s why you pulled away. Why Superman disappeared for those weeks...I thought it was a sense of loyalty to you, but it wasn’t. I didn’t lose two people I lost one. I just didn’t know it.”

“What are you talking about?” he asked, confused.

“You—Clark—Sorry, it’s just easier to talk about like this. You disappeared. After our fight about Lex when you stormed off. I tried calling you, and you never returned my calls. I tried calling for Superman, and he never showed.” Lois accused. “You abandoned me and I...”

He felt a wave of nausea wash over him as he recalled the pain from the Kryptonite cage he’d been trapped in. He moved his hands to her face, running his thumb against her jaw, “Lois, I would never abandon you...ever.” He took a deep breath, steadying himself before he continued.

“Then why didn’t you answer?” she asked, covering his hand with hers.

“I couldn’t answer because ....” He took a deep breath, contemplating whether or not to tell her.

She seemed to sense his hesitation and pressed, placing a hand on his chest, “No more secrets. You want a chance you need to be honest with me.”

“It was a trap.” He explained softly. “I got arrogant and never thought he’d get his hands on it after it was destroyed in Smallville.”

“What was destroyed?” she asked, her tone soft.

“Kryptonite.” He took a breath, “Luthor had a cage of Kryptonite.” She let out an inaudible gasp, and he continued, staring down at her small hand, “I was trapped in there for a day and a half. Listened to Luthor taunt me about how he’d finally won and what he was going to do to me...and everyone I cared about. I used up all of my strength to get out of there...had to hide behind the barrels of wine when he came in there with an ax.”

“Clark...”

“I made the mistake of being over confident when I confronted him. I never scanned the wine cellar. Never thought to check for Kryptonite. I never thought he’d get his hands on it. It was destroyed...so I thought.” He continued.

“But Arianna...” Lois interrupted.

“I think that’s the same sample Luthor had. I suspect it came from the sample Wayne Irig sent to the lab.” Clark explained.

“There really was Kryptonite there.” She mused, putting the pieces together. “I knew it existed from when she’d shot you but...I guess I just wrote Trask off as insane.”

“He was, but in this one thing he was right,” Clark explained.

“I never understood what he was doing in Smallville.” She said softly, “Now it makes sense.”

“Are you still mad?” he ventured cautiously.

“I don’t know.” She whispered. “I mean, I get why you did what you did. It just hurts that you lied to me for so long. I don’t even know where to go from here. I thought I knew you better than anyone. You’re my best friend and I had no clue...”

“You’re *my* best friend, Lois. The only one I would *ever* consider sharing this with.” He ran a hand through her hair. “It was never a question of trust. It was a question of my being ready to share this with someone...someone I could hopefully share everything with.”

“Everything?” she echoed uncertainly.

“Everything.” He repeated softly, stroking her jaw with his thumb. “I told you the other night...I’m not looking for anything temporary. I want *forever*.” He heard her heartrate pick up as he spoke and pressed on, “I’m just looking for a chance.”

“I feel like I hardly know you.” She said softly.

“I know, and I’m sorry for that.” He apologized. “Superman was just a disguise I dreamt up. He was never supposed to be

anything more than that.”

“He wasn’t a disguise to me.” she said tearfully.

“I know.” He looked down. “I had a hard time hiding how I felt about you in the suit.”

“You did?” she asked, looking up at him with a half-smile.

“Yeah,” he grinned back at her. “I want to show you something.” He said, picking up the globe from the table behind the telescope.

“The globe,” Lois said, recognizing the object in his hand. “What’s it for?”

“It has maps of Earth and Krypton.” He explained, “but it also holds messages from my birth parents.” Her eyebrows rose in wonder as he brought her hands with his to touch the bottom hemisphere of the globe. “Just watch.”

The room lit up, and the hologram of Jor-El filled the room. He looked toward Lois who stared in shock, “Wow...”

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Lois stared at the globe that had just gone cold in her hands, still reeling from everything she’d just seen and heard. “That’s amazing.”

“Yeah,” he gave her a half-smile, but she could tell the images they’d seen were painful for him. Seeing his birth parents prepare to send him into the cold, dark universe with no guarantee he’d make it.

She was still unsure how she felt about everything. There was a lot they would have to work through. He’d lied to her. Moving past it would take some time. Connecting Clark with Superman and vice versa would take time. Everything would take time.

He was staring at her expectantly. His hands remained on her waist, unmoving as if he was afraid she’d bolt out of his arms. “So, you seem to be taking this a lot ... better than I thought you would.”

“I think I’m still in shock.” She explained gently. “I won’t tell anyone. I know this wasn’t easy. You can trust me.”

“I know, Lois,” He smiled at her. “I trust you.”

She could feel her heart hammering in her chest as he spoke. It was so hard being this close to him yet feeling so torn about how to act with him. “Thank you for showing me the globe. I can’t imagine how hard that must have been to hear and see for the first time.”

He smiled at her, “I kept getting the messages when Jack had stolen the globe. I’m not sure, but I suspect he knows.”

“Does that scare you?” she asked, apprehensively.

Clark shrugged, “Anyone knowing makes me a little uneasy... vulnerable. I’m not used to that.”

“I can understand that.” She began slowly, fingering the lapels of his jacket, “There’s definitely a little more than a chance.” She began carefully, “but I’m still processing a lot of this. I don’t know how I’m going to feel in the morning. I don’t know how I feel right now. You lied to me. That hurts. I never thought you’d lie to me. You kept this huge part of yourself from me, and I’m still...” She stopped, seeing him looking at her with a surprised expression. “I understand why you did it. Really, I do. It’s just hard. Trying to take two men I love and combine the two is just... complicated.”

“You still love me?”

“Yes.” she asked cautiously. “I couldn’t stop if I tried, but don’t you dare lie to me again.”

“From this point on, you know everything.” He promised, leaning in to kiss her softly on the lips.

She smiled against his lips, feeling his other hand move up her spine until it found its way to the other side of her face, outlining the frame of her face with his palms as she moaned against him. It would be so very easy to get caught up in the moment right now. He’d just taken her on a romantic date, shared something with her he’d never told another living soul outside of his parents and showed her the last images of his birth parents. It was an

emotional roller coaster for both of them. She could very easily lose herself in his arms and not give it a second thought.

He pulled back, “We need to stop.” He whispered against her lips.

She nodded, watching as he stepped away from her, looking at the ground before looking back at her.

“You owe me an exclusive. A real exclusive.” She said, moving her hands up his chest, “Everything that didn’t get printed.”

“Okay,” he tightened his arms around her.

“No more secrets.” She repeated.

“No more secrets.” He echoed, leaning in to capture her mouth with his, sealing the promise with a kiss.

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Lois leaned against the doorframe of her apartment, taking a deep breath. Her lips still tingled from where Clark had kissed her goodnight. Tonight had been so much different than anything she’d imagined when she had pictured her date with Clark. She’d pictured a typical dinner date with him. She’d pictured a light conversation. Maybe a kiss goodnight. She never imagined being swept off her feet ... literally by a dinner date under the stars. She’d never imagined she’d have such conflicting emotions as she continued to process everything she’d learned tonight.

Clark was Superman.

Superman was Clark.

Her best friend was Superman.

Superman was the guy she’d shared pizza with, watched Lethal Weapon with and joked with for so many nights. Merging the two images into one would take time. She knew that, but the more she thought about it, the harder it was to deny how she felt.

She knew she loved him.

She was still upset he’d lied to her, but given that he’d told her on what was their first date, she knew she couldn’t hold it against him. He was trying to be honest with her. He’d shared something with her he’d never shared with anyone. The images of Jor-El and Lara putting their baby into the silver space ship while their planet was dying around them haunted her. She knew from the look on Clark’s face they haunted him too.

<< “You’re about to fall head over heels in love.”

“I thought I already was.”

“Not yet, but you will be.”>>

A slow smile spread across her face as she recalled her conversation with Clark a few nights ago. That was why he’d stopped. That was why he’d made her promise to go on ‘several dates’ with him. He’d been afraid of her reaction. Despite how close they’d been to crossing that line, he’d stopped. She could still recall how incredible he’d felt pressed up against her. They both had lost control that night. If he hadn’t stopped, she would have gladly moved their embrace to the bedroom.

That was how she’d felt two nights ago anyway. Whether she’d still have felt that way knowing what she did now she wasn’t sure. She had two men she cared about deeply that she’d just found out were one and the same. Coming to terms with that concept was a challenge. Her heart wanted one thing while her head wanted another.

He’d promised to take things slow and let them figure things out. She wasn’t sure how she felt about that idea, but she was willing to give it a chance—give them a chance. At the end of the day, he was still Clark. He was still Superman. Losing either man from her life wasn’t a notion she wanted to entertain.

He’d trusted her with his secret.

That was a step in the right direction.

The rest they could figure out.

Despite everything, she knew she still loved him. Trusting him was going to be a little more difficult.

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After he’d taken Lois home, Clark did a quick patrol around

Metropolis. He couldn't stop grinning. All he could think about was how it felt like an enormous weight had been lifted off of him. All weekend long he'd been worried about how Lois was going to react. He was terrified she would hate him. Terrified he would have ruined any chance at what was starting between them.

His dad had been right. She had surprised him. She'd been shocked, angry, hurt, and everything in between, but the most surprising emotion he'd seen from her was understanding. She had understood why he'd lied to her, but she was still hurt. That was going to be the hardest hurdle in their changing relationship.

*'Relationship.'*

He couldn't help but smile at that thought. He was in a relationship with Lois Lane.

His patrol turned up a handful of incidents. He'd stopped a small group of thugs on the outskirts of town from making their mark on one of the buildings on Hobb's Bay district, and stopped an attempted hijacking. Just when he thought it was safe to head back home, he heard a muffled cry for help from a building marked 'Joe's Antiques.'

When he scanned the building, he found a middle-aged man tied up in the back store room with the glass shattered everywhere. He moved to the store room and untied the man, "Are you okay?"

"Do I look okay?" the man asked irritably, rubbing his wrists as he stood up. Remorse washed over his face when he looked back at Clark. "I'm sorry Superman. I just... They took everything."

"They?" Clark asked, looking around the shop that had been torn apart. It was obvious the assailants had been looking for something.

"My files. My collections....The entire collection on Bonnie and Clyde, Al Capone, and his gang....gone. My dad spent his whole life collecting this stuff."

"I'm sorry, sir." Clark managed. "How long ago did they leave? If you give me a description, I might be able to catch up to them."

"I doubt it." The man sighed, "The Bonnie and Clyde wannabes were in and out before I could make a sound. I've been tied up there for almost an hour. Took me over half an hour to get the gag they had on me loose enough to be able to yell and another half hour to get the sound-proofing turned off." Off Clark's look, he explained, "We keep the place sound-proof for privacy of our customers. Activated by this remote." He pointed to a small silver object that was on the floor by where he'd been tied up.

Clark did his best not to react as he watched the man pick up the phone to call the police. He'd been on patrol for the last hour. He could have helped if he'd heard, but from the sound of it, there hadn't been anything for him to hear. He glanced at the cases that had been broken into. Clyde Barrow's 10-gauge Winchester shotgun, Bonnie 20-gauge model 11 shotgun, and numerous .30-caliber BARS that were found in Bonnie and Clyde's car upon their capture. It appeared the man's collection specialized in historic weapons from some of the most notorious criminals in history. Now, someone had a collection of unlicensed weapons with more firepower than any gangster, or police officer could defend themselves with. It looked like he knew what his and Lois' next story would be.

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Lois fumbled with the clasp to her skirt, twisting it to the back as she tucked her blouse in, examining herself in the mirror. She was late. She had tried on four different outfits and still didn't find anything she felt was right.

"This is ridiculous." She thought to herself. 'It's work. The Planet. Not a date.' She stared at her reflection in the mirror, mussing her hair as she let out a scream in frustration, falling against her bed. The phone on her nightstand rang, and she sat up, reaching over to answer it, "Lois Lane,"

"Lois? Hey, it's Jimmy!" Jimmy's voice rang on the other end

of the line.

Lois sat up, running a hand through her hair, "Jimmy, hi, what's up?" she replied, trying to cover her distressed tone.

"I'm supposed to head over to the Chief's to look over the car for the rental he got for Friday's party, but I can't get my car to start. I was wondering if you could give me a boost?" Jimmy's tone went up a few octaves as he got his usual 'I need a favor' tone to his voice.

"What about Perry? Can't he give you a boost?" Lois asked, reaching for the jacket to her suit hanging on the bed post. It didn't look like she'd be seeing Clark at the office anytime soon.

"Uh, he's still at his place. I figured since you're just a few blocks away..."

"Okay, I'll be right over." Lois sighed, "Be ready."

"Thanks, Lois," he said before hanging up.

Lois sighed, looking at her reflection in the gray business suit with a short skirt that came just above her knee. "I guess gray it is." She said with a sigh. She grabbed her purse and bag and headed for the door. She held her keys out to lock it and stopped when she saw a note with a single rose taped to her door.

*//Lois,*

*I'll be a little late this morning. I've got to check on a few things from last night's patrol.*

*Enjoy the croissants.*

*Love,*

*CK//*

'Croissants?' Lois looked down to see a small white bag outside her door.

A slow smile spread across her face as she picked it up.

<< "You're about to fall head over heels in love." >>

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Clark stopped by the police station as Superman to talk to the Police Chief about how they planned to handle having the gunpower of a small army out on the streets without any way of tracking it.

"I'm sure we can come up with a solution." The chief explained, "We're not equipped like they were in the 20's."

"Thank you, sir," Clark said, following him into the station, "That kind of firepower in the hands of a petty thief will be dangerous for everyone in Metropolis. I just wanted to make sure the police were prepared. I'm fast, but even I can't be in two places at once."

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"I honestly thought it was the battery," Jimmy explained as he sat in the passenger seat of Lois' Jeep.

Lois did her best not to react. It wasn't his fault his alternator had gone out. It wasn't his fault that she probably wouldn't see Clark till after lunch at this rate and would miss her chance to talk to him...and thanking him for what she could only assume were authentic French croissants. It wasn't Jimmy's fault that all she could think about was her partner and how her lips still tingled every time she thought about last night.

It wasn't Jimmy's fault, but she was still upset.

She'd been miffed when he'd helped himself to one of her croissants because he was starving. She'd been annoyed at having to drive him to Perry's house. She'd been irritated when Jimmy had sat on her rose. Everything he did this morning seemed to set her off.

"It's fine, Jimmy," she snapped. "Let's just get you to Perry's then you can ride back with him. I've got leads to follow up with, and I've been out of the office all weekend."

"Hey, that's right, you got the whole weekend off," Jimmy recalled. "Did you do anything exciting?"

"Not really." She shook her head, refusing to look at him.

"Rested mainly."

"Oh." He nodded. "Is CK still mad about the whole setting him up on dates thing?"



“No, he’s over that,” Lois said offhandedly.

“Good.” Jimmy let out a sigh of relief, “I mean, I know he said he forgave me and all, but I just wanted to make sure...” he trailed off before interjecting, “I really think you should cut Mayson some slack though. I mean, CK deserves to be happy. He’s got himself a hot babe that...”

“Babe??” Lois zeroed in on the word Jimmy had used to describe Mayson. She’d forgotten about Mayson. The ADA that had been throwing herself at Clark the last few weeks. She really didn’t want to talk about her. She knew Jimmy didn’t mean anything by it, but hearing about the blonde ADA on the heels of last night felt like a punch in the gut.

“Well, yeah,” Jimmy said with a grin. “I gotta say I’m surprised CK hasn’t made his move. I mean if I had a hot babe like that chasing me I’d...”

Lois pulled into Perry’s driveway and jerked the car into park. “We’re here.”

“Thanks, Lois,” Jimmy hopped out of the car, closing the door behind him.

Lois looked over at her crinkled flower and broken stem. “I will not kill him. I will not kill him,” she told herself. She waited a few minutes willing her annoyance to go down before getting out of the car to greet Perry who was walking up the driveway.

“Hey, darlin’, I thought you’d be at the office by now,” Perry said as she stepped out of the Jeep.

“So did I,” Lois gave a forced smile, “but Jimmy was having car trouble so here I am.”

Perry looked back at Jimmy who shrugged, “The alternator’s going out.”

“Well, since you’re here you might as well get a peek too.” Perry motioned for her to follow him to the garage.

Perry hit the garage door opener in his hand. The door slid open to reveal a vintage 1934 Ford Coupe in mint condition. “Nice ride, Chief,” Lois complimented.

“Whoa, check it out...” Jimmy’s eyes lit up as they walked inside the garage.

“Beauty, ain’t she? I got her on loan for the Planet’s anniversary celebration.” Perry said proudly, eying the car with admiration.

Lois peered inside, eying the leather and wood paneling. “Original interior.”

“She’s a classic.” Perry beamed.

“Is this what you used to drive when you were my age?” Jimmy asked.

Perry shared a look with Lois before giving Jimmy the evil-eye, “Jimmy, I might have gray hair, but that’s because of my job. I wasn’t even born when this car was built.”

“So what’s wrong with this one?” Jimmy asked, pointing to the white sedan parked next to the coupe.

“When I came in last night I couldn’t get it to shift into ‘park.’” Perry explained.

Jimmy pulled out a wrench from his toolbox, “Well, let me see what I can do...”

“You guys have fun. I’m going to head into the Planet.” Lois said, heading back toward her Jeep.

“All right, darlin’, thanks for giving Jimmy a ride,” Perry called after her.

She gave a quick wave and headed up the driveway, pulling her keys out of her purse. She felt a cold metal object against her back and jumped.

“I’ll take those.” She looked back to see a man dressed as if he’d just come out of an old gangster movie staring at her with a blonde next to him.

“What do you want?”

The woman pointed toward the garage, “We’ll ask the questions. Move it.”

“Lois, I thought you...” Perry stopped mid-sentence when he

saw the man and woman next to her with a gun to her side.

“You just made the biggest mistake of your life,” Perry said, reaching for his phone on the workbench.

“Don’t even think about it, Gramps,” another pistol was pulled out by the blonde, training it on Jimmy and Perry.

The man moved toward the coupe, fiddling with the keys to her Jeep to try and get the car door open. “Those aren’t the keys.” Lois tried to explain.

Frustrated he threw the keys to the ground. “Y’all got the keys to my car?”

Perry looked at him like he’d grown a second head, “You want to run that by me again?”

“It ain’t that confusin’, Pops. You got my car, and I want it back.” The man said scowling at them, “Where are the keys?” the man moved the pistol from Lois’ back to Perry and the blonde turned back toward Lois, giving her a warning look.

Lois looked around, hoping to find something she could use as a weapon.

“Just give him the keys, Chief.” Jimmy stammered.

“I don’t know what your game is, friend, but that car’s on loan from a collector to my newspaper.” Perry’s tone remained calm as Lois tried to inch her way toward the garage door opener.

“Newspaper man, huh? You boys always were gutsy.” The mans’ smile faded away, and he scowled, “Too bad I never cared much for gutsy.”

Lois saw her keys on the ground next to the door opener. She met Perry’s gaze, trying to signal to him what she needed to do.

“Bonnie!” the man called out.

The blonde turned her attention to Perry and Jimmy. Lois took advantage of the distraction and grabbed the keys and door opener. At the same time, Perry threw the keys into the coupe and ran with Jimmy out of the garage just as Lois hit the door opener.

“Run!!” Perry pushed them toward Lois’ Jeep as they ran up the hill.

The sound of gunfire echoed inside the garage. Lois looked back in shock to see dents poking out but no holes from the bullets. “Bullet-proof?”

“Yeah, Alice wanted to make sure we had a place to go in case of an emergency, home invasion... That sort of thing. Never thought I’d need to use it. You got your mobile phone?”

Lois opened the door to her Jeep, climbing inside to hand it to him. Perry took a shaky breath and began to dial. A loud crash came from the garage.

“Chief, I think you better look at this,” Jimmy called out.

“Not now, I’m trying to remember the number to the ....”

“Duck!” Jimmy pushed them both inside the Jeep.

They looked up to see the coupe flying by with cracked wood from the garage door flying all over the place. Lois peeked up from the driver’s seat where she’d been pushed. “I hope you had insurance on that thing.”

Perry looked back at the hole in his garage door and muttered, “Alice is gonna wring my neck...”

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Clark looked up at Lois’ empty desk for the hundredth time since he’d gotten in. It was well past nine which was when she usually got in. So far no call, no message. Nothing. The longer he waited, the more worried he got. Lois had a knack for finding trouble. Just as he was about to head for the stairwell to scan the city for her, she stepped off the elevator with Perry and Jimmy in full tirade.

“I don’t understand! How can you not insure a car like that!” He smiled watching her light into Perry and Jimmy as they made their way down the ramp into the newsroom.

“Lois?” He approached her, Perry and Jimmy as they made their way toward Perry’s office. He did his best to suppress his growing anxiety over where she’d been all morning.

“Hi,” she smiled at him. He couldn’t suppress the grin as he

got a good look at the dark gray, knee-high skirt and jacket she'd chosen to wear with a teal blouse. She looked beautiful.

Noting the presence of Jimmy and Perry watching them he cleared his throat, "Hi."

She met his gaze, giving him a quick once-over with a half-smile before turning back toward Perry. He loved that smile. He'd seen her give him that half-smile all last night on their date and at her door when he'd been kissing her goodnight. He wanted to pursue where her train of thought was headed with that look, but he also wanted to know what had happened. He'd spent the last hour worried sick about her.

He did his best to keep his tone as neutral as possible and not give any clue about their budding relationship to Perry or Jimmy before Lois was ready. They had agreed to take things slow. Letting the whole office know they were dating before they'd had a chance to talk after last night wouldn't exactly win him any points toward earning her trust back either. "Uh, where have you been all morning?"

She threw Perry an annoyed look before turning back to him and giving him a once over with a half-smile. "Getting carjacked. How was your morning?"

"What!?"

"Lois, I don't want to talk about it." Perry argued, "Let it go."

"Let it go?" Lois echoed, following Perry and Jimmy into the Editor-in-Chief's office. "I'm not going to let it go. You were almost killed because you'd rather argue with carjackers instead of hand over the keys. Would you have taken a chance like that if you had bought the insurance?"

"No, probably not, but..."

Lois cut him off, "Of course you wouldn't! You would..."

"Carjacked?" Clark interrupted her tirade. "Chief, are you all right?" He looked at Perry in concern, seeing the extra lines of worry on the man's face.

"Fine. I'm fine. Jimmy's fine. Lois is fine. Everyone made it out in one piece...and that's all that's important, right, Lois?" He eyed Lois with a stern gaze.

"Yes, everyone's fine, and Perry got carjacked by Bonnie and Clyde." Lois shot back with an even sterner gaze.

Clark, did his best to suppress a chuckle, "Bonnie and Clyde? Lois, they died over sixty years ago."

"Oh, but CK you weren't there. They looked just like them. Had the accent, the clothes, the makeup..." Jimmy rambled. "It was insane." He patted himself on the chest, "I saved us."

"Jimmy, go splash some water on your face," Perry ordered.

Clark looked between Lois and Perry, uncertain where to even begin. How was it that Lois could find trouble so easily? Why hadn't she called him? He'd been worried sick for the last hour. "I'm sorry, Chief, how did all this happen?"

Lois sighed, "I gave Jimmy a ride to Perry's because his car wasn't starting. When I got over there, we got held up by Bonnie and Clyde wannabes. We were able to trap them inside the garage, but unfortunately, they used the Chief's collector coupe to break down the garage door and escape. Jimmy pushed us out of the way."

Clark placed a protective arm around her. He still wasn't sure what was okay and what wasn't now. She didn't pull back, so he assumed she was okay with him holding her after the ordeal. "Why didn't you call me?" He asked in concern. "I could have..."

"Could have what?" Lois asked, eying Perry who was watching them with a critical eye.

Remembering he had an audience he covered, "I could have... helped." He supplied, meeting her gaze with a half-smile.

"Well, son there wasn't much anyone could do at that point. The police weren't that optimistic about getting the car back." Perry said with a sigh.

"The police don't have any leads?" Clark asked hesitantly.

"No, they were too busy laughing at the description of Bonnie

and Clyde to be of any help," Lois explained, stepping away from him as she began to pace. "I think we need to check and see if there have been any crimes like this reported. A couple in their late-20's dressing up as gangsters. They'd have to get the outfits from somewhere. You can't get stuff like that off the rack anymore..."

Clark recalled the robbery Superman had helped out with last night, "There was a robbery last night. A man and woman described as 'Bonnie and Clyde' lookalikes held up a private gun collector. They got away with an arsenal of antique weapons. Tommy guns, Colt-forty, five automatics..."

"I'd say that at least sounds like a connection." Lois reasoned aloud, stopping mid-pace. She cracked a half-smile, but he couldn't bring himself to return it. She'd yet again found trouble. Normally, he was with her and was able to help, or she called him. This time she hadn't. What he couldn't figure out was 'why.'

"See what you can dig up. That car was a piece of this paper's history. It belonged to one of our great publishers...and more importantly...it's not insured."

Lois and Clark nodded, stepping out of Perry's office. Lois turned to him after Perry's door was closed, "So, where do you want to start?"

He looked around to see if anyone was watching, before guiding her toward the conference room, "Can I talk to you a minute?"

He opened the door for her, and she stared at him in disbelief, entering the conference room with a huff, "What is it?" she asked after he closed the door.

"Are you okay?" he asked, checking her for any sign of injury.

"Fine," she said with a light laugh. "A little confused right now, but fine."

"What's this?" He knelt down to look at her, ankle where she had a small scrape.

"It's nothing." She reassured him.

He looked her over with his x-ray vision reassuring himself she was indeed okay before letting out a sigh of relief. "Why didn't you call me?"

She looked at him in disbelief. "When was I supposed to call you? There was no time."

"You could have gotten seriously hurt," he pointed out taking a step toward her.

"I've survived a lot worse." She reminded him.

"What if they'd shot you?" he asked in concern. "Lois, you could have been killed."

"But I wasn't." Lois pointed out, holding up her hands for inspection. She crossed her arms over her chest pacing as she spoke, "I have been taking care of myself for quite some time. I know what to do when a gun gets pulled on me. The Chief's the one you should be mad at. He could have just given them the keys and avoided the thousands of dollars of damage to his garage."

"I'll deal with him later," Clark said, cutting her off. "Right now, I want to talk about why you didn't call for help when someone pulled a gun on you guys like that. I would have been there in a heartbeat, and you know that."

"Clark, I'm fine. It was no big deal." she shrugged it off, "These things happen. You can't protect me from every bad thing that is going to happen any more than the police can protect Southside from Intergang."

"They had guns, Lois." He said, taking a step toward her.

"They didn't shoot me," Lois reassured him, holding her hands up to prove her point. "Look, I know you're upset but don't you think you're overreacting just a little bit?"

"No, I don't," he argued, taking her hand in his. "You should have called me."

"I was dropping Jimmy off at Perry's. He lives in one of the safest neighborhoods in Metropolis. How was I supposed to know we'd get held up? It was just dumb luck." She fingered the lapels

to his jacket with a smile. “That’s all.”

He looked down at her, seeing the flirtatious smile on her face. He was a goner, and he knew it. “Please try and be more careful.”

“I can try,” she reasoned aloud, “but you’ve also got to trust me to be able to handle the situation on my own too.”

“I do trust you,” He argued.

“Clark, what do you think would have happened if I’d yelled ‘help Superman’ this morning?” she pressed, taking a step back from him as she crossed her arms over her chest.

Clark took a deep breath, frowning at the loss of contact, “I would have gotten there in time to stop these gangster-wannabes, and we wouldn’t have to chase them down. Perry’s garage would still be intact, and you never would have gotten hurt.”

“I think you give yourself too much credit.” She argued, placing a hand on his chest with a smile. “If I’d yelled, ‘Help Superman’ or anything like that I might as well have had a ‘Shoot Me’ sticker plastered on my forehead.”

“It never stopped you before,” He pointed out, sighing in relief as he felt her small frame press against him.

“When I couldn’t find any other way out, yes, I’ve yelled for help, but when I can get out of there without drawing attention to myself, I like to go that route.” She ran her hands up his chest, allowing her hands to finger the back of his neck as she continued, “Besides, there’s no guarantee on where you’d have been at the time. How do I know you’ll hear me? You could be on the other side of the world saving someone, and I wouldn’t know. I did what I had to do to get out of there.”

“Lois, I will always come when you call me.” He whispered, stroking her cheek. “but I guess you have a point.”

“I know I do.” She grinned up at him. “You can say it. ‘You’re right, Lois.’”

He smirked at her, fighting the urge to kiss her. It was really hard to think straight when she was standing this close to him.

“Come on. You know you want to.” She teased in a sing-song voice.

“Fine, you’re right,” He said with a smirk.

“I know.” She leaned in to whisper a soft kiss against his lips. “I’m sorry I scared you.” She brushed her lips against his again, lingering a little bit longer this time. He moved his hands to the back of her head, holding her to him as he deepened the kiss.

“God, I’ve wanted to do that since I left you last night,” he murmured against her lips.

“Thank you for breakfast.” She whispered against him with a grin, breaking off the kiss, “Even if Jimmy did steal half of it.”

He chuckled against her, running his hands up and down her sides as he walked them away from the main window to the conference room. “You want me to get you some more? It’ll only take a few seconds.”

She fingered the lapels to his jacket, “No, knowing my luck, Jimmy will find the bag again.”

Her hands moved to the back of his head, fisting his hair as he walked her back toward the corner of the conference room away from peering eyes. “We’re going to get caught.” He looked back toward the window behind them.

She giggled, tugging on the knot of his tie, “Makes it more fun.”

“You said you wanted to keep...” He stopped mid-sentence when she grinned at him, fingering the silk tie in her grasp. He loved seeing this side of her. His hands slipped around her waist, pulling her to him.

“I said a lot of things last night.” She murmured, fingering his hair as he held her to him. “Keeping it professional in the office is a lot harder than it sounds.”

“It was your plan.” He pointed out, outlining her face with his palm.

“It was a dumb plan. A stupid plan.” She whispered, fingering the knot to his tie as she spoke. He chuckled against her as she

mumbled, “Less talking.”

“Did you just call *your* plan dumb?” he whispered in her ear.

“Yes,” she whispered softly, fingering the hair on the back of his neck flirtatiously, “Now, shut up and kiss me.”

Jimmy’s voice penetrated his thoughts, and he backed away from Lois, “Hey, Lois, there’s a...”

Lois moved away from him, taking a few steps back. Jimmy looked at them with an amused smile, “Am I interrupting something?”

“Nope,” Lois said hurriedly.

“Nothing,” Clark said at the same time.

“Uh-huh,” Jimmy stared between the two of them for a minute before finishing. “Right, well, Lois, there’s a Detective Wolf on line two.”

“Detective Wolf?” Lois asked, smoothing out the sides of her skirt and straightening her jacket.

“He said he was calling about the carjacking this morning.” Jimmy supplied, looking at his feet.

Clark did his best not to look at Jimmy as he straightened his tie.

“Oh,” Lois nodded, “We -I should go talk to him then.” She looked at Jimmy who was still staring at them with a big grin on his face. “What?”

Jimmy snickered, “Nothing. I didn’t say nuthin.” She didn’t move, and Jimmy cleared his throat, “Lois? Line two.”

“Right. I’m gonna just take that at my desk,” Lois said, rushing out of the conference room.

Jimmy cleared his throat watching Lois leave with a chuckle.

“What?” Clark asked, still not sure what Jimmy was laughing at.

“Nothing,” Jimmy shrugged.

“Okay,” Clark said, shaking his head as he headed into the newsroom to follow Lois.

“Yeah, CK, wait!” Jimmy nodded with a glint in his eye, patting him on the shoulder, “You might want to wipe the lipstick off first.”

Clark looked back at the young man in surprise, pulling his handkerchief out of his pocket to wipe his face. Sure enough, Lois’ lipstick appeared on the white cloth. There was no denying that.

“Don’t worry. I’m not going to say anything.” Jimmy shrugged. “You two might want to be a little more discreet though if you’re not telling anyone. Rumors fly fast.”

“Thanks, Jimmy,” Clark smiled at his young friend before heading out.

As he left the conference room, he overheard Jimmy talking to himself. “This place keeps getting stranger and stranger. Mayson never had a chance....”

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Lois hung up the phone with Detective Wolf, turning toward Clark’s desk. He was finishing up a call of his own, cradling the phone in his ear with an annoyed expression. She bit her lip, allowing her eyes to wander over his broad shoulders, taking note of how the muscles rippled from beneath the crisp cotton of his dress shirt as he moved.

One date and they were already having a hard time focusing on work...well she was anyway. All she could think about right now was how she wanted to pick back up where they’d left off in the conference room before Jimmy had so rudely interrupted to tell them Detective Wolf had called.

Why did that detective choose *that* moment of all times to call and check in on the case? She’d given her statement and Detective Wolf had called to introduce himself and find out if she remembered anything else since this morning. At least the phone call hadn’t been a total waste. She’d been able to find out that the bullets used matched up with the magazine of a Tommy Gun, not something that would typically be used nowadays. So there was a clue.

She glanced over at Clark who was reaching for a message pad on the other side of his desk. She admired the way the cotton of his trousers stretched across his backside.

*'Bad thoughts.'*

Dianne and Rachel walked by, blocking her view and she quickly turned her attention back to her computer which she still hadn't booted up yet. She hit the power button, catching the look Dianne gave her when she walked by. Had she been that obvious?

She fought to suppress the smile threatening to spread across her face. She was in trouble. One date and she was already acting moony-eyed and unable to concentrate. Oh, but the teasing and the flirting and the kissing....

He was really, *really* good at the kissing. She bit the inside of her lower lip, fighting the urge to look back over at him. What was wrong with her? She'd gone from being angry and hurt to cautiously trusting in less than twelve hours. This morning she couldn't seem to wipe the smile off her face, recalling her and Clark's date last night and his revelation. No more hiding how they felt about one another. No more secrets.

Yes, there were still a lot of challenges they had to face with trying to merge her feelings for Superman and Clark. She'd spent a year seeing the two men as separate and combining the memories and how she viewed each of them into one would take time. It was nice seeing the walls come down with him. He had promised her no more secrets. She'd woken up to find a note explaining his absence and a bag of incredible pastries with a single rose. He was certainly pouring on the charm and she was enjoying every second of it.

Recalling the teasing from earlier, she let the smile spread across her face. Jimmy probably suspected something. Who knew how long he'd been standing there. She didn't think he'd say anything but still... She couldn't even be in the same room as Clark without fighting the urge to kiss him...and failing miserably. How did she seriously think she'd be able to keep their budding romance under wraps?

"Well, remind me never to make Bobby mad," Clark said, walking toward her after hanging up the phone.

"Bobby?" Lois asked confused as she tried to pull her mind back to the present. "Since when does he offer up information without payment?"

"He's still charging but he did say he'd take half if we can stop the guys that tore up his favorite all-you-can-eat buffet," Clark explained taking a seat at her desk.

"Ah, food is involved." Lois smiled back at him, "That explains it."

"I told him we'd meet him in the usual spot," Clark said, returning her smile with one of his own.

"Why would someone tear up a buffet?" Lois asked confused.

"I don't know. The reason the owner was given was pretty strange. A man and a woman...dressed in clothing from a *bad gangster movie*...as Bobby described them...came in and demanded moonshine."

"Moonshine?" Lois asked quizzically.

"Well, apparently back in the day Al's Buffet used to be a hot spot for illegal gambling and bootleg liquor," Clark explained.

"They're all coming out of the woodwork." She mused, shaking her head. "Any thoughts on who might be behind this from...?" she did a flying motion with her hand.

He grinned, shaking his head, "No, from what I hear he's just as baffled as the rest of us. There was a robbery last night he helped out at. A private gun collector was cleaned out of his entire collection of historic weapons from some of the most notorious gangsters of the 1920's."

"Let me guess," Lois began. "The robber was dressed like a gangster too."

"Bingo." Clark nodded. "Not sure what we're dealing with here but somebody's taking their session of 'Masterpiece Theater'

a little too far in my opinion."

"Hey guys," Jimmy walked up to them holding a file, "here's that list you wanted of everyone in Metropolis that could have sold, rented, or bought the costumes and makeup for our Bonnie and Clyde."

"Thanks Jimmy," Clark said, taking the file from him.

Jimmy's smiled, nodding to Clark and then turned to leave.

"What was that about?" Lois asked, watching Jimmy continue to watch them as Clark guided her toward the elevator.

"He, uh, knows," Clark whispered, leaning over to press the call button as he spoke.

Lois did her best not to react. "Knows?"

Knows what? That Clark is Superman?

A thousand thoughts ran through her mind as Clark guided her onto the empty elevator. She waited for the elevator doors to close before she turned on him, "What exactly does Jimmy know? Superman? Did you tell him?"

"No, of course not!" Clark shook his head adamantly.

"Then what did you...?"

"The conference room." Clark reminded her.

Recognition washed over her face, recalling the look on his face when Jimmy had almost caught them kissing. "Did he see us?"

Clark rubbed his cheek. "It was hard to deny anything after I had to wipe your lipstick off of me."

Lois did her best to suppress a giggle as the mental image of Clark wiping her lipstick off of himself popped in her head as they stepped off of the elevator and into the lobby. "Which means half the newsroom probably knows by now."

"He said he wouldn't say anything," Clark said, leaning in to whisper in her ear.

"Yeah, right," Lois said, looking around the lobby. She noticed the group of reporters by Joe's newsstand eying her and Clark under the cover of reading their magazines and newspapers. "So, you think Bobby will have any info on our Bonnie and Clyde?" They were still staring. She tucked a hair behind her ear, trying to ignore the looks.

"I don't know," Clark said, stopping at the coffee cart to fix a to-go coffee. "The police stopped carrying that kind of firepower years ago thanks to the gun laws. Whoever cleaned the collector out last night had to..." He stopped mid-sentence, getting the all too familiar expression on his face.

"Had to what?" she prompted.

He looked around the semi-crowded lobby and whispered, "Lois? I've got to go."

"Go?" she asked, uncertain what he was referring to.

His eyes looked toward the door then back to her before drawing an invisible 's' in the air.

Realization dawned on her and she smiled. "Oh, well, then I guess you should..." She still had a lot to get used to as far as merging the two identities in her head. It was so obvious. Clark was always the one that could find Superman for her when they needed to talk to him. How had she missed it for so long?

"What?" he asked, readjusting his glasses nervously under her gaze.

"Nothing," She said, "I guess, it just takes a little getting used to."

His eyes lit up in recognition and he smiled, "Ah."

"So, I guess you should get going," She said softly, looking toward the door.

He gave her a warm smile, "I guess so." An amused look crossed his face.

"What?" she asked, self-consciously.

"Nothing," He mused softly. "It's just kinda nice having you know where I'm going."

"Yeah?" she grinned back at him, looking around the semi-crowded lobby. "Me too." She whispered, fighting the urge to

touch him. From the looks she was getting from Joe at the newsstand it was obvious the flirtatious looks she and Clark were exchanging weren't going unnoticed.

"I think our secret's out." He shifted his eyebrows toward Joe and the small crowd of reporters that were trying to pretend to read their magazines while watching them.

"Can't ever keep a secret around here," Lois mused, eying the small crowd with their eyes glued on her and Clark.

"I should go." He motioned toward the door.

"Right." She nodded, recalling their earlier conversation.

"Okay," he smiled at her before heading toward the door to leave.

She let out an inward sigh, watching him leave. *'Yep, big trouble.'*

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After stopping an attempted carjacking on Fourth and turning the robbers over to the police, Clark headed toward Mario's to pick up Bobby Bigmouth's favorite selection of pasta and Italian dishes. He and Lois were supposed to be meeting Bobby at their usual place.

It was getting harder and harder to keep his Superman persona intact while at rescues. He had to suppress his grin as he helped deliver criminals to the police and rescued traumatized victims because all he could think about was Lois. He wasn't sure what to expect this morning. Lois had been adamant about setting the rules of keeping their relationship quiet in the office. Given her history with Claude, he understood why she didn't want it advertised that they were seeing one another. There was still a lot to work through.

He knew it was going to be hard after their date last night to act normal, considering he'd shared his secret with her. But he hadn't anticipated how hard it would be. Just being around her was proving to be problematic. He couldn't seem to hide his grin when he saw her this morning. Despite being caught by Jimmy, he'd enjoyed every second of the teasing from her this morning when she'd been trying to calm him down.

She said he needed to trust her to handle the situation herself. It wasn't something he was used to. He wanted to protect her. He wanted to keep her safe. He hated that she'd been in danger this morning and he hadn't been there to protect her.

He had found himself rescuing her from every impossible situation that could be concocted over the past year. He'd seen her call for help countless times, but today she hadn't called for him. Her reasoning for not calling him made sense...somewhat.

If he had been on the other side of the world he wouldn't have heard her. If she had yelled for help she could have drawn attention to herself and been shot. Under the circumstances, he could see why she hadn't called him, but not being able to protect her scared him.

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"Is that everything?" Lois asked, looking at the large bag of takeout Clark had placed on the middle console of her Jeep. She was starving. Her stomach had been in knots all morning and she'd only gotten half a croissant eaten before Jimmy had helped himself to the other two.

"A variety selection from Mario's. Just like Bobby likes," Clark said, buckling his seatbelt as she pulled out of the parking lot and headed toward the alley where Bobby left a note to meet them at.

"I still don't know why Bobby wanted to change locations." Lois sighed, putting the Jeep into park. She looked over at Clark before turning back to the food. It was really hard being in such close proximity with him. Accidentally letting Bobby in on their budding relationship would only fuel the rumor mill more. So far, the only one that knew anything for sure was Jimmy and, if he knew what was good for him, it would stay that way.

"You know how skittish he gets," Clark reasoned aloud.

She wanted to ask him how the rescue went but with Bobby Bigmouth being anywhere nearby she knew that wasn't a good idea. Instead she decided to distract herself with her stomach. The pasta smelled divine. Clark always knew where to find the best food. "I'm starving," Lois commented, glancing at the bag on the console. "That ravioli smells great."

"We'll get some lunch after," Clark said, pulling the bag away from her.

Lunch? She smiled at the prospect of food. Would it be weird eating out somewhere together? Sharing a meal together? They'd done it hundreds of times before but this was different.

Lois looked around, "Where is Bobby?" She leaned back toward the bag. "If he doesn't show up soon I'm going to start in on that ravioli."

"You will not," He admonished, pulling the bag back. "I'm sure he'll show up soon."

"I hope so," Lois whined. "I'm giving it five more minutes. If he doesn't show up by then, I cannot be held responsible for my actions."

Clark chuckled, reaching over for her hand, "You can't take Bobby's food, Lois."

"I know, but it smells so good." She complained.

"I promise to feed you soon," He said with a grin.

Lois gave him a weak smile, uncertain if the butterflies in her stomach were from her hunger or the broad grin he'd just offered her.

"Really? What are we having?" Bobby poked his head up from the backseat of her Jeep.

Lois jumped back startled, "Bobby! How did you get back here???"

"Hi Bobby," Clark said unfazed.

"Trade secret," Bobby commented with a shrug, reaching for the bag in Clark's lap.

"And how dare you eavesdrop on our private conversation," Lois added with a scowl.

"I can't help it. I'm a snitch," Bobby said, sifting through the bag. "What'd you bring me?"

"A wide variety of culinary delights as always," Lois said flatly.

"Mario's," Clark supplied, handing Bobby the other bag.

"Hey, do I detect an attitude? You know, I don't have to snitch for you. There's a reporter at The Star who'd give me my own chef if I started working for them," Bobby said, taking a bite of his breadstick.

"Do that and you'll never get any more authentic Swiss chocolates again," Lois retorted.

"I do love those Swiss chocolates," Bobby admitted with a sigh. "Okay, point taken."

"Can we get down to business now?" Lois asked annoyed. "Some of us haven't eaten very much today and would like to get some lunch before the turn of the century."

"Ah, yes, the lunch date." Bobby nodded with a knowing grin. Lois shot him a glare and Clark suppressed a chuckle. Bobby shrugged, "I forgot. Keeping it quiet. Very happy for you two."

"Bobby, we're not here to talk about..." Clark began but Bobby cut him off.

"I want you to know a lot of people are pulling for this to work out," Bobby added taking another bite of his breadstick.

"What people?" Lois asked aghast.

"What, you think it's some big secret Clark here's been mooning over you?" Bobby asked with a knowing grin.

"Bobby, what were you able to find out about these gangster wannabes?" Clark interrupted.

"Ah, don't want to talk about it, huh?" Bobby gave them a knowing grin. "That's fine. Take your time. I love being in love. There's no feeling like it in the world." He took another bite of his breadstick, "Except maybe a really full stomach."

“Bobby! The story,” Lois prompted again with a glare.

“Okay, calm down,” Bobby said, motioning with his hands for her to settle down. “Word on the street is they aren’t wannabes. They’re an experiment gone bad.”

“Experiment?” Lois asked, her curiosity was piqued.

“Some sort of science fiction thing going on. I’ve got some feelers out to find out more on whose experiment. Give me a day or two and I should have some more for you,” Bobby explained. “I’ll call you when I have something concrete for you. Bring the chocolates next time.”

“No problem.” Clark nodded as Bobby opened the backdoor to get out. “Oh, and Bobby?”

“I’m not going to say anything,” Bobby said with a grin. “Good luck.”

The door slammed shut and Clark looked over at her with a smile. “What do you think he meant by experiment?”

“I don’t know, but I can’t think on an empty stomach.” Lois shot him a pleading look.

Clark smiled, pointing to a parking spot across the street. “Park over there next to Rosie’s. I’ll fly us to go get something to eat.”

“Fly us?” Lois echoed, pulling into the empty parking place Clark had pointed to.

“It’ll only take a few minutes.” He shrugged, stepping out of the Jeep.

“Flying to lunch,” She muttered to herself. “Why not?”

She locked the door and allowed Clark to guide her down a narrow alleyway behind Rosie’s and away from peering eyes. He scanned the area to make sure no one was around before disappearing into a red and blue blur before her eyes. A second later she stood face to face with Superman.

She tried her best not to allow her jaw to drop from the surprise of seeing him change into Superman for the first time. “Wow...”

He grinned, scooping her up in his arms. “Come on, I know this great pizzeria...”

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“Better?” Clark asked after Lois finished the last bite of her slice of pizza.

Lois nodded with a satisfied sigh, looking over at him a smile. “I can honestly say when I was complaining about my growling stomach earlier I wasn’t expecting to be picking up pizza in another zip code.”

He smiled back at her with a broad grin. “Bartoli’s is the best.” He’d flown them out to Chicago to his favorite pizzeria. It had been incredible flying with her and knowing he didn’t have to hide anything from her anymore.

“So, do you do this often? Fly off to random places to try the different cuisine?” she asked, reaching for another slice of pizza from the pan.

“Sometimes,” He said. “I spent a year after college traveling. Seeing the world and getting a taste for what cuisines I liked and which ones I didn’t like.”

“So the Chinese from the other night was from China I take it?” Lois prompted with a grin. “No wonder I couldn’t ever find the place in New Troy.”

“Summer Palace,” he shrugged, catching her gaze. “Local place in Beijing I found when I was traveling.”

“So do you get jetlag from sprinting all over the place or are you invulnerable to that too?” she teased, tearing apart her breadstick to take a bite.

“No jet lag,” He chuckled.

“So not fair,” She muttered with a smile.

“Sorry.” He offered her a smile. “Can’t help it.”

Lois smiled, looking down at her plate before looking up at him shyly. “This is weird, isn’t it?”

“What is?” he asked, not following what she was referring to.

“This.” She motioned between the two of them. “I mean, in less than twenty-four hours we’ve gone from being completely... This is why they say not to date your co-workers. It makes everything so complicated and...”

Clark relaxed, feeling a weight lift off his shoulders as she dove into babble-mode, “Lois,” he interrupted, taking her right hand in his to calm her down.

“I’m babbling again, aren’t I?” she asked, looking up at him.

He chuckled, watching her tuck a stray strand of hair behind her ear self-consciously. “Just a little bit,” He said, running his thumb over the knuckles of her hand.

“Things are different,” She said softly.

“I know,” He said, leaning closer to her. “That’s why we said we were taking things...slow,” He reminded her.

“A lot of good that did us.” Lois rolled her eyes. “Jimmy knows. Most of the people in the lobby that were staring at us probably suspect something. Then there’s Bobby,” Lois listed off as she ticked each point off on her fingers.

“Yeah, but Jimmy said he wouldn’t say anything. He’s the only one that knows for sure.” He wiggled his eyebrows at her.

Lois gave him a half-smile, “I hope you’re right. I just really don’t want to deal with another Elvis and Priscilla yarn from Perry or overhearing everyone’s opinion on our relationship when we’re still trying to figure everything out.”

“Perry does like his Elvis stories.” Clark grinned.

“So many Elvis stories,” Lois agreed with a sigh.

“He cares...with Elvis yarns.” He chuckled.

“I know he does,” She whispered softly. “Jimmy does too in his own way.”

“He means well,” Clark said with a light smile.

“Yeah, I suppose,” She said softly, taking another bite of her pizza.

There was something about her tone. He looked over at her in concern, “Something wrong?”

“No,” she smiled at him, “So, what do you think is up with these wannabe gangsters? You gotta admit, it is a pretty ingenious way to not get caught. Dressing up like dead criminals. Dangerous talent for a criminal to have,” Lois commented, tearing off a piece of her breadstick. “Who all did Jimmy have on that list?”

“He’s got makeup artists, a few lookalike agencies, and a Halloween costume store,” Clark read off the list.

“Lookalike agencies?” Lois echoed in disbelief. “I don’t even want to know.”

“I guess if you’ve got the talent to look like anyone...” Clark shrugged.

“Well, at least this group of lookalikes isn’t using their talent to assassinate people,” Lois said with a frown.

“Sebastian Finn is in prison,” He reminded her gently, taking her hand in his.

She gave him a half-smile, “I know.” She turned to look around the semi-crowded restaurant and leaned into him, pressing her lips to his for a moment and pulling away with a smile.

“What was that for?” he asked.

She shrugged, moving her hands up his shoulders as she fingered the fabric of his jacket, “Just for being...you.” His hand moved to cup her cheek and she leaned into him once more, brushing her lips against his once more. She pulled away and smiled. “I think I could get used to this whole not having lunch in Metropolis thing.”

“Being able to fly anywhere has its advantages.” He grinned at her.

“I can imagine.” She smiled back at him. “Must be nice to be able to fly off whenever you want.”

“If you’re up to it maybe we could get dinner in Heraklion. There’s a great place near the gulf.”

“Heraklion?” she echoed.

“Greece,” He supplied with a smile.

"I've never had Greek food before."

"You'll love it. Trust me." He grinned.

"Okay," she lightly tapped her fingers on the table. "Greece it is."

"It's a date." His face broke out into a broad smile, meeting her gaze. He really wanted to kiss her. He wanted to do nothing but kiss her every second of every day for the rest of his life. It was an urge... An urge he was fighting with all his might. He was trying to take things slowly with her and rebuild her trust in him.

"So, I guess we should probably head back," She said softly, looking at the empty pizza pan in front of them.

"Yeah," He smiled, watching as she picked up the list from the table they'd been reading earlier.

"How many lookalike agencies *are* there?" she asked, scanning the list.

"Thirteen that carry professional costumes," Clark leaned over her shoulder and read from the list.

"Oh, brother, this is going to be one of *those* investigations isn't it?" she groaned.

"First one on the list is 'Ralph's Talent Network,'" Clark read off.

Lois rolled her eyes, "Come on, let's get this over with. The sooner we bag these clowns the better."

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One Halloween costume store. Two make-up artist studios. Two look-alike agencies. Lois cringed looking at the exterior of the run-down office. The dark brown signage hung on the door off center, faded and scratched, making 'Sammy's Look-Alike Agency' hard to read. Lois crinkled her nose as she stared at it.

Clark turned the door handle and opened the door. Instead of a busy office atmosphere, the space was bleak and sterile. There was no secretary or anything in the space to make anyone believe that it was an actual, professional office. A balding man in a teal blue suit sat at the only desk in the middle of the room.

"That's right... he's a dead ringer for Elvis." The man spoke into the phone, motioning for them to come in, "Of course before he died." He looked toward her Lois and Clark and motioned for them to sit at in the shabby looking chairs which stood just across from his desk, "Have a seat folks. I'll be right with ya."

Lois looked at the ratty looking chair then around the room, noting the lack of seating options. She gingerly took a seat next to Clark. As the man finished up his phone call, she whispered to Clark, "This is the last one of these places you're going to drag me to. I don't think car-jackers register with talent agents."

"They were on the list," Clark whispered back.

The man hung up and then turned to them. "The name's Sammy. So, what can I do for you folks?"

Clark introduced them, "I'm Clark Kent, and this is my partner Lois Lane. We're from..."

"Vegas, right?" Sammy cut him off.

Lois exchanged a look with Clark, '*Vegas?*' she mouthed to him.

"No?" Sammy interjected again as Clark shook his head, "Wait, I know. Don't tell me. I never forget an act. I got it. Kutsher's, the Catskills."

Lois rolled her eyes and Clark continued, "We're reporters from the Daily Planet."

Sammy shook his head, "Reporters. Oh..." He leaned back in his chair, giving Lois a once over as she shifted uncomfortably under his gaze, "A babe with a face like yours should be in show business."

"Show business?" Lois echoed doubtfully.

"Hey, I know talent when I see it." He said, getting up from his desk and rummaging through the racks of costumes behind him as he spoke. "Throw on a wig. Slap on a beauty mark. You'd be a dead ringer for...Madonna." He held up a sleazy spangled costume with twelve-inch gold plated breast cones to her.

"Madonna?" she echoed, insulted and unsure how to even begin to respond to the slimeball agent. She looked back at Clark who was staring at the floor, suppressing his laughter. She shot a glare at him, and he stopped, mouthing a quick '*Sorry*' to her.

"Oh, yeah!" Sammy cheered with a leering gaze.

"That's it. I'm gone." Lois stood up to leave.

Clark stood up with her, stopping her as he interjected, "Sammy, we were wondering if you represented any Bonnie and Clyde look-alikes."

"Bonnie and Clyde?" Sammy shook his head, "Nope, sorry."

"See? Waste of time. Let's go." Lois said hurriedly trying to push her way past Clark.

"You know, it's funny that you mention them. I had a guy in here a couple of weeks ago looking for gangster costumes." Sammy added thoughtfully.

Lois stopped, turning her attention back to the sleazy agent. Clark placed an arm around her shoulders, giving her a gentle squeeze, "Do you remember his name or what he looked like?" Clark asked.

"Sure, I keep a record of all my business transactions," Sammy said as he opened up a desk drawer. "How do you think I got to where I am today?"

Lois noticed the wads of scrap paper in the drawer and muttered under her breath, "One can only wonder."

"Uh... here he is. Emil Hamilton. Rented a whole rack of gangster costumes." Sammy handed them the piece of paper.

"Uh, do you mind if we make a copy of this?" Clark asked.

"Sure!" He pointed to the copier on the wall. "A dollar a copy."

Lois bit her tongue, suppressing the urge to call Sammy out for his unethical business practices and lewd behavior. Clark gave her a look and pulled out a dollar from his wallet. Sammy took the paper and waltzed toward the copier to make the copy for them.

Lois grabbed Clark by the tie to whisper through gritted teeth. "Get me out of here *now*."

"Hot off the press." Sammy handed them the paper. "Get it press? Like hot off the presses?"

"Very clever." Lois forced a smile as they turned to leave.

The door opened, and she found herself face to face with Superman. She did a double take, looking back at Clark then again at the man in the very familiar red yellow and blue suit. "Don't tell me..." She forced a smile, "*Superman???*"

"I love it!" Sammy cheered as the man in the Superman ensemble traipsed in with a briefcase in hand. "Gets 'em every time. Folks, say hello to Barry."

Lois exchanged a look with Clark who shrugged.

"Please, lady. Don't ask me to fly out no windows, okay?" the doppelganger said in a thick New York accent.

Lois looked back at Clark who had a familiar faraway look on his face. "What is it?" she asked in a hushed whisper.

"Robbery across the street." He whispered back as 'Barry' began pulling out large glossy photos of *Superman* for Sammy's approval.

"Good. Let's get out of here." Lois whispered, trying to get as far away from Sammy the talent agent as possible.

"No, stay here. I'll be right back." He said, walking out the door. Lois was right behind him, slamming the door behind her. "Lois? What are you *doing*?" She looked up to see Clark now dressed in his Superman suit.

"Not staying in there another second." She said, walking toward the Jeep.

"Lois, these guys are armed with some serious artillery." He began to argue.

"You are not leaving me *alone* in there with Barney Fife and the Jolly Green Giant!" She hissed back. "I'm just going to head back to the Planet and..." she stopped, seeing the annoyed expression on his face. "What?"

“Just be careful.” He said.

Gunshots could be heard from inside the bank. He gave her a pleading look, and she glared, “I’m *fine*. Go!”

“Be *careful*.” He repeated before disappearing into a blur of red and blue.

Lois unlocked her Jeep and pulled out her mobile phone to dial, “Yes, I’d like to report a robbery...”

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Inside the Metropolis Savings and Loan Bank, Clark could see a man that looked like Clyde Barrow pointing a machine gun at the crowd of customers. All of them were lying face down on the floor. He could make out the customers’ whimpering as they trembled in fear under the bank robbers’ shotguns. Nervous tellers were filling bags with money. Another man stood in the corner, keeping his rifle trained on the tellers...Clark did a double take. The man looked exactly like the photos he had seen of John Dillinger.

He was going to have to be careful. One wrong move and they could empty their weapons into any of the innocent people in the bank.

“Take a good look, sister.” The Dillinger impersonator said to the teller, grabbing the bag before turning to the crowd, “All of you! ‘Cause this is the face you’re gonna see smilin’ back at you from your evening paper. This is the face of John H. Dillinger.”

The bank doors opened and a blonde burst inside, “Hey! What’s takin, so long?! I’m gettin’ wrinkles waitin’ out there.”

Taking advantage of the men’s distraction Clark chose this moment to super-speed inside. Everyone turned toward Clark as he stood with his arms crossed over his chest, blocking the front door. “Aren’t you boys a little late for Halloween?”

“Look who’s talkin’. Who are you supposed to be...? ‘Little Boy Blue?’” Dillinger shot back.

“Put down your guns,” Clark ordered sternly, watching as both Clyde and Dillinger turned their weapons toward him. Hopefully, if they did fire, he’d be able to catch all the bullets. They were still standing awfully close to the customers on the floor.

“Oh, my!” the blonde accomplice smiled, “Now he is one hunk of a man.”

Clyde took another step forward, unloading his machine gun at Clark. Clark moved at super-speed, grabbing the bullets and catching one with his teeth before spitting it out.

“What is this...a cap gun?” Clyde asked.

“You can’t hit the broad side of a barn,” Dillinger said, grabbing the pack of six sticks of dynamite and throwing it at Clark.

Clark caught the dynamite and snuffed out the flame, glaring at them. “I’m not going to say it again. Drop the guns.”

The sound of police sirens could be heard outside. “We gotta get out of here now, Clyde!” the blonde ordered, pulling on Clyde’s coat sleeve.

Dillinger cocked his head, pulling out another three-pack of dynamite and threw it in the air. “Interesting trick. Let’s see you do it twice!” He pulled out a third pack of dynamite and threw one at Clark and the other toward the teller’s station.

Clark raced around the room at super-speed to catch both packages of explosives, snuffing the fuses out once more. Dillinger looked at him in shock. Clark moved at super-speed and grabbed him before he could pull any other tricks out of his bag.

“Everyone freeze!” Clark looked over to see a crowd of officers standing at the door.

He looked back toward Dillinger, “Looks like your bank robbing days are over.”

One of the officers approached, pulling his handcuffs out, “Thanks, Superman.” He looked around the room. “Where are the other two?”

“Two?” He scanned the room. The Clyde lookalike and blonde had escaped during his confrontation with the Dillinger lookalike.

“We got a call in about a bank robbery from an anonymous source.” The officer continued. “Said there were three robbers.”

“There were,” Clark said with a sigh, knowing full well who the anonymous source was. “Two of them escaped while I was handling this one.” He handed the officer the bag he’d taken from the Dillinger wannabe.

“At least we caught one of them.” The officer said, slapping the cuffs on Dillinger. “All right pal. Now we’re gonna find out who you really are.”

“Name’s John H. Dillinger.” He said.

“Yeah and I’m Madonna.” The officer shot back. “Last I heard John H. Dillinger was pushing up the daisies.”

“Who’s Madonna?” Dillinger shot back.

“Whatever. Keep up the act. We got ways of making you talk.”

“I don’t squeal.” Dillinger spat defiantly, jutting his chin out proudly and meeting the officer’s gaze with a menacing one of his own.

The officer pushed Dillinger toward a tall man with dark hair dressed in a business suit talking with one of the customers. His detective badge was clipped to his belt, “Hey, Wolf, we got one.”

The detective looked Dillinger up and down, “Nice get up. Unfortunately, it’s not going to save you from the book the DA’s gonna be throwing at you and your friends.” Dillinger just offered a smug smile before two other officers escorted him outside.

“Detective Wolf.” He held out his hand to shake Clark’s.

“Nice to meet you, Detective,” Clark said, shaking the man’s hand.

Wolf looked toward the door where Clark had dropped the pile of bullets that had been shot at him by the Clyde Barrow wannabe. “I take it this was your handiwork?” he asked, looking toward Clark.

“Yeah,” Clark frowned.

“So Bonnie and Clyde and John Dillinger this time. They’re expanding the cast I see.” Detective Wolf asked.

“Yeah,” Clark said, “The make-up, the acting, the costumes. All of it is very well done.”

“No clue who these clowns could be?” the officer asked.

“Sorry.” Clark gave the officer a helpless look.

“Lady, this is a crime scene. You can’t go in there!” One of the officers argued at the door.

Clark looked up to see Lois looking through the open door. “I’m with the press.” She said, “Lois Lane, Daily Planet.”

“Geez, news travels fast,” Wolf muttered under his breath.

“Oh, you’ve got to be kidding me! What are you doing here?” another familiar voice could be heard by the door.

He looked up and saw Mayson Drake standing in the doorway with Lois. “Oh, boy...”

“Covering a story,” Lois said. “What about you? Last I heard the DA’s office prosecuted cases and left the crime scene examination to the police.”

“How did you hear about this?” Mayson asked angrily.

“Great. Just what I need. A moody DA.” Detective Wolf muttered under his breath. “Mayson?” he waved his hand in the air. “Over here.”

Mayson looked at Lois, “I’ll deal with you later.”

Lois rolled her eyes and turned to one of the officers to begin asking questions, remaining behind the police line. Clark sighed to himself. The last time he’d seen Mayson was when he’d left her at the diner after his and Lois’ fight. He’d called to apologize for leaving and misleading her but hadn’t heard anything back. He had no idea if she’d actually received the message since the power had gone out across the city half an hour after he’d left the message.

“Nathan.” Mayson nodded to Wolf then turned to Superman, “Superman.” She then muttered under her breath, “Why am I not surprised?”

“Come on, smile, Mayson. We finally caught one of them.”



Wolf nudged her.

“Yes, and there are two more at large—No thanks to your team dropping the ball.” Mayson threw a pointed look at Wolf.

“They blew the tires out. What did you want them to do? Ride on the rims?” Wolf asked with a smirk.

“Whatever,” Mayson shrugged, looking around at the scene, “So, what happened here?”

“Dillinger, Bonnie, and Clyde decided to rob the bank. I stopped them at the door. The Clyde doppelganger emptied his machine gun.” Clark pointed to the pile of bullets one of the officers was sweeping into an evidence bag.

“No stray bullets?” Mayson asked, looking around.

“No, I was very careful,” Clark explained. It was always incredibly awkward being around Mayson as Superman. She treated him so differently than anyone else. He felt like he had to defend every action with her.

“From what I’ve been able to gather from witnesses, Superman took a couple rounds of bullets and stopped this Dillinger impersonator from leveling the place with TNT three times,” Wolf interjected.

“Well, good. Thanks for not crushing the evidence this time.” Mayson said with a forced smile. “We’ll need to have the bullets analyzed to compare to the weapons taken from the antique shop owner. Since they were collector’s items, we have the records from the twenties we can pull up and compare the ballistics to.” Mayson said, looking at the large bag marked ‘evidence’ with the pile of bullets that had been gathered.

Clark motioned toward the window. “If there isn’t anything else?”

“Sure, go on.” Detective Wolf patted him on the shoulder. “Thanks.”

Clark let out a long sigh of relief and stepped outside where Lois was talking to one of the officers by a tow truck that held two of the police cars that had been shot up.

“Where was this?” she asked.

“Three blocks from here. Right over by Old North Road.” The officer explained. “I got shot at four times. They missed.” He said smugly, tapping himself on the chest proudly.

“Well, that’s great. I’m glad they, uh, missed.” Lois said, tapping her pen on her notebook.

“Oh, hey, Superman,” the officer said with a smile.

“Hi,” he smiled warmly, crossing his arms over his chest as Lois looked back at him. “Can I talk to you?”

“Sure,” she said, following him as he walked away from the officer.

“What are you doing?” he hissed as soon as they were out of earshot.

“Covering the story.” She shrugged, readjusting her purse on her shoulder.

“You had no way of knowing about this robbery, Lois. You can’t just show up like this.” He whispered irritably. “How are you going to explain how you found out about it?”

“I was across the street, and I heard gunshots.” She shrugged. “Calm down.”

“How exactly is you showing up at a crime scene *seconds* after the crooks left being *careful*?” he pressed.

“I didn’t chase them, did I?” she asked, crossing her arms over her chest and glaring at him. “Calm down. People are starting to stare.”

She looked over his shoulder. He looked back and let out a long breath when he saw Detective Wolf and Mayson standing in the front of the bank watching them. “No more showing up at rescues like this.”

“Fine,” Lois sighed, “Next time I’ll wait till you’re done talking to the police. Are you happy?”

“Fine,” he chuckled. There was no keeping Lois Lane away from any story...no matter how dangerous the situation.

“So, what’s the deal with Mayson showing up?” Lois asked, pointing toward the woman in question that was still talking with Detective Wolf.

“I’m not sure.” Clark sighed. “Where did that officer say they lost the other two lookalikes?”

Lois pulled out her notebook and read, “Old North Road.”

“That’s where the collector was robbed last night.” He frowned.

“That can’t be a coincidence,” Lois observed.

A crowd of news vans pulled up and began to surround Mayson and Detective Wolf. “What do you think is going on?” Lois asked.

“I don’t know,” Clark said, looking for a place to change. “Why don’t you go find out while I change? I’ll meet you over there in a few.”

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“Lois Lane, Daily Planet.” Lois pushed her way through the crowd of officers who were setting up a microphone in front of the bank.

“Hey, Lois,” Tom from LNN stood at the front. “You got any idea what this impromptu press conference is about?”

Lois looked toward the front where Mayson and Detective Wolf were greeting the police chief. “I’m not sure. I guess we’ll find out soon.” She heard a familiar sonic boom and turned to see Clark forcing his way through the crowd toward her.

“All I know is our producer got a call to have someone down here in five minutes.” Tom rolled his eyes as the police chief straightened his jacket for the cameras. “Ever notice how this guy’s always taking the credit for everyone else’s work? I heard Superman stopped one of these gangster copycats. Watch him try and take credit for that one.”

“I...” she stopped herself, unsure of how to respond. She didn’t want to give too much away on what she knew about the robbery. “Clark, over here.” She waved at him, hoping that would be distraction enough to end this conversation with Tom.

“Hi,” Clark said, closing the gap between them. “Hi, Tom.”

“Kent, good to see you. How’d Lois beat you here?” Tom asked, “Aren’t you two usually joined at the hip or something?”

“I, uh...” he began to fumble.

“Had to put money in the meter.” Lois supplied for him.

“Right.” Clark nodded, turning his attention to the cameras around them. “This place filled up fast.”

“Thank you for coming, everyone,” the police chief spoke into the microphone, holding his hands up to calm the crowd. “This will only take a moment. At approximately three fifteen this afternoon, three armed robbers dressed as Bonnie Parker, Clyde Barrow, and John Dillinger—”

There was a rumble of snickering in the back of the crowd. Lois looked back to see Hank and Will from Channel 9 laughing uncontrollably. Their reaction seemed to be contagious because the snickering and giggling spread throughout the group of reporters.

“Yes, yes, I know, it seems ridiculous, but this is what happened according to several witnesses.” the police chief interrupted, trying to steer everyone back to the topic at hand. “The assailants broke into the Metropolis Savings and Loan bank in an attempt to rob it. The robbery was stopped and the two assailants dressed as Bonnie and Clyde...” A snicker from the back could be heard, but the police chief continued. “...have escaped and are at large. The assailant dressed as John Dillinger has been taken into custody.”

A barrage of questions came from all angles. “One at a time. One at a time.” The chief said, shouting over the crowd of reporters.

The shouting quieted down, and the chief looked over to Wolf who nodded, stepping forward, “I’m Detective Wolf. This is ADA Mayson Drake, and you all know Chief Reynolds.” He introduced

everyone. “As you all know we’ve had at least five instances reported where the assailants have dressed up as Bonnie and Clyde. Now that we have one of the accomplices in custody it’s our hope that we can bring the rest of the assailants in.”

“Our sources say there was another guy dressed up as Al Capone seen at the mayor’s office.” A reporter from the STAR called out. “Care to confirm that detective?”

“Not at this time,” Wolf said.

Clark looked at Lois, shaking his head and Mayson stepped up, “What we have is a group of armed and dangerous criminals. They’re wearing really good makeup. That is all. We will catch these criminals and when we do they’ll be punished to the full extent of the law.”

“We’re asking that everyone take extra precautions. Don’t go out by yourself after dark. Lock your doors and windows and be vigilant.” The chief added.

“What are the police planning on doing?” Lois asked.

“They’ve got the fire power of a small army. The police stopped carrying shotguns in the 1960’s.”

“We’ll do whatever’s necessary, Ms. Lane,” Mayson interjected before turning to the crowd of reporters. “That’s all the questions we’ll be answering. An official statement will be released to all news circuits this evening.”

Clark watched as Mayson, Detective Wolf and the police chief went back inside the bank. Something was going on. He just wasn’t sure what.

“We’ll do whatever’s necessary?” Lois echoed. Her gaze stayed on the retreating figure of Mayson Drake before turning back to Clark, crossing her arms over her chest defiantly. “Have I mentioned I don’t like her? Because I don’t like her...” She said, shaking her head as the doors to the bank closed behind Mayson and the police chief. “What do you think’s going on?”

“I don’t know,” Clark sighed. “but it can’t be a coincidence that the police lost these guys on the same street this antique shop got held up.”

“You know what I think?” Lois’ eyes lit up as the wheels began to turn in her head.

“Oh, no, you’ve got that ‘I’ve got a plan’ look.” He groaned.

“What?” she shrugged, “I was just going to say we should find out if there are any names connected to that Professor Hamilton in the area.”

“And?” Clark prompted with a knowing look.

“And maybe we could stakeout the antique shop to see if we can spot our Bonnie and Clyde.” Lois finished with a shrug.

“Absolutely not.” Clark admonished.

“Why not? It’s the only real lead we have right now. We can get Jimmy to check around and see if any other names come up and cross-reference those so we know where to look and...”

“Hey, guys!” Jimmy ran up to them with a camera bag on his shoulder.

“Speaking of...” Clark chuckled, turning to face his young friend. “Hi, Jimmy,”

“I got some information you’re going to love.” Jimmy said excitedly, “Turns out that vintage car the Chief borrowed once belonged to the real Clyde Barrow!”

Lois exchanged a look with Clark. “He did say *his car* but...”

“Exactly!” Jimmy said, following her trail of thought, “That got me to thinking, so I called the cemeteries where they’re buried...”

“Jimmy...” Clark gave him a look of disbelief. He wasn’t seriously considering what he thought he was thinking.

“I know it sounds weird but get this. Both cemetery directors said that a few years ago a scientist had their bodies dug up and took bone and hair samples.” Jimmy explained with a grin, “Pretty creepy, huh?”

Clark had a feeling he already knew the answer but asked anyway, “Did you get the scientist’s name?”

“Hamilton,” Jimmy said.

Lois and Clark exchanged a look once more, “Professor *Emil Hamilton*?” Lois pressed.

“Yeah, how’d you know?” Jimmy asked, confused.

“Bobby did say it was an experiment gone bad.” Clark reasoned aloud.

“Yeah, but *what* experiment?” Lois asked.

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Perry stared at the research Jimmy had laid on his desk with a raised eyebrow, holding up one of the Scientific Journals with a skeptical expression, “So, you’re saying this...Dr. Hamilton is, uh, doing what?”

“We’re not sure,” Lois said, crossing her arms over her chest as she paced in front of Perry nervously. What were they supposed to say? Bobby Bigmouth had insinuated an experiment had gone wrong, and that’s where these lookalikes had come from, but they still had no information on what the experiment was.

“Hamilton was working on something called DNA manipulation.” Clark replied, pulling the article out of the stack on Perry’s desk, “but what that has to do with these lookalikes we’re not entirely sure.”

“Most of these articles are written in a scientific lingo neither Clark nor I are able to understand. We’ve sent copies to STAR Labs and are hopeful we can get some sort of translation but until then...”

“What do we know about this Hamilton?” Perry asked, leaning back in his chair.

“Not much,” Clark shrugged, standing behind her as she came to a stop from her pacing.

Lois nodded, looking back at him. “He dropped out of the public eye about a year and a half ago.”

“Any idea why?” Perry asked.

“Not yet,” Lois said weakly.

“Is there anything you *do* know?” Perry quipped with a grunt.

Lois braced herself for a lecture about hard facts and how journalists did things in the old days. None of it came. “We’re still running down leads.” She said weakly, hoping that would be enough to satisfy him for the moment.

“Well, maybe you should try and find out...” Perry said, handing her the files. “I want everything you have on Hamilton on my desk first thing in the morning.”

“But...” Lois began to argue but stopped herself. Seeing the expression on Perry’s face, she knew he meant business. “We’ll get right on that.”

“Good.” Perry nodded, “Get to work. The sooner we bag these lunatics, the better.”

Lois exchanged a look with Clark before following him out of Perry’s office. “Well, there goes our evening plans.”

“Sorry.” Clark gave her a weak smile. “I could still fly there and pick up some takeout from Heraklion, but it kinda loses the date feel by mixing dinner with ...*research*.” he gave a roll of the eyes on the last part of his statement, turning to open the door to the conference room for her.

Lois followed him inside, “Well, maybe once we bag these nutcases you can make it up to me.”

“Count on it.” He grinned at her.

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Jimmy Olsen sifted through the files on his desk. It was getting close to the end of the day. Perry had him working late to help Lois and Clark find everything he could on Professor Emil Hamilton. He didn’t mind helping them out, but he was exhausted and it had been a weird day all around.

He still couldn’t believe what he’d witnessed in the conference room earlier. Things had been complicated between Lois and Clark over the past few months. He and the rest of the staff had done their best to stay out of whatever was festering between them. On the outside things seemed to have gone back to normal

after Mr. Stern had bought and rebuilt the Planet, but to someone that knew Lois Lane very well and had observed her for the last few years Jimmy knew better.

Lois had been hurting. It was clear Clark had been upset too. Everything seemed to have come to a head when Lois had enlisted his help in setting Clark up on a date after Mayson Drake had started throwing herself at Clark. It had been clear the ADA was interested, but what Jimmy couldn't understand was why Clark had never pursued her. She was beautiful, smart and she liked him. What more could a guy ask for? When he walked in the conference room this afternoon everything clicked into place.

The flirtatious smile on Lois Lane's face. The half-grin on his friend's face as he'd leaned in to kiss her. It was more than flirting. More than testing the waters of dating. Something big had changed between the two of them. After his accidental intrusion, he'd observed them from a distance. He'd seen the way the two of them kept exchanging looks. He'd seen the way Lois' eyes lingered on Clark when she thought no one was looking. Things had definitely changed between the two of them. Why they felt the need to hide it in the newsroom he wasn't sure.

"Sure, Ms. Drake, he's in the conference room." Jimmy heard Scott say from a few cubicles over.

Jimmy looked up and saw Mayson Drake walking toward the conference room with a determined look on her face. The conference room where Lois and Clark were working. Recalling what he'd witnessed earlier he decided to intervene, "Mayson! What are you doing here?" he said a few octaves too loud.

Mayson looked at him with an odd expression, "You feeling okay, Mr. Olsen?"

"Never better!" Jimmy practically shouted as he followed Mayson to the conference room.

"Uh-huh. Well, I need to talk to Clark." She eyed the conference room door, then Jimmy. He got the message, but didn't budge. "Jimmy, do you think you could..." she motioned toward the conference room door and then back at Jimmy's desk for him to leave.

"Absolutely!" Jimmy grinned, opening the door for her.

"Not exactly what I was trying to say..." Mayson muttered under her breath as Jimmy followed her in the conference room.

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Lois stared blankly at the pages in front of her. "Blah, blah, blah, DNA Modification." She muttered, tossing the journal to the center of the table. She stared at the stack of books in front of her with an annoyed expression. "I do not understand a single thing I just read."

"They lost me when they started going into DNA molecular restructuring." Clark muttered, rubbing his forehead with a weary expression as he laid another book down on the table.

Lois folded her arms over the table, resting her chin on them as she let out a long sigh. "I think I've hit a wall."

"Tell me about it." Clark muttered, setting another book down after speed-reading through it.

"Okay, so three hours. What have we learned?" Lois asked, tapping her pen on her notepad.

"Dr. Emil Hamilton. Age forty-three. No family. No friends. Spends every waking moment in his lab where he spends every cent he has on his experiments." Clark listed off.

"How do you think this DNA modification works?" Lois asked with a frown.

"The closest thing I found was the article about him being booted out of the scientific community. It's still hard to understand what exactly he was trying to do but from the sound of it..." Clark pointed out, turning the book in his hand to the page he was referring to. "Hamilton believed he could restructure DNA and stop aggressive and anti-social behavior." Clark laid the article down.

"This article details Hamilton's proposed experiment to the

warden at New Troy's Correctional Facility. There's nothing on what the decision was." Clark pulled out another Science Journal from earlier, "It sounds like he was wanting to experiment on prisoners and that got shut down."

Lois grew thoughtful for a moment, "What if he found a way around that though? I mean, he couldn't experiment on the prisoners, but he pulled the DNA from dead criminals. What if..."

"You think he brought the real John Dillinger, Bonnie Parker, and Clyde Barrow back to life to prove his theory right?" Clark guessed, following her train of thought. "How?"

"Well, we know cloning exists...It's not a huge stretch to think he'd try to clone the DNA and experiment on them to prove his theory right." Lois guessed. She saw the skeptical look on Clark's face, "Oh come on, it's not that far-fetched."

Clark shook his head, "Unfortunately, you're right, but the only person that's had any fraction of a success in cloning was Dr. Fabian Leek and he's dead. How'd Hamilton get his hands on the research? There's still a lot of holes."

"I know. So far it's just conjecture. We don't even know what the decision of the warden was on Hamilton's proposal, or if he knew anything about cloning." Lois rubbed her temples wearily.

"Not directly." Clark shook his head, "But he did say he'd found a way to accelerate the maturation process of the embryos."

"Yeah, I found a similar article..." She reached over and grabbed the book she'd been reading earlier, "Here." She pointed it out to him, "The article said his theories outraged the scientific community. Could be why he dropped out of sight."

"Experimenting with cloning and genes never wins you any friends." Clark added with a half-smile.

"Well, it's something, but probably not enough for Perry to print." Lois sighed, tapping her pencil against her notepad irritably. Her stomach growled and he chuckled. "I guess picking up something to eat while we finish going through this stuff wouldn't be a terrible idea." She admitted sheepishly.

Clark smiled good-naturedly at her, "What do you feel...?" An all too familiar expression washed over his face.

"What is it?" She asked.

Clark chuckled, "It's Jimmy." He looked toward the newsroom where Jimmy was following Mayson to the conference room. "I guess after this morning, he thought we needed a bull horn to warn us when someone was coming in here."

"Oh, well that's...*sweet* of him." Lois grinned, recalling the flirting and kissing from that morning. Her expression changed when she saw Mayson walking with Jimmy toward the conference room. "Mayson? What's *she* doing here?"

"No clue." Clark shrugged.

"Not exactly what I was trying to say..." Mayson said as she entered the conference room with Jimmy in tow.

"Here you go, Ms. Drake. Door to door service!" Jimmy said a few octaves louder than necessary.

Lois suppressed the need to burst out into laughter, biting her lower lip as Mayson glared at poor Jimmy. She looked back at Clark and saw he was having the same problem. Jimmy trying to cover for them was hysterical.

"Is that really necessary?" Mayson asked, looking at him dumbfounded.

"Jimmy, were you able to find anything out from STAR Labs?" Lois asked, taking pity on him and hoping to get him out of Mayson's wrath.

The Assistant District Attorney seemed to be abnormally irritable today. She had directed it at the crowd of reporters at the press conference and at Lois after the bank robbery. What had caused this change in attitude she wasn't sure, but she didn't want Jimmy taking the brunt of it for trying to help keep her and Clark's relationship hidden from the public.

"Right," Jimmy snapped his fingers. "I should get check on that." He darted out the door and headed to his desk.

Mayson watched Jimmy leave with a confused expression, “Is there something wrong with him?” she asked in hushed whisper. “What do you mean?” Clark asked, acting as if nothing strange had occurred.

“What do I mean?” Mayson echoed, pointing toward Jimmy’s desk. She wanted to say something. It was apparent on her face but she stopped herself. “You know what. It’s not important. What is important is...” She looked around the conference room nervously, “I was hoping to catch you after work.”

Lois and Clark exchanged a look, “Well, we’re kinda under the gun right now.” Clark said uncertainly.

“Yeah, I guess Perry’s got you two working *long* hours on this Dillinger case, huh?”

“What can we help you with, Mayson?” Lois asked impatiently, tapping her pen on her notepad. “Is there something new we should know about?”

“Not exactly.” Mayson looked around, “I actually stopped by to talk to Clark about...”

Another faraway look crossed Clark’s face. Lois looked back at him and he motioned with a flying hand to her. She nodded, looking at her watch, “Clark! You should get going.”

“I should?” he looked at her with a quizzical look as he stood up.

“Right. That takeout isn’t going to pick itself up.” She grinned at him.

“Of course, Little Italy?” he looked at her for confirmation and she nodded, “Just let Lois know what you need and we’ll get right on that.” He said hurriedly, rushing out the door.

Mayson watched Clark leave and then turned to Lois accusingly, “Why did you just do that?”

“Do what?” Lois asked, uncertain what Mayson was so upset.

“Send Clark to go pick up *takeout*???” Mayson shot back irritably. “I was trying to *talk* to him and you just...” She stopped, “Do you have any idea how long it took me to drag myself down here to have this conversation???”

“Have what conversation?” Lois asked, not following.

“You *cannot* be that oblivious!” Mayson shot back irritably.

“Well, apparently I can since I have no idea what you’re talking about. Little Italy doesn’t remake the orders if you’re late. No offense but eating cold spaghetti isn’t exactly something I’m willing to do for someone that’s spent *all day* treating me like dirt.” Lois shot back irritably. “What do you want? What are you even doing here?”

“I wanted to talk to Clark.” Mayson said irritably, “but I guess I won’t get a chance to do *that* anytime soon.”

“Clark?” Lois echoed, uneasily. “What do you need to talk to him for?”

Mayson rolled her eyes, “Not really any of your business.”

“Well, given that you’re showing up here...at the Planet...where he and I *work*. I’d say it just *became* my business.” Lois said, trying her best to keep the bite out of her tone.

She knew she didn’t have to worry about Mayson being a threat to her relationship with Clark but something about the woman just rubbed her the wrong way. She didn’t like the way she looked at him or the way she just showed up unannounced. Granted she hadn’t done that since before she and Clark’s relationship had changed, but it still made her uncomfortable.

“Why does that bother you?” Mayson asked, narrowing her eyes at Lois. “It’s not like I’m keeping you from doing your job. From where I stood last week, Clark needed an escape.”

Lois’ eyes flashed in anger, suppressing the urge to prove Mayson wrong and give her a good idea of exactly how much of an escape Clark *didn’t* need from her. She didn’t do it though. Opening up that can of worms with the Assistant District Attorney wasn’t something she envisioned going well. She didn’t know how Clark had left things with Mayson and she knew he probably

wouldn’t appreciate her rubbing their relationship in Mayson’s face either—even if she was asking for it. Everything was still so new for both of them. They were still figuring out how to act around one another at work with their budding relationship and managing to string together enough coherent thoughts that would resemble a story. Adding a fight with Mayson into the mix didn’t appeal to her in the slightest.

“You don’t know *what* you’re talking about.” Lois huffed.

“No? He seemed to be in quite a hurry to get away from you.” Mayson added airily.

Lois bit her lip, suppressing the urge to throw back a dig, snide remark at the woman. She wasn’t going to stoop to that level. “My relationship with Clark is none of your business.”

“And *my* relationship with him is none of *yours*.” Mayson said a bit too smugly for Lois’ taste.

“I’ll be the judge of that.” Lois said, tapping her pen on her pad. “You’re the one that showed up here to talk. What’s so important it couldn’t wait?” She motioned to the chair in front of her.

“You’re joking, right?” Mayson asked with a light chuckle.

“You showed up here.” Lois pointed out, glancing at her watch, “At almost eight o’clock at night.”

“I had a late deposition and thought I could catch Clark here... *alone*.” Mayson corrected, giving Lois an annoyed look. “I wanted to talk to him about why he...” she stopped herself.

“Never mind. I don’t even know why I’m talking to you about this.”

“Why he what?” Lois arched her eyebrow at her.

“Fine,” Mayson crossed her arms over her chest, taking a seat across from her. “You want to talk. You want the dirt. Here it is. Your partner is nothing but a scumbag that doesn’t know how to treat women.”

“*What!*?” Lois shot up out of her chair angrily. “How dare you? Clark is ...”

“A rotten jerk!” Mayson corrected, cutting her off. “I mean, I guess I should have put two and two together. I mean, I was practically throwing myself at him...”

Lois snorted, “*Practically?*”

“Fine. Whatever.” Mayson huffed, “I was throwing myself at him. You happy?”

Lois couldn’t suppress the grin from her face. “Very.”

Mayson snorted, looking away for a moment before snapping back angrily. “Anyway, it’s not like it did me any good. Weeks of throwing myself at him and still couldn’t get him to agree to even a cup of coffee with me let alone...”

“What does this have to do with anything? So, he wouldn’t go out with you? Big deal.” Lois snorted irritably. “That doesn’t make him a jerk. That doesn’t warrant you throwing around remarks like that.”

“No?” Mayson shot back. “How about him agreeing to have lunch with me and then bolting with no explanation other than ‘I can’t do this’ before we’ve even been seated? He left me standing there like an idiot. Then all weekend I waited to hear something... *anything*. You know what I got? *Nothing*. No explanation. No apology.” Mayson said angrily. “Then I come here to confront him and clear the air after seeing him at the press conference and *you* send him for *takeout*.”

Lois looked away, uncertain how to respond. Had Clark really done that?

“I’m sure there’s an explanation. I’ve known Clark for a long time and he would never...”

“Yeah, of course you’re defending him.” Mayson muttered under her breath, reaching for a notepad to jot something down. “When he gets back give him this. Tell him to call me.”

Lois nodded, watching the Assistant District Attorney get up from the table and head out the door. She glanced at the notepad and frowned when she read the note, “*You owe me an explanation.*”

*Call me. – Mayson'*

Lois threw the note across the table. "You've *got* to be kidding me."

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Clark finished clearing the scene of the accident and ensuring the bearing that had cracked was secure enough that the construction crew could safely work without endangering anyone. The road blocks had been put up and the car that had almost gone off the side was safely parked on the other side of the bridge with an EMT, checking for any injuries.

After ensuring he wasn't needed any longer, he headed back. It was strange today, being around Mayson again after so much had changed between Lois and him. He hadn't talked to her since he'd left her at lunch...if you could call it that. He'd left before they'd even had a chance to sit down.

He'd called to apologize for leading her on and for leaving before all hell had broken loose with Ryan Wiley and the Hawkeye, but hadn't received a call back. He actually hadn't expected a call back at all given his behavior. He felt horrible about using her to avoid dealing with his anger at Lois. It wasn't his proudest moment. Mayson didn't deserve that.

Even though he didn't look at her the same way she looked at him, he still cared for her. She was a good person and had a strong moral compass he could respect. It was clear she thought his activities as Superman were questionable—an opinion that made him ponder whether he should show up to every rescue he was called for. Many situations didn't require Superman's presence at all. Of course, he didn't hold her opinions about Superman against her. She had valid arguments. Arguments he didn't necessarily agree with. Arguments that festered Lois' anger at the ADA. It was just one of the many things that drove home why he couldn't see himself pursuing anything more than friendship with Mayson Drake.

The most important point being, she wasn't Lois.

Lois stood by him through thick and thin without even knowing the man behind the cape. She'd been his biggest ally and toughest defender throughout the past year. Now that she was in on the secret it felt like he could finally be himself with her. What he'd thought would be hard or awkward between the two of them had become second nature. She anticipated his need for an excuse and helped him come up with believable excuses for him to leave on a rescue. It made him love her even more.

Still, he knew he owed Mayson more than a voicemail message with a lame apology. He needed to talk to her face to face. He needed to clear the air, no matter how uncomfortable that made the both of them.

He flew by downtown Metropolis and spotted the neon sign for 'Little Italy' down below. He landed in the small ally behind the restaurant and changed, heading inside to pick up the order that surprisingly had already been called in for him. He couldn't help but smile as he carried the food with him back to the Planet. The closer he and Lois got the more she surprised him.

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'*Personal.*' The word rang in Lois' ears on repeat as she tried to distract herself with the translated journals Jimmy had brought her from STAR Labs. '*Babe*' Jimmy's word of choice to describe Mayson earlier that morning echoed in her mind.

"Lois?"

Lois looked up to see Clark setting the two bags of food down in front of her. "You're back." She forced a smile, "Good. I'm starved."

"Did you make any headway while I was gone?" Clark asked, pointing to the stack of books on the table before carefully removing the takeout containers from the first bag.

"No, not really. I got distracted." Lois gave him an apologetic smile, allowing the sweet aroma of the marinara sauce to hit her nostrils. She was starving.

"Cream soda." He said, handing her a can.

"Thanks." She said, popping the top and taking a sip.

"What did Mayson want?" Clark asked, taking a seat next to her.

"Oh, nothing." Lois said uncertainly. "She wants *you* to call *her*."

"Okay." He shrugged, opening up the foil to reveal the garlic bread, pushing it in front of her. "Here. Eat."

Grateful for the distraction she took a piece and bit into it. "Mmm...I love their bread."

He smiled back at her, "I know." He took a bite of his pasta before reaching over to grab the stack of papers Jimmy had brought her from STAR Labs. "These from Jimmy?" he asked.

"Yeah, I... haven't had a chance to go through them yet." Lois said evasively, looking down with a frown.

"Something bothering you?" he asked, setting his fork down.

"Fine. I'm fine." Lois said, poking her pasta with her fork a little harder than necessary.

"No, you're not." He observed, taking her hand in his. "What's wrong?"

"Just mulling over some things." She said, forcing a smile. "Everything go okay with your...?" she did a flying motion with her hand.

"Yeah, the bearing on the Metropolis bridge cracked and there was a car caught in the collapse, but everyone's fine." He reassured her, looking at her in concern, "Lois, what's wrong?"

"It's not important." She said hurriedly.

"Why don't you let me be the judge of that? Come on," Clark pressed.

She pivoted herself toward him as she spoke, "Fine. Mayson came in here spewing a bunch of accusations...which *really* made me want to drop kick her down the elevator shaft." She bit out irritably. She saw the amused expression on Clark's face and added, "It's not funny."

"I didn't say anything." He added sheepishly.

"You were smirking." She corrected and added softly, recalling her conversation with Jimmy that morning. "Then this morning, Jimmy was telling me I needed to be a good friend and let you be happy with...*Mayson*." She spat out irritably, allowing the acid in her tone to linger on Mayson's name.

"Lois, there has never been any... Mayson and me." He said, taking her hand in his. She closed her eyes, feeling the relief wash over her as she heard Clark confirm her suspicions about his and Mayson's *relationship*. He tilted her chin toward him, forcing her to look at him. "You're the only one I want to be with. The only one I could even entertain the thought of sharing this secret with."

"Really?" she asked cautiously.

"Really," he moved his hand to cup her cheek. "I love you, Lois. I always have and I always will. I never saw Mayson as anything more than a friend."

"Does *she* know that?" Lois asked, biting her lower-lip.

"Well, I've never gone on a date with her if that's what you're asking." Clark edged cautiously, moving closer to her.

She smiled, feeling the warmth from his hand against her cheek. How was it that he could make her weak in the knees with just a touch?

"Well, she seemed to be under the impression there was more than friendship going on." Lois pointed out cautiously, placing her hand over his. "Showing up at the Planet, your apartment, and the night of the Charity Ball..."

"One dance." He said with a small smile, holding her hand in his as he removed it from her cheek, intertwining his hand with hers, "And you were the one that agreed for her to cut in." She gave him a half-smile and he added, kissing her palm with his lips. "Then you disappeared on me and made me go hunt you down at your apartment."

"As Superman." She whispered.

"I *am* Superman." He whispered back. "And you, Lois Lane, are the only one I want to be dancing with." He leaned into her, tightening his hand on hers.

"Good." She finished with a smile, "I don't share well with others."

Clark laughed, "I've noticed." He reached up to cup her cheek. "Now, where were we?" Unable to suppress the urge any longer she leaned forward, capturing his lips with hers. He moaned against her, tracing the outline of her lips with his tongue as his hand cupped her cheek, "We're going to get caught." He whispered against her lips.

"I think we agreed that was a dumb idea, right?" Lois teased, running her hand up his shoulders.

"So you don't want me to pretend I don't want to do this every time I see you?" he leaned in to kiss her, "Or this?" He kissed her again.

She giggled against him. "Every time?"

"Every time." He repeated, leaning in to kiss her once more.

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### **MOB IMPOSTORS MOVE IN ON METROPOLIS**

*By Lois Lane and Clark Kent*

Lois took a long yawn as she stepped out of the elevator, scanning the newsroom. It looked like Clark still wasn't in yet. They hadn't left the Planet till a little after midnight. A small smile spread across her face as she recalled the evening she'd spent with Clark. The slow pace they'd promised to take with their relationship seemed to be gradually losing its appeal. Hiding how she felt about him was torturous.

She knew she loved Clark. Merging her feelings for him and the feelings she had for his alter-ego would still take time but trying to act like things hadn't changed between them wasn't doing anyone any favors either. She wanted to kiss him, hold him, touch him, and she hated spending the last twenty-four hours pretending like those feelings weren't there just because they were in public. She glanced toward his empty desk across from hers, frowning at her partner's absence.

"Lois?" Perry approached her from behind, "Nice of you to join us this morning. Where's Kent?"

"Oh, he, um, had an errand to run this morning." Lois finished weakly, turning to see Perry standing behind her.

"Uh-huh," Perry's gaze bore down on her for what felt like an eternity before turning to head back to his office. "When Clark gets in I want to see the both of you so we can go over everything you've got on this Hamilton character."

"Sure thing, Chief." Lois nodded, watching as Perry headed back for his office.

She and Clark had finished gathering information on Hamilton last night and had put out some feelers with a few of their sources to find out more about these criminal zombies that were popping up everywhere. Rumor had it that the police were working on a sting operation to take down Bonnie and Clyde, but no one knew when or where.

"Mr. White, I know you have a paper to run, but I have a reputation to uphold. Now I just need a decision!"

Lois looked up and saw the uppity caterer Perry had hired for the Planet's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party tomorrow night, holding up several swatches of napkins for inspection. Lois suppressed her laughter when she heard the raised voices. Party planning obviously wasn't the Chief's forte and being forced to make all the decisions was obviously taking a toll on him.

Even from her desk, she could see Perry's brow furrow and the familiar vein on his forehead pulse as he shot back, "Look, Jacques. I don't really care what kind of napkins you put out. So long as the guests aren't wipin' their mouths on their sleeves!"

Lois suppressed a chuckle as she watched Perry slam the door to his office. She had to admit, she was actually looking forward to the party tomorrow night. Now that she and Clark were dating

she found herself looking forward to many of the functions and parties she used to roll her eyes at. Having someone to go with helped.

Given that Jimmy already knew about the two of them and the fact that she and Clark were finding it more and more difficult to act 'business as usual' in the office she was seriously contemplating just letting the cat out of the bag. Yes, there were still things she was coming to terms with regarding his dual identity. Clark's need to try and protect her in and out of the suit for one. She'd been irritated at him when he'd overreacted about her showing up to the bank after the robbery. It wasn't like she went inside while the robbers were still in there. She had some sense.

While she knew he was only acting that way because he was concerned, it still annoyed her. Then there was his ability to hear and see things the normal human couldn't. Remembering that he was Superman when he was dressed in a suit and tie was proving hard. She was so used to having to break-in to hear or see things. Having Clark's super-hearing on standby was a perk to having her partner traipse around in tights. It was hard to remember when she was talking to Superman, she was also talking to Clark. She was slowly starting to merge the two in her mind, but she still had her moments.

"What's so funny?" a familiar voice breathed in her ear before leaning in to steal a peck on the cheek.

She grinned, turning to see Clark standing behind her with two cups of coffee in hand. "Hey, you."

"Hey yourself," He grinned back, setting the coffee mug down in front of her. "Sorry, I'm late. I wanted to do a quick check on the city to make sure there wasn't any sign of our missing Bonnie and Clyde."

"Any sign of them?" she asked, taking a sip of her coffee as he took a seat at her desk.

"No, but it was pretty quiet this morning. Not even a cat in a tree." Clark commented as Jimmy approached with a paper in hand.

"Guys, this just came over on the fax." Jimmy handed the paper to her, and he summarized as she read, "The cops got a definite make on the bank robbers. The fingerprints are exact matches with the real John Dillinger, Bonnie Parker, and Clyde Barrow."

Lois handed the fax to Clark, "Exact fingerprints? How is that even possible?"

"I don't know," Jimmy shrugged before he pointed toward Perry's office. "Uh, the Chief wants to see you."

"Oh, right," Lois nodded, heading toward Perry's office with Clark right behind her.

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Jimmy watched as Lois and Clark headed toward Perry's office. To the outside observer, nothing seemed to be amiss with the duo. They still interacted as they always had, but to someone that knew them, it was obvious there was a change in their relationship. The hidden glances they shared with one another, the way they lingered in the other's presence and the touches they shared with one another all hinted at the budding romance that had developed between the two.

How long they'd be able to keep it under wraps, he wasn't sure. They worked in a building filled with reporters that spent every day digging into other people's lives. Hiding a new relationship between the Planet's top reporting team wasn't going to be an easy task. Especially if they kept looking at each other like that. Perry for sure would figure it out.

The smell of cigar smoke caught his attention. Jimmy crinkled up his nose and turned to see a man in a striped suit with a matching grey bowler hat approached him, taking a long puff of his cigar. "Hey, kid. Where can I find Perry White?"

Jimmy looked at the man uncertainly. "He, uh, might be in his

office.” Jimmy pointed toward Perry’s office. “Do you have an appointment?”

“*Al Capone* doesn’t need an appointment.” The man said, pushing past him as he headed toward Perry’s office.

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“The DA and the police aren’t talking, but our sources say Dillinger made a deal and is willing to give up the entire operation,” Lois said, pacing in front of Perry. “I’m still waiting to hear from Bobby on the ‘where’ and ‘when’ this sting operation is supposed to take place.”

“Sting operation?” Clark and Perry echoed in unison, looking at her with equally disapproving looks.

“No way,” Perry shook his head. “Talk to your source. Get the information, but you’re not going to interfere in the takedown of these characters.”

“I don’t even know if there’s anything to interfere with.” Lois snapped irritably.

“We’ll be careful, Chief,” Clark added, giving Lois a pointed look. “We still need to find this Hamilton and put a stop to whatever experiments he’s conducting, so we don’t have anyone else coming out of the woodwork...”

“Perry White?” a voice from behind them intruded. Lois turned to see a man in a pinstripe business suit that looked to be from the 1920’s and a matching bowler hat, puffing on a cigar as he stepped inside the office. “I’m Al Capone.”

Lois looked back at Clark who motioned for her not to react.

“Great shades of Elvis! Who’s next? Jimmy Hoffa?” Perry muttered under his breath.

“Who’s Elvis?” Capone asked.

“Don’t move. Don’t say a word.” Clark whispered in her ear.

“Who’s Elvis??” Perry echoed irritably, “Look, pal, I don’t know what kind of game you’re playing...”

“Now is that any way to talk to a man who came by to do you a *favor*?” Capone asked, reaching into his pocket to dangle a set of keys in his hand before tossing them on Perry’s desk. “The coupe’s out back...washed and waxed. Clyde sends his apologies for the inconvenience.” Capone set an envelope on Perry’s desk that looked to be filled with money. “This should make up for the trouble.”

“What is this?” Perry asked.

Lois recognized the expression on Perry’s face. He was about to lose it. If what they’d discovered was true then this was the real Al Capone...as in *‘sleeps with the fishes Al Capone.’*

Clark pushed her toward the door while Capone moved toward Perry and whispered, “Call the police.”

“I found it under the front seat. I believe it belongs to you.”

Capone said as Lois snuck out of the office with the help of Clark shielding her from Capone’s view.

She reached her desk and picked up the phone, glancing back at Perry’s office where she could see Clark had moved to the other side of the office where Perry was. What if Capone had a gun? What if he tried to shoot Clark or Perry? Clark’s secret would be out and...

“Lois! Did you see who just came in here? It was Al Capone!” Jimmy pointed excitedly toward Perry’s office.

“Yes, I know,” Lois said irritably as she listened to the phone ring.

“Metropolis P.D.,” the voice on the other end of the phone said.

“Yes, hello, this is Lois Lane at the Daily Planet. We need to have a patrol car come down here right now! We’ve got another of Dillinger’s friends that...” The line went dead. “Hello?” She glared at the phone and began to dial the direct line to one cop she knew wouldn’t hang up on her.

“Lois!” Jimmy interrupted her train of thought

“Wolf here.” The detective’s voice echoed through the phone line.

“Detective Wolf? This is Lois Lane.”

“Ms. Lane, to what do I owe the ....?”

“We’ve got some guy claiming to be Al Capone in our editor’s office. We need someone to get down here now!” Lois cut him off.

“I’m on my way.” He said. With that, the phone line went dead.

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Back in Perry’s office, Clark had moved himself closer to Perry as the confrontation ensued. Hopefully, the police would get here soon and take Capone out of here before he tried anything. He’d x-rayed Capone and found a few knives and semi-automatics beneath Capone’s jacket. One wrong move and both he and Perry could be peppered with bullets, and he’d have a lot of explaining to do.

“C’mon now, Mr. White. You’re an editor, and I’m a businessman. Let’s just say we both know how to run an organization. And when it comes right down to it... it’s the grease that makes the presses flow.”

“The presses flow just fine here at the Daily Planet,” Clark interjected, taking a protective step in front of Perry.

“Is that right?” Capone looked between Perry and Clark, “No union problems?” his tone emphasized ‘union problems’ as a glint sparked in Capone’s eyes. “I could use someone like you, to see that the right things are said about me in the paper, Mr. White.”

Clark looked back at Perry, uncertain how the proud editor would respond to the insinuation that he was for sale. Perry stared at the Capone uncertainly, rising to his feet as he handed the envelope back at Capone, “I’ve had just about enough ‘Masterpiece Theatre’ for one day. Take your filthy money and that phony scar and get out of my office.”

Capone’s face fell, and a cold expression washed over his face. Clark steadied himself, watching carefully to see if he needed to intervene. “Why don’t you take a few days?” Capone’s eyes narrowed at Perry, “Think it over.”

“I think he’s already made his decision,” Clark said, taking another protective step in front of Perry. “You need to leave.”

“Police! On the ground!”

Clark turned to see four officers and Detective Wolf in Perry’s doorway, pointing their weapons at Capone. Capone looked at Perry with a disapproving tone, “You just made the biggest mistake of what’s left of your life, Mr. White.”

“Oh, threatening a witness,” Wolf said, slapping handcuffs on Capone. “We’ll add that to the long list of charges you never were charged with.”

“You don’t have anything on me.” Capone shot back angrily. “I’m just a law-abiding citizen having a nice conversation with my local editor. No crime in that.” Capone smiled as he attempted a half-way shrug that was limited with his arms in handcuffs behind his back.

“Yeah, but see there’s been some development in science over the years.” Wolf retorted with a grin. “All those crimes you thought you got away with are going to come home to roost.”

“We’ll see...” Capone sneered.

“You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney one will be provided for you...”

“Chief, are you all right?” Clark asked, looking at the older man in concern.

“Fine, son, just fine.” Perry retorted, taking a shaky breath. It was clear the encounter had more than rattled Perry, but he wasn’t about to admit that. “Are you?” He peered at Clark with a concerned look.

“I’m not the one that was being threatened, Chief,” Clark said good-naturedly, readjusting his glasses nervously as Perry stared him down.

“No? I just meant are you okay?” Perry looked to him in disbelief, “I mean, obviously you’re not thinking straight what with your getting into Capone wannabe’s face back there. I know

you have gotten out of a few close calls over the past year but that's no reason to act like you're bullet-proof! You're *not* Superman, son and—"

Lois peered into the office as the police escorted Capone to the elevator with Detective Wolf. "Everyone okay?"

"Fine," Perry said uneasily, taking a seat at his desk.

Lois looked at Clark for confirmation. He smiled, nodding that everything was okay. She sighed, taking a step toward him, resting her head on his shoulder as he placed an arm around her waist.

"Capone thought he could buy Perry," Clark explained.

"I'm sure that went over well." Lois gave Perry a weak smile.

Perry stared at the two of them for a moment responding, seeming to size the two of them up. "Yeah, I told him where he could take his money and shove it before that Detective Wolf showed up."

"I think we should try and find Bobby," Lois said, looking up at Perry.

"Yeah," Clark nodded, following her out of the office. He looked back at Perry to see the man watching him and Lois with a knowing look

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Bobby opened the box of Swiss chocolates happily as he listed off the information to Lois and Clark happily, "This Capone character? Not a big fan of the no smoking laws. He's been all over town trying to bribe everyone. The police chief. Mayor. Congressman. All of them got offers similar to what your editor had. All of them shut him down."

"Well, at least he's in jail now," Lois commented, tapping her fingers on the table. "What were you able to find out about that address?"

"It's an old laboratory. Hasn't had a lease on it in months but it's obvious someone's been living there." Bobby took a bite of the chocolate, "Mmm, the Swiss definitely know their chocolate."

"So this address might be where Hamilton is hiding the rest of the gang. How many of these guys are there?" Clark asked.

"Not sure." Bobby shrugged, "but from what I've been able to gather it's not Hamilton that's in charge anymore."

"The DNA manipulations must not have worked," Lois commented with a sigh. "So now we've got a gang of resurrected thugs trying to take over Metropolis."

"And get back in the business," Bobby said around another mouthful of chocolate. "Capone's last move was to try and takeover Georgie Hairdo's illegal gaming club downtown. Capone may be locked up, but his orders aren't."

Lois met Clark's gaze, "That might be where the sting operation is."

"Could be, but that's way too dangerous." Clark shook his head.

"Look, there's something goin' down tonight at the club. That's all I know." Bobby said with a shrug, standing up to leave. "I'll catch you later."

Clark watched Bobby leave and looked at Lois, recognizing the expression on her face. "No way. Absolutely not."

"Oh come on!" Lois retorted. "We don't know how many of these guys there are out there. Our job is still to report the news, right?"

"Yes, but becoming *part* of the news isn't exactly what I had in mind. We know something's going on at the club tonight. Let's call Detective Wolf and report it."

"Or we could go down there and see for sure what's going on and call Wolf if we see any suspect characters," Lois suggested.

"No," Clark repeated, shaking his head. "Not happening."

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Lois stared at the dark building in front of her. "I still don't see why we couldn't check out Georgie Hairdo's club first."

"It's early," Clark said, looking around the questionable surroundings, trying to find the entrance. "The club will be there

when we're done. Right now, I'd like to stop Hamilton before he brews anymore members to the *Walking Dead Gang*." He found the door, which was secured by a padlock. With the flick of the wrist, he knocked the lock loose. He looked behind him before opening the door and saw a homeless man staring at him in awe, "Must have been rusted through." He lied. The man looked to him then the door then hurried down the corner to get away.

Lois rolled her eyes, "You've got to get better at those excuses."

He followed her inside the building. The room was dimly lit. A large vat sat in one end of the room. A man with a disheveled appearance stood at the other end of the room, measuring liquid from one test tube to another.

"Professor Hamilton?" Lois asked, approaching him.

"Ah! No!" Hamilton jumped in surprise, dropping the vial in his hand. The glass shattered and the chemicals he was mixing dripped down the table. He turned to see Lois and Clark, letting out a sigh of relief when he saw them, "Who-Who are you? H-How did you get in here?"

"Lois Lane and Clark Kent." Clark answered, "We're with the Daily Planet."

"The paper?" Hamilton looked around in dismay. "This is not what it looks like."

"It looks like you're doing what everyone told you not to do." Clark frowned, fingering a blue notebook on Hamilton's desk. "You've brought back some of the most notorious criminals."

"You don't understand!" Hamilton argued frantically, "It wasn't supposed to be like this. I never meant for anyone to get hurt. I was just trying to find a cure!" Hamilton argued. "I wanted to help mankind."

"A cure?" Clark asked, not sure what he was talking about.

"Hollywood's made a dozen versions of Frankenstein, and you still didn't get the point." Lois said, looking toward the vat, "What's in the vat?"

"Baby Face Nelson." Hamilton cringed, "Or at least, it will be."

"Baby Face Nelson? How many failed experiments is it going to take to —" Clark noticed the chains on Hamilton's feet.

"They've got you locked up here?" It seemed Hamilton wasn't as willing a participant in all this as he originally assumed.

"I tried to escape a few times." Hamilton pointed to the bruises on his arms.

Lois and Clark exchanged a look, "Come on, let's get you out of here." Clark said, fiddling with the locks.

"Professor Hamilton, when was the last time you ate something?" Lois asked, pulling Hamilton's attention away from Clark while he snapped the cuffs off the professor's ankles.

"I honestly don't recall." He shrugged.

"Done," Clark announced, standing up. "We should get you to a hospital." He looked toward the vat. "Is there any way to stop... whatever is going on here?"

"Yes, there is. There's a way to stop all of this." Hamilton said in an eerily calm voice. Before Lois or Clark could react, Hamilton turned the vial over on the counter and poured it into another test tube. "We have approximately three minutes and forty-six seconds to get out of here before that blows." He said, running toward the door.

Clark muttered under his breath as he did his best to remain at a somewhat normal speed in rushing Lois out of the lab.

They looked back, and he saw flames ignite inside the building. "I'm going to go call the fire department." He said, tugging at his tie.

"No, wait until it's burned a little more. I don't want anyone getting those notes." Hamilton said, pointing at the building that was slowly becoming engulfed in flames.

"Just go." Lois interjected, pointing to the building in flames. "Professor Hamilton that's a chemical fire. If we don't call for



help it could spread and—”

Clark didn't catch the last part of her argument as he disappeared down an abandoned alley tugging on his tie and returned in his Superman suit, flying inside the building and dousing the flames with his freezing breath. The flames had risen against the wall but not enough to do anything more than scorch the walls. He approached the journals Hamilton had tried to unsuccessfully destroy and flipped through them at super-speed. It detailed how Hamilton had been able to regenerate the cells of the criminals walking the streets of Metropolis. Hamilton wanted it destroyed, but it was still evidence. Evidence that would prove how these criminals had risen from the dead.

He exited the building as the fire truck pulled up. He looked at Lois who smiled at him with a knowing look. The firefighters approached, examining the scene cautiously, “The fire's out. It looks like there was an accident with the chemicals in the lab.”

The first firefighter looked around the room behind him, examining the walls. “Doesn't look to have done too much damage. Those chemical fires are usually brutal. Lucky you were nearby.”

“Yeah,” Clark frowned, uncertain if he wanted to tell the firefighter that luck had nothing to do with it.

Lois was hanging up the phone as he approached. He looked to Hamilton, trying to keep himself from reacting too openly with his concern for her. Acting like an overprotective boyfriend with six firefighters, three officers, and a well-meaning professor wouldn't bode well for either of them.

“Was anyone hurt?” Hamilton asked in concern.

“No, no one was injured, thankfully. The fire chief is examining the scene.” Clark explained.

“Thank you, Superman,” One of the firefighters approached. “This could have turned into a disaster if you hadn't been nearby.”

“I'm just happy I was able to help.” He looked to Professor Hamilton, “You should be more careful with the chemicals you're working with, sir. They can have dire consequences.”

“I'll try to remember that. Thank you, Superman.” Hamilton said before stepping away to talk to the police who had just arrived on the scene.

Clark watched Hamilton leave and smiled, “He tried to do the right thing in the end. I guess he gets points for that.”

“Well, that's one problem solved.” Lois smiled at him.

“Are you okay?” he asked. “I tried to get us out of there as fast as possible without raising any suspicions with Hamilton.”

“I'm fine.” She soothed, looking down at the doused hem of her skirt from where an unknown substance had spilled on her when they'd been trying to leave. “I definitely need to change, but I'm fine.”

“You think he's going to be okay?” He asked, looking to the police car where Hamilton was sitting, writing his statement.

“I hope so.” Lois said softly. “Now, we've still got a pretty big problem to handle and a story to write.” Clark groaned, knowing full well where she was headed with this. Lois crossed her arms and continued, ignoring his groan. “I spoke with Louie. There's been a lot of movement at Georgie Hairdo's club. We need to get over there and find out what's going on.”

“I still don't think that's a good idea.” He retorted, forgetting himself for a moment as he moved his hand to cup her cheek.

Lois looked at him in surprise but recovered quickly, “Where's Clark, Superman?”

He frowned, noting the subtle reminder that he was in his Superman suit. He looked around, saying a silent prayer that the gesture had gone unnoticed by the emergency personnel.

“I'll go find him.” He said, allowing his tone to return to the voice he used as Superman.

“You do that.” She smiled.

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“I'll just be a sec,” Lois called over her shoulder as she ran

into her bedroom to change.

Clark watched her retreating figure and sighed. It had taken them about half an hour to be released after answering questions about Hamilton's accident. He hated lying. He hated being dishonest. But given that Hamilton intended to destroy his journals and prevent someone from recreating his experiments, he knew in the grand scheme of things it was the right thing to do.

He wasn't going to actively participate in the destruction of evidence, but he wasn't going to help put Hamilton away for trying to do the right thing in the end either. He still wasn't sure about going to this club. He had a bad feeling that whatever was going down tonight would be dangerous. Lois was determined to go and find out what was going on. Given that he would still be following her into the undercover assignment if she didn't know he was Superman he couldn't argue with her reasoning. They still needed more information for their story. The DA's office and the police weren't talking. This was the only way they'd find out what was going on. At least, that's what he told himself to justify what they were doing.

Lois exited her bedroom in long red dress with spaghetti straps. She looked stunning. “You ready?” she asked, grabbing her purse.

He allowed his eyes to wander up and down her body as a slow smile spread across his face. “Just about.” He took a step toward her, pulling her to him as he leaned in to kiss her.

She smiled against him, fingering the hair on the back of his neck, “I take it you like the dress?”

“You could say that,” he whispered, pulling away as he allowed his eyes to wander up and down her soft curves. “Such a waste to wear that on an undercover assignment though.” He commented, allowing his hands to rest on her waist.

“Maybe you can fly us to dinner after we get what we need from the club.” She suggested fingering the lapels to his jacket.

“I still don't know why you can't just let the police handle this.” He said with a long defeated breath.

“Because they're not talking,” Lois said, stepping a little closer to him as she looped her other hand around his neck and pulling him to her as he walked them back toward the front door.

He stopped in front of the door to her apartment, running a hand through her hair as he spoke. “These guys are dangerous.”

“I'm more than capable of taking care of myself.” She reminded him, fingering the knot on his tie as she spoke.

“Your roundhouse kick isn't going to be any match for a shotgun.” He reminded her.

“We don't even know for sure that Bonnie and Clyde are going to be there.” Lois reminded him.

“And if they are?” he pressed. “What's your plan if they show up?”

“Get out of there and call the police.” She shrugged. “Come on. You've got to admit it's a good plan.”

“It's a *dangerous* plan.” He corrected.

“You can't see through lead.” She reminded him. “Superman might be needed. It's probably easier to help if you're already there than try to fly in. Most of those places in Hobb's Bay were built in the early 50's...”

“...which means they've got lead-paint and I'd be going in blind.” He finished for her. “I know. I know, but I still don't like it.”

“Come on,” she tugged him toward the door. “The sooner we get over there and get the scoop on what's going on the sooner we can leave.”

“I'll be counting the seconds.” He said with a pointed look.

She pulled him to her by the tie, capturing his lips with hers. He let out a soft moan against her lips before allowing her to pull away, “Everything's going to be fine.” She reassured him, tugging his hand with her as she guided him through the doorway.

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“Are you sure this is the right place?” Clark asked, watching from around the corner as a limo pulled up to a tall brick building with no signage outside. The tall metal door was sealed tightly as two couples dressed to the nines approached.

“*The fat lady sings*” he overheard the man say to the doorman. The door opened.

“Pretty classy crowd for an illegal gaming club,” Lois commented.

“Isn’t that Congressman Haines and his wife?” Clark asked.

“Nice to know how our taxes are being spent,” Lois commented with a wry smile. “Any idea how we break into this place?”

“Well they keep saying ‘*the fat lady sings*’ to the bouncer, so I’m going to assume that’s the password to get in,” he said, following her to the metal door.

“How many times have you done that?” she grinned at him. “Listened in on a conversation or scanned something when we were investigating?”

“Typically I do it to keep you out of danger.” He said with a smile before he knocked on the door.

“Yeah?” the peephole slid open, and a pair of eyes stared back at them expectantly.

“The fat lady sings,” Lois said confidently.

The door opened, and Clark looked around the large casino nervously. “Here goes nothing.” He muttered.

“No sign of Bonnie and Clyde,” Lois observed as they moved further into the room.

“Well, hopefully, someone here knows where they’re at,”

Clark added, looking around the room.

“Let’s get to work.” She smiled back at him.

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Lois watched as Clark headed toward the craps table to mingle with the crowd and find out what he could about Bonnie and Clyde. She moved toward the slot machines, seeing customers young and old playing the machines. No one seemed to be having any luck. She felt a hard bump from behind and saw a man with an outrageous hair-do walk past her.

She followed him, tapping him on the shoulder, “Excuse me. Mr. Hair-do?”

The man turned around in disbelief, “You talkin’ to me?”

Questioning whether she’d made a mistake, she responded meekly, “Yes, aren’t you Georgie Hair-do?”

“Do I look like a bald dead guy?” he asked pointing to himself in disbelief.

“I...beg your pardon?” she asked, uncertain if she’d heard correctly.

“Georgie Hair-do was found floatin’ in Hobb’s river half an hour ago.” He said with a shrug.

“Oh, I’m sorry.” She whispered.

“I’m not. I owed him twenty large.” He said over his shoulder as he walked away.

Lois turned to scan the room for Clark, seeing him walking around the crap’s table. She turned to head his way when she felt someone grab her shoulder.

“What are you doing here?”

Lois turned around and found herself face to face with Mayson Drake. She was dressed in a long blue dress with her neckline lower than what Lois felt was appropriate. “Following a lead.” She crossed her arms over her chest, looking around the room.

“You need to get out of here. Now!” Mayson said in-between gritted teeth. “You’re going to ruin this operation. If Clyde recognizes you...”

“We’re just talking to a few people, and then we’re leaving.” Lois breathed irritably. “We have no plans on staying in this dump.”

“*We?*” Mayson echoed.

Lois looked toward the bar where Clark was sitting at the bar talking to the bartender. She recognized the blonde woman as Bonnie from Perry’s garage and narrowed her eyes as the woman took a seat next to Clark.

“If you’ll excuse me I have to go rescue my partner.”

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Clark took a seat at the bar, watching the room cautiously. He hadn’t seen anyone that looked out of place. He had noticed a few patrons with hidden shields and weapons. The police were already here and ready for taking down Bonnie and Clyde if and when they showed up.

“Hey, handsome. How about some company?”

Clark turned to see Bonnie Parker in a blue cocktail dress that looked like it came off of a costume rack for a 1920’s flapper. It was amazing how different she looked in person.

Uncertain what to do he nodded, “Um...sure.” He motioned for her to sit down next to him. He eyed the other patrons of the barn. No sign of Clyde but if history on the duo of Bonnie and Clyde had taught him anything it was wherever Bonnie was, Clyde Barrow wasn’t far behind. “So...do you come here often?”

She leaned forward, playing with his tie. “I haven’t been here in years. I guess you could say I haven’t been anywhere in years.”

He felt her tug on the knot of his tie and moved to stop her.

“Would you like something to drink?”

“Why don’t you surprise me?” she grinned at him flirtatiously.

He pulled back, straightening up in his seat. He waved at the bartender who headed his way. She leaned forward again, playing with the silk of his tie, “You look a little wound up. Why don’t you loosen your tie and relax.”

“No, thank you,” he managed weakly, pulling away from her once more.

“Clark!” His super-hearing picked up on a hushed whisper from across the room. He looked up and saw Lois standing a few feet away.

“Beat it, pretty boy.” Clyde Barrow walked up, placing a protective arm around Bonnie, “The lady’s taken.”

“Knock it off, Clyde. After sixty years, I still don’t see no ring on this finger.” Bonnie retorted.

“Could we discuss this later?” Clyde looked at Bonnie with an annoyed expression, “You’re supposed to be watching the door.”

“Look. Um... it was nice meeting you. Both of you. But I have to go... find someone.” He said hurriedly, moving away from the bar to find Lois.

“What’d you find out?” she asked.

“Get out of here...*now*.” He said, pushing her toward the front door before she could argue.

“But...” she turned to him, and he motioned with his hand the familiar flying symbol as he tugged at his tie, looking for a safe place to change.

“Go.” He repeated.

She hesitated once more then relented and walked toward the entrance they’d come in at. He moved down the corridor toward the backroom and changed into Superman at super-speed.

“Don’t anybody move!!” Clyde Barrow’s voice echoed through the room as he held a gun to the side of an officer he recognized from the bank robbery the previous afternoon. “I ain’t gonna miss this close!”

“Everyone move back!” another officer called out.

“That’s right! Don’t you forget who’s calling the shots here!” Clyde spat out.

Clyde hadn’t seen him yet, giving him the element of surprise. He watched as the undercover officers around the casino pulled out their service weapons and trained them on Clyde. Bonnie stood by his side with a shotgun trained on them. One wrong move and the officer Clyde held in his grasp would pay with his life.

“Hey, you look familiar...” he heard Bonnie say, pointing her gun around the corner.

“Oh, no...” he muttered to himself when he saw the familiar brunette being pulled up from behind the bar where she’d been hiding, camera in tow. “Lois...”

“Hey, ain’t you that broad that had my car?” Clyde asked.

Bonnie held the gun to Lois’ side and laughed, “Sure is, Clyde.”

Lois winced in pain when the barrel of the shotgun hit her side but didn’t respond. Clark shook his head, trying to gain control of his emotions as a plan formed. All of the undercover officers were a few feet away and could easily get caught in the cross-fire if he just landed in front of them... One wrong move and the officer Clyde had grabbed, and Lois, would be paying for his mistake. He needed to neutralize Bonnie and Clyde.

He scanned the Tommy gun Clyde held against the officer, finding just the right spot to melt the internal mechanisms and render the weapon useless. He shot a blast of heat vision, hearing Clyde cry out in pain from the heat. Clark applied the same treatment to Bonnie’s weapon of choice before she could fire a shot. He flew at super-speed to remove the officer and Lois out of Bonnie and Clyde’s grasp and landed in front of them confident that Bonnie and Clyde wouldn’t get a shot off.

“I don’t believe Georgie Hairdo is taking any new members.” He said, taking a step toward them.

Clyde hit the trigger repeatedly, but nothing happened. “What is this?” He grabbed Bonnie’s machine gun and found the same issue.

“Something *wrong*?” Clark asked, taking another step toward the duo as he grabbed the two weapons from Clyde and tossed them to the ground. Before either could take a step, he grabbed them both and handed them to the awaiting officers.

A scattered applause could be heard throughout the room.

Clark walked toward Lois, “Are you okay?”

“Fine.” She said shakily. “Thank you.”

“I told you to get out of here.” He whispered, looking around to make sure no one could overhear their conversation.

“I thought I had the situation under control,” Lois said cautiously.

“It looked like you had a gun pointed at your side and no way to escape.” Clark countered. “I wouldn’t call that *under control*.”

Before she could respond, Detective Wolf approached with a sigh of relief. “Thank you, Superman. How did you get here so fast?”

“I, uh,” he looked to Lois who shrugged and then struggled to come up with a logical explanation for him being there tonight. “I had a feeling Bonnie and Clyde might try and pick up old habits. This seemed like the logical place to find them.” He answered weakly.

“Superman?”

Clark turned to see Mayson Drake approaching him. He mentally prepared himself for the verbal beating she was probably going to throw at him for everything she thought he’d done wrong tonight. Lois crossed her arms over her chest, throwing Mayson a skeptical look. She seemed to be thinking the same thing.

“Yes, Ms. Drake?” He finally responded.

“Thank you,” she said weakly. “You saved a lot of lives tonight.” She extended her hand to him, and he looked at her in confusion. “Don’t look so shocked. I can give credit when it’s due. You did good tonight. Thank you.”

He nodded, uncertain how to respond. “I appreciate that Ms. Drake. I’m just glad no one got hurt.”

“You and me both.” Wolf interrupted, looking around the crowded room.

Mayson looked toward Lois, “Next time I tell you to leave, you better do it. Where’s that partner of yours?”

“He, um...” Lois looked to Clark for help.

“I think he was outside calling your story in, Lois.” Clark supplied for her.

“Right,” Lois nodded over-enthusiastically. “Always with those deadlines of Perry’s.”

“Really?” Mayson asked, “Well, I need to talk to him.” She moved toward the exit and Clark looked at Lois for help.

“Mayson, wait!” Lois cut her off. “Aren’t you... busy here? I mean, you haven’t even gotten Ca-Superman’s statement... or mine for that matter?”

“I’m sure there are enough officers here to handle that,” Mayson said with a smile. “Excuse me.”

Wolf raised his hand to stop her, “Mayson, whatever it is is gonna have to wait. The mayor wants to talk to you about the press release on this one.”

Lois and Clark exchanged a look as they watched Mayson leave. Clark let out a long sigh of relief, “That was close.”

“Too close,” Lois said in agreement. “Did that just happen? Did Mayson Drake actually thank Superman, the vigilante for his help?”

“She’s not *that* bad.” Clark corrected.

“Please!” Lois rolled her eyes. “Come on, let’s get out of here. We’ve got a story to write up, and I don’t think Detective Wolf is going to keep Mayson deterred for long. You might want to go find Clark.” She traced the ‘S’ on his chest. He looked down with a smile, reminded he was still in the suit.

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“So Clyde and Capone were planning to takeover Georgie Hairdo’s operation and trying to rebuild their old gang,” Lois explained over the phone to Perry as she finished typing her final notes on the story on her laptop.

“Well, now they can keep each other company while they await trial,” Clark said, looking at the screen from over her shoulder.

“This is great stuff you two.” Perry said, “Glad you all made it out of there in one piece.”

“Me too,” Clark said, looking over at Lois.

“All right, well send me what you’ve got and we can go over everything in the morning,” Perry said.

“Night Chief,” Lois said, hanging up the phone and turning the speaker off. She leaned back against the couch and sighed, “What a night.”

“Tell me about it.” He muttered, looking around his apartment with a frown. Lois had yet again gone head first into a dangerous situation and nearly gotten herself killed. He still wasn’t sure how to even begin addressing what had happened tonight.

“You okay?” Lois asked, turning to look at him.

He carefully folded the laptop down and set it on the coffee table. “We need to talk about what happened tonight.”

“What’s to talk about? We got the bad guys. The story is written. Everything turned out okay.” She finished with a weak smile.

“No, everything did not turn out okay. You got lucky. You can’t keep putting yourself in danger like that.” He fumed, “What you did tonight was reckless.”

“I was trying to get the story. Just like I’ve done countless times.” Lois argued. “What’s the big deal?”

“The big deal is you could have gotten yourself or anyone else in that room killed tonight.”

“I was out of sight. I didn’t know they were going to recognize that officer and I certainly didn’t know they were going to recognize me.” Lois argued angrily. “I got in over my head. I know that, but you can’t expect me to change the way I do my job just because things are different between us. I’m still a reporter, and I still have to meet the same deadlines and...”

“Lois, did it ever occur to you that I could have gotten us that story without you being in there?” Clark reminded her gently. Realization dawned on Lois’ face, and she looked down at her lap as he continued. “I’m not trying to make you stop doing your job. Just be...more cautious. Take less unnecessary risks.”

"I guess this is one of those things I have to get used to," Lois said with a slow smile.

"Please be more careful." He said, taking her hand in his, "That's all I'm asking. If anything ever happened to you... I don't know what I'd do." He moved his hand to cup her cheek.

Lois gave him a weak smile, "I'm not good at sitting on the sidelines."

"I know, but there are some situations that are too dangerous." He let out a long breath, removing his hand from her cheek. "Like an illegal gambling club filled with undercover cops and dangerous mobsters."

"I thought I could get in there and get the story and go unnoticed, but I was wrong." Her tone dropped an octave as she finished, "Very wrong."

He leaned his head into his folded hands, twiddling his thumbs, "I would have told you what happened." He pointed out softly.

"I know." She looked down, "I guess I'm just not used to all this yet. I mean, I'm used to chasing down the leads and getting the story. At some points, I think I've got a handle on it and others... I don't know. I forget when Superman's saving the day it's also my partner."

"I guess I can understand that." He relented gently. "Just try to be more careful. We can get the story without you getting yourself kidnapped or worse."

"I can try. That's all I'm willing to promise right now." Lois gently nudged him with her elbow. "I still have to pull my own weight in this partnership."

"I'll take it." He smiled, leaning in to kiss her.

"Thank you for saving me," she murmured against his lips, "Even if it was my own doing."

He felt her arms encircle around his neck and murmured, "I'll always be there for you, Lois."

"I know." She grinned against him, running her hands up the sides of his cheek. "You've always been there for me when I needed you... as Clark and as Superman."

"I love you," He whispered softly in her ear, nudging his nose against her cheek.

"I love you too." She whispered back, turning her cheek to face him. She leaned in to kiss him once more, tightening her arms around his neck.

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"Ridiculous!" Mayson fumed as she drove down the familiar streets. "Absolutely ridiculous!"

She was angry.

She was furious.

She was hurt.

She thought Clark Kent was a good guy. He seemed to genuinely care about others and was willing to take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of others without giving his own personal safety a second thought. He seemed like the perfect guy.

That all changed when she'd finally gotten him to agree to a lunch date with her.

Yes, it had been on the heels of an argument with his partner, but at that point, she didn't care. She was thrilled that she was finally going to have a date with the man she'd been fantasizing about for a week and a half. Ever since she'd seen him without a shirt at his apartment....

"Don't think about *that!*" Mayson ordered, making a turn down Main Street.

He had an incredible body. It still amazed her that he hadn't been snatched up by now. It was apparent his partner seemed oblivious to how lucky she was to work with him. She would kill to have a chance to work with Clark day in and day out.

What had gone wrong?

Why had he left like that?

She'd been mortified when he'd left before they'd even had a

chance to order drinks. Then after she'd finished her meal alone, she'd had to negotiate with the owner to accept a personal check because the power system went down and she didn't have enough cash on her. It was humiliating enough having her date walk out on her before the date had even begun. It was even more humiliating to have to beg the owner to take her check. Thankfully he'd been understanding.

All weekend she'd waited by the phone, waiting for a phone call to come that never came. He didn't even apologize. What kind of guy does that? She cringed inwardly when she recalled how many times she'd degraded herself, throwing herself at him mercilessly. She thought he'd cared about her, but she'd been wrong.

Well, no more playing nice. No more playing victim. She was going to get some answers, and she was going to get them now. At least if she showed up at his apartment, she wouldn't have to worry about him running off or his partner giving him an excuse to leave for takeout.

She parked the car on the street and prepared herself mentally to confront Clark Kent. "You can do this," Mayson told herself. "Stand up for yourself."

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Lois let out a soft moan as she slid her right leg to the side, hovering over Clark as their embrace continued. Both hands moved to cup her face, and his lips found hers repeatedly. She felt a sense of déjà vu wash over her as their embrace continued.

"I thought we were taking things slow?" Clark murmured as she leaned in to nibble at the sensitive flesh between the curve of his neck and shoulder, tugging his tie loose from the collar of his shirt and throwing it over the back of the couch.

"We'll add that to the list of bad plans." She giggled, sighing in relief as she worked on unbuttoning his dress shirt and saw the bare flesh of his chest.

<<"Lois, you have no idea how many times I've fantasized about this,">>

<<"I don't want a one-night-stand, and I don't think you want that either. I want forever...">>

<<"You're about to fall head over heels in love.">>

Her hands moved up and down his chest, pressing her lips against each newly exposed layer of skin.

"You seem to have a lot of those lately." He murmured, leaning in to kiss her. His hands moved up her back, pushing the soft cotton of her dress up as his lips moved down her jawline, feathering her in heated kisses.

"Too late for slow." She whispered against him. "Besides this is...so much more fun."

"I love you," he murmured against her as she lowered herself on his lap.

"I love you too, Clark,"

She felt the obvious effect their embrace was having on him and shuddered involuntarily. Recalling how he'd put a halt to things the last time she didn't move. She could feel him respond to her more and more as his lips nibbled at the sensitive flesh of her throat. She could feel her body slowly begin to respond as well. The room was slowly becoming unbearably hot as his breath moved up and down her throat. She could feel her thighs instinctually tighten around his waist.

"Lois..." he let out a shaky breath, "We've got to slow down." He slid her off his lap.

<<"I don't want a one-night-stand, and I don't think you want that either. I want forever...">>

She looked at him incredulously, trying to catch her breath as she felt a shiver run down her spine from the loss of contact. "You want to stop?"

<<"I want forever...">>

"No," he admitted carefully. She couldn't help but smile at that as he continued, "But I don't want to rush into anything."

This...is still very new for both of us and I..."

<<"I want forever..." >>

The simultaneous ring of the telephone and knock at the front door interrupted him. Lois giggled, smoothing out the wrinkles in her dress as she stood up. "You get the phone I'll get the door."

'Always something' she couldn't help but think to herself as she heard Clark answer the phone.

"Hey, Jimmy. Wait wait, slow down. What happened?"

Another knock on the door reminded her of the unannounced guest that was on the other side of his door. At least she knew this time it wasn't Jimmy.

She unlocked the door and swung it open, "Mayson?"

"Lois?" Mayson echoed in surprise, peering past Lois to see into the apartment. "Wha-What are you doing here?"

"Well, I..." she began to explain and caught herself. Why did she have to explain anything to Mayson? She was the one that had shown up unannounced at Clark's apartment. What was she doing there? "I don't think that's any of your business." She crossed her arms over her chest.

"I need to talk to Clark. Is he home?" Mayson asked, pushing her way past Lois and taking a step into the apartment.

Clark stood on the other side of the room, buttoning his shirt back up from their heated embrace earlier as he jotted down notes on a notepad, still talking to Jimmy. Mayson threw Lois a look as she tapped her foot on the wood floor.

"Okay, when did this happen?" Clark continued, still not looking in their direction as he finished his conversation with Jimmy.

Mayson looked back at Lois, "Do you mind? This is kinda personal."

"Excuse me?" Lois scoffed in disbelief.

"No, that's okay. She's right here. I'll tell her." Clark said, looking toward Lois. His expression changed to mild surprise when he saw Mayson standing at the door.

"Just go. There's no reason for you to be here right now." Mayson glared at Lois.

"You're out of your mind if you think I'm going anywhere because you told me to." Lois shot back angrily.

"No, it's not like... Goodnight, Jimmy. See you in the morning." Clark hung up and turned toward them. "Mayson, what are you doing here?"

"Well, for starters you never called," Mayson said, giving Lois a disapproving look.

"Yeah, sorry about that. It's been a crazy day." Clark apologized.

Mayson looked at Lois, narrowing her eyebrows at her, "Do you mind?"

Lois looked at Clark who shrugged. Contemplating whether she wanted to stay in the room or not she finally decided to give Mayson the space she thought she needed to talk to Clark. "I'm going to fix a cup of coffee."

Clark got a panicked look on his face, "No, no, no, don't touch the coffee maker."

"I can make a cup of coffee just fine." She argued.

"Yeah, but then people would have to drink it." He gave her an amused look. "There's some Cream Soda in the fridge. Help yourself."

Lois chuckled to herself, catching the uncomfortable gaze Mayson gave her as she headed toward the kitchen. She'd give her seven minutes. Surely it couldn't take *that* long to say whatever it was she needed to say.

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Clark watched Lois leave the room and smiled to himself before turning back to Mayson, "So, you wanted to talk?" he asked, uncertain where this conversation would be headed.

"Yes," Mayson moved into the room, pacing by the back of the couch. "I think you owe me an explanation."

"Explanation?" he asked, uncertainly.

"Yes, an explanation!" she fumed irritably. "I mean, you can't just leave someone like that and act like nothing happened. You just left...without any explanation or an apology."

"What are you talking about?" Clark asked confused. "I called and left a message for you on your phone after I got back to the office."

"You did?" She asked, suddenly embarrassed. "I..I didn't get it."

"You're right. I am sorry for leaving you like that. It wasn't fair to you...or to Lois." He continued, glancing back at the kitchen where he was sure Lois was pressed against the wall by the walkthrough between the kitchen and living room, listening in.

"Lois? What does Lois have to do with any of this?" Mayson stammered.

Clark looked down, unsure how to continue. "I really wish you'd gotten that message. It'd make this a little easier."

"But I didn't." Mayson corrected, fingering the back of his couch as she spoke. Her hand ran against the sheer red shawl of Lois' that he'd thrown on the back of the couch earlier. Right next to it, fumbled in a ball was his tie from where Lois had thrown it.

"I'm sorry if I led you on, Mayson, but I'm not interested in anything more than friendship with you." Clark continued, trying his best not to let his voice waver. The words he spoke were true, but it was still hard to hurt her like that.

"I see." Mayson nodded. "I guess I can't change your mind?"

"No," he shook his head, glancing back toward the kitchen where he knew Lois was probably trying to eavesdrop. "That place in my life has already been filled."

Mayson stared at the crumpled tie on the back of his couch and nodded, seeming to fit the pieces together. "By Lois?"

"Yeah," he nodded.

"Okay, well I guess there's nothing left to say." She said, seeming to put on a show of strength as she made her way up the steps to his front door. "Good night, Clark."

With that, the front door slammed behind her and Clark sighed, "Nope, not awkward at all." He made his way into the kitchen and found Lois perched on the edge of the counter, looking at her watch. "What are you doing?"

"Five minutes and forty-five seconds." She took a sip from her soda. "Not bad."

He laughed, leaning in to kiss her. "Apparently a message got lost in the power grid failure last week."

"I didn't think you'd ever run off like that and not apologize." Lois reasoned aloud, "Although given the fact that she assumed you would just goes to show how much she does *not* know you at all."

"Well, I don't think it matters anymore. Somehow, I doubt her opinion on me changed much after tonight." Clark said softly, running his hand through her hair.

"As long as she isn't showing up at my boyfriend's apartment all hours of the night I really don't care."

"Boyfriend?" he grinned at her.

"I'm sorry, *Super-boyfriend?*" she offered with a twinkle in her eye.

He chuckled, leaning in to kiss her. "Just don't repeat that one to anyone."

"Deal." She said, linking her arms around his neck. "So, what did Jimmy want?"

"He said there was a prison riot tonight. Capone was trying to go after Dillinger for squealing. Only he ended up getting double-crossed. Shiv in the back. No one's talking to anyone right now." Clark explained with a sigh.

"Well, I guess we know what our follow-up will be," Lois said.

"You're not going to demand we go down there and get the big scoop?" Clark asked surprised.

“No,” she sighed, pulling him to her. “I had this really smart guy remind me of this great source I’ve got that can help land the scoops without rushing into a dangerous situation.”

“Is that so?” he asked, looking back at her with a smile.

It would be so easy to pick up where they’d left off. Lose themselves in one another’s arms. So easy and so tempting. His eyes lingered over the smooth red cotton that hung on her in just the right way to accent every curve. He could very easily pick her up and take her into his bedroom and explore every inch of her without a second thought. It would be so easy.

He’d never felt like this with anyone before. He knew he was different growing up. He could still remember the questions about why he never got sick or how he was able to retain information so easily at even a young age. Then when he got to be an adolescent, he began seeing how different he really was when his body began to heal at a rapid rate. He was able to lift the tractor with ease when he caught it from falling on his dad.

It was then that he’d made the decision he’d never allow himself to lose control. He’d never let anyone get close to him. And he hadn’t. He hadn’t let anyone get close to him. He kept everyone at arms’ length until the day he met Lois Lane. From the moment he’d met her he’d been a goner. He’d grown to admire, respect and love her. He knew she was the only one he wanted to be with. He’d let her in. He had shared things with her that he hadn’t even shared with his parents.

There was still one thing he hadn’t shared with her though. Whether this was the right time to bring it up or not he wasn’t sure. They’d come so very close to crossing that line twice. That wasn’t how he wanted to remember his first time with Lois...his first time. He wanted it to be special. He wanted it to be right. He didn’t want it to be the result of them losing control, but rather a moment where they were both ready to take that step.

“I’ll fly you home.” Clark offered.

“I appreciate the offer, but that would prove to be a problem in the morning when I need to drive to work.” She pointed out.

“I can come back for the Jeep.” He pointed out, running his hands up her sides. “It’ll only take a few minutes.”

“And when someone takes a picture of Superman flying my Jeep to my apartment?” Lois prompted, looking back at him with a teasing smile.

“Probably not a good idea.” He conceded, leaning in to kiss her.

“Probably not.” She agreed, smiling back at him. “So...” she fingered the collar of his dress shirt, folding the flap of his collar where it had come unfolded earlier.

“So...” He repeated, looking down at her with a smile.

“I guess I should go home. Get some rest.” She whispered softly, still not making a move to leave.

“Yeah,” he smiled at her. “I guess you should.”

“So, tomorrow?” she whispered, sliding down from the counter to stand in front of him.

“Tomorrow.” He leaned in to kiss her.

THE END

Read the Sequel in “Rules of Battle”