

# Slow News Day

By Mouserocks <mouserocksnerd@gmail.com>

Rated: PG

Submitted: October 2017

Summary: After Lois' failed wedding and the death of Lex Luthor, summer in Metropolis has been slow and hot and lazy. Lois can't stand it, so she decides to do something about it. WAFF.

Story Size: 2,416 words (13Kb as text)

\*\*\*

She drummed her nails against the desk furiously, watching the cursor blink inanely at her for the better part of the last hour. This was ridiculous. Why, she was about to do something crazy and reckless herself, if for no other reason than to break up the monotony of the day. And maybe because it'd have a chance of drawing Superman out, and that would at least make things interesting.

*My god, is this how Lex felt? Was he really just this... bored, all the time?*

There was no way of asking, but between the summer heat and the lull in news it felt like an answer enough.

She wondered if Superman would catch her if she, you know, just "slipped" out a window.

*You're losing it, Lane. Get a grip.*

"More coffee?"

Her partner's warm eyes stared down at her, and she crushed the little tingle of something his gaze ignited in her veins as quickly as it arrived, hiding behind a scowl. "Coffee is the last thing I need. I need something to make the day go by faster, not make me more antsy."

A smile pulled at the corner of his lips; not the full-blown, mega-watt grin she wanted to see. "It's just a slump."

"It's a long slump, Clark."

He shrugged, and moved past her desk to get his own coffee. She followed his steps with a glare, until her eyes found his posterior, and her gaze softened. A wry smile turned at the edges of her mouth as she appreciated one of her partner's better assets. God, he looked good in his tailored slacks. How she'd overlooked him for the better part of a year, she'd never know. Pheromone-Lois had seen it, why hadn't she?

What she'd give for an ounce of Superman's x-ray vision.

He turned back a bit sooner than she'd expected, and her scowl took less effort to force this time. "I'm just saying," she continued as he took his beverage to his desk, "We live in Metropolis. How is it possible that there's not one newsworthy thing going on out there among, like, a million people?"

He sipped at his coffee in spite of the steam still rising from his mug. "No news is good news, Lois."

She scoffed. "Maybe for Superman it is. For us? We're gonna be out of a job."

His answering sigh of exasperation had her hackles up again. He muttered something under his breath, and that did it. She rolled her chair out from under her desk sharply and stood up, planting her hands firmly on her desk. "What?"

"I said," he met her gaze head on, "maybe everyone's just burned out. The city might need a break after, you know..."

"After what? After Lex? You can say it."

She felt a couple of other stares landing on her at the mention of the name, and she crossed her arms and jutted out her chin proudly. He was her fiance. Heck, he was nearly her husband, had

Clark and Perry not stepped in when they did. Even then it'd taken her longer than she was proud of to admit the truth to herself, so if anyone had the right to bring the man up, it was Lois.

Clark's gaze traveled around the room quickly and came back to meet hers. "Why don't we go take a break? Maybe get some air?"

Lois wanted to be stubborn and refuse, but some air would probably do her some good. Begrudgingly, she nodded and turned to grab her purse. He followed her over to the elevators, behind a couple of steps, lost in his own thoughts even as they stepped into the elevator car together.

The doors closed them off from the rest of the world, and quickly the silence filled the space between them uncomfortably. He smelled nice. Lois tried to shake the thought away, but his cologne in this tight space was inescapable, and she let out a small sigh of contentment. Clark turned to look at her oddly, but she didn't even acknowledge the motion, keeping her eyes trained on the numbers as they slowly approached the ground floor and striving valiantly to keep any embarrassment from staining her cheeks.

The doors opened, and together they slowly ambled out of the building and towards their usual spot in Centennial Park. A twinge pulled in her stomach. It *was* their spot, until she'd ruined it. They hadn't been back since that day.

In fact, they hadn't done much together since that day, about three months ago. The Planet had reopened about a month and a half ago, but during that gap time she'd hardly seen Clark. And even since it'd been open, they'd hardly even had a chance to work together on anything. He was always keeping a polite distance, leaving her at an arm's length. Perry didn't put them together on as many stories, and suddenly she was wondering if Clark had said something to him, or if he could just see the tension in the air between them. She wouldn't be surprised if it was a little of both.

"Clark?"

"Hmm?"

"What are we doing here?"

His smile came and went quickly, but the warmth behind his eyes was something he couldn't hide. "We're slowing down, Lois. City people... Not everything has to go at a breakneck pace. I mean, look around you. Look at the leaves on the trees. It's all so green still, in the middle of August. And yeah, it's hot, but for how much longer? Shouldn't we take a moment and appreciate it all? Every second of it. The sunshine on your face, the way a small breeze can take you by surprise and delight you in the span of a second, when at any other time you'd take it for granted, or even resent it. It's wonderful."

He enraptured her when he got like this. The spark behind his glasses, the way his gestures got broader, how his voice got louder, full of conviction. She knew she was a great reporter, but Clark... Clark had the soul of a poet. Everything he touched, he saw, he spoke of with such reverence and awe. As if he didn't particularly deserve all of it, and the fact that he had any of it was a sheer delight.

A smile tugged at her heart before her heart stabbed her with a dagger. She hated to take the wind out of his sails, but that wasn't her question. "I meant us, Clark. What are we doing?"

His shoulders dropped, along with his smile, and she hated herself for stealing his joy. He was such a bright spot on this world, it was tantamount to kicking a puppy. His gaze landed on his shoes, spark gone. "What about us?"

"Are we... friends?"

His molten chocolate eyes snapped up to hers, almost horrified by the prospect. "Of course. Why would you think that?"

Lois shrugged, feigning an interest in her cuticles as she walked towards the fountain that was one of the park's most underrated features. Most people went to the duck pond. "I don't

know. I haven't seen very much of you all summer. I know we said things to each other, before... before. I just wanted to make sure we didn't say anything too far."

She turned to find her partner— was he her partner now?—rooted to the spot several paces back and gaping like a fish. "I-Lois, no. You could never say or do anything that would ruin our friendship, I guarantee it."

"Yeah, but what about our relationship?"

His gaping didn't stop as he searched for his words. "Our relationship? Y-you mean, as friends?"

Lois bit her lip, and sank onto the fountain's edge. "Don't play stupid, Clark. I know you meant what you said here, retraction or not." She looked up at him under a quizzical brow, and he snapped his jaw shut. "Yeah. That's what I thought."

The fountain gurgled behind her, practically the only noise around them. Clark stirred nervously, unsure of whether to pace or wring his hands or what, when he finally took a seat next to her on the fountain, leaving a modest distance between them. He carded a hand through his hair and proceeded to sit on his hands uncomfortably. Lois felt her stomach churn at his apparent nervousness. "I shouldn't have brought it up. We can go back if you want."

"No, no. We can talk about it."

Lois tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. "Why would you lie to me? About this?"

Hurt flashed through his face, wrinkling his brow. "I think you know why."

Her stomach sank. "So... it is my fault." She looked out at the spattering of people in the park— on a hot afternoon like this, it was hardly occupied. A couple in one corner, a mom or nanny trying to get a couple of bratty kids under control, a man playing fetch with his dog. She tried to look anywhere but his face.

"It's not your fault. If anything it's mine." She risked a glance at him, only to see his hurt directed at himself now. "I thought I could handle being just a partner with you, or just a friend. But turns out it's harder than I thought to just... turn off my feelings."

The park somehow got quieter, until Lois realized it was just her heart pounding in her ears, drowning out all other noises. She licked her lips, suddenly parched. "So you do have feelings for me?" His blatant stare made her face flush embarrassingly again. "Right."

He looked down at his now clasped hands. "I'm sorry. It's not your problem."

"Not my...?" She gaped at him, unable to understand where his spectacular lack of confidence came from. His humility gave her all the confidence she needed. Lois turned toward him more fully and grabbed his hands between hers. "Clark Kent, you listen to me right now. First off, you should never feel the need to apologize for your feelings. They're *your* feelings. Own them. And secondly, well, I should probably take some of my own medicine."

His eyes snapped up to hers sharply, and a flicker of hope shone at her before he quashed it. She took a deep breath in before continuing on. "You should have let me go first, back when you told me you didn't love me."

"What?"

He didn't move, didn't blink. She didn't think he was even breathing. The only indication that he was alive was how rapt his attention was as he stared at her. She tucked another strand of hair behind her ear again; maybe it was time for a haircut. "I was going to tell you I loved you too. In a way, though, I'm glad I didn't. Things were really chaotic, and right on the heels of Lex... well it just felt weird. Too fast. And then you took it back, and I thought maybe it was for the best. But this summer, with us being so distant, and then having basically nothing to focus on except you, I realized it wasn't just a knee-jerk reaction."

He pulled his hands out of hers and gripped the concrete of the fountain, still barely breathing. "Lois, what are you saying?"

She squirmed, a self-deprecating smile turning up the corners of her mouth. "You're really gonna make me say it... I think I have feelings for you too. Real ones. Not like Lex, or Superman. You're my best friend, my partner in crime. I just had to have some time to think about it all, without any pressure."

Without any warning, Clark surged forward and captured her lips with his. Lois moaned softly into his mouth, reassuring his actions by threading her fingers through his hair affectionately. His hair was perfect, the texture of it almost as luxurious as his kisses. He pulled away much too soon, but she immediately got lost in his eyes and she found she didn't mind so much that the kissing stopped. She could drown in those pools of molten chocolate and die happy.

The way he was looking back at her, she thought he might feel the same.

She was suddenly very aware of their location, and she fidgeted with her hair again as she looked around herself. Nobody seemed to be looking their way, everyone absorbed into their own little worlds. She glanced back at the man responsible for the fluttering feeling in her gut and ran a hand over his cheek. "I guess slowing down every once and awhile isn't the worst thing in the world."

He huffed a small laugh at her, and turned to kiss her palm, making her squirm with delight.

"You're the most inspiring person on the planet, Lois."

She almost protested, but one glimpse of the wistfulness in his eyes had her believing him. A flush spread across her cheeks, and his grin shifted from awe-filled to teasing. She smothered the expression with another kiss.

"We should head back to the office," he murmured regretfully against her lips several long moments later, breath hot and a little bit labored. She shook her head, sipped from his lips once more before replying.

"No, you inspire *me*, Clark. Inspire me not to waste another moment. Wanna play hooky? We can explore the city for a day, maybe catch a movie?" Lois toyed with his tie casually, and was delighted by how flustered the action made him.

"Wh-what will we tell Perry?"

She grinned like the cat that ate the canary. "We'll tell him we're investigating. Maybe taking an old story from a new angle."

"And if he asks for a story?"

Lois shrugged and stood up from their seat at the fountain's edge, cracking her back. "Go with the flow, Clark. Can't we have one, slow, long day, all to ourselves? Mr. Type-A over here," she teased, eyes sparkling as she walked away proudly.

She squealed in delight as he caught up to her quickly, banding an arm around her waist and pulling her into him. He peppered her neck, ear, and the side of her face with kisses, and she dissolved into giggles.

THE END