

# I Want You to Want Me

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Summary: When Lex Luthor sets his sights on something he wants, he doesn't let anything get in his way.

Story Size: 2,792 words (15Kb as text)

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Author's Note: This is in response to the Kerth Challenge #4 which stated as the rule – "The last song you listened to is the title of your fanfiction and has to relate to the plot of the story in some way. Go." I happened to hear Cheap Trick's "I Want You To Want Me" at the time the challenge was issued.

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*I want you to want me.*

Don't fight it, Lois.

You know you want it too.

Ever since you first began to pursue me – granted, for an exposé for your precious Daily Planet – you've demonstrated over and over that you want me. You couldn't resist the dinner date I set up for that meeting. I dazzled you with the exquisite choices in food. And the wine was of such a rare vintage that you'd never even dreamed it existed. We talked for hours, you and I. Oh, sure, you tried to keep the meeting professional. You kept circling back to your tidy little list of questions. You scrawled down my answers and notes – some of them new questions as you peeled back the layers of what makes Lex Luthor tick. Well... the layers I *allowed* you to peel back, at any rate.

You were star-struck. You ate up every morsel I fed you, probing deeper but never deeply enough to see what was still hidden beneath. No doubt you took pride in being the first reporter (and a woman at that!) to land an interview with me. Perhaps that's why you always stopped short of strong-arming more information out of me. Maybe you fancied yourself as some kind of heroine, about to drown in journalistic accolades for your riveting exposé. I, on the other hand, laughed inside, knowing that the Lex you presented to the world was *exactly* who I wanted the world to meet. Who knows? I may even thank you for your naiveté one day.

Later, I invited you back to my home once again, and you ate up the invitation immediately. You were so blinded by your hero-worship of me and so desperate for the attention I so willingly gave you. But there was something also intriguing about you. Any other woman, and I would have brushed you off, sickened by the lack of a challenge there was in getting your attention. I don't abide by those who are so desperate for love that they jump at the first sign of a potential relationship. Too often, those women become clingy and stifling to be around. I learned long ago to look for any sign that that might occur and to dismiss those women straight away.

But you?

You were an anomaly.

You were an easy mark – lonely and willing to succumb to the first indication that I was interested in you. But I knew you'd be a challenge as well. As desperate as you were for love, you'd also hardened yourself to the world and built up defensive walls to keep potential lovers – potential *heartbreakers* – at bay. As a hard-bitten newswoman, I knew you'd present the additional task of keeping my more underhanded dealings under wraps. I would need to crack your tough outer shell and slip inside your walls, while keeping my own walls flawlessly intact. And then, when I would eventually manage to do that, there was yet another test ahead – that of keeping you wanting me. I may be obscenely rich, powerful, and charming, but I'm not stupid. I was well aware that even with all I offered, I would have to continue to expend energy in keeping you. After all, it's not enough to hook the fish on the line. The fisherman must also reel in his prize and create a suitable habitat for it if he wishes to keep it for him to admire.

You were exactly the woman I was looking for, even if I hadn't been aware that I was in the market for a future wife. And I was more than ready to rise to the challenge you presented.

So I began my courtship of you. I dazzled you with gifts. I showered you with compliments. I offered you a guaranteed safe haven when Nightfall threatened to cleanse this world of the miserable masses. You declined that one, choosing to stay above ground with all the rest of the sheep, needlessly risking your life for what? The chance to witness the end of the world? It's not like you would have survived to report what you saw to anyone. It was a foolish choice. However, against all odds, the world was spared from near extinction, and you remained safe. It was more than anyone anticipated after Superman's spectacular failure to destroy the massive space rock.

As we continued to date, I offered the finest entertainment to you – operas, art galleries, and the like. I flew you around the world just to share a meal with you. I opened your eyes to experiences you never would have had otherwise. And you were like putty in my hands. Blushing, you'd gush over the impromptu trip to Italy for dinner or the quick flight down to Mexico for a day in the sun.

Like a hunter, I wove my trap, drawing you in, closer and closer, ensnaring you with a quick jerk, but with barely-there movements you were oblivious to. Each successful date brought you more and more under my spell. I tried to gauge (after each one) how deep into my net you'd become, until I could no longer bide my time. I pulled the net tighter, and asked you to marry me, presenting you with the largest diamond you could have dreamed of, though it was a mere bauble to me. I easily could have gone bigger and more expensive, but for what purpose? I'd already chosen a stone that was bigger than any woman has a right to ask for.

Proposing when I did was almost a misstep. *Almost*. Where I'd imagined you would immediately – and likely sobbingly – accept, you hesitated. You asked for time to think it over, and I wondered if I'd pushed things too far too swiftly. But, I agreed to give you time and to not press the issue. It wouldn't do for me to push you headfirst into my net. You had to walk into it, willingly, and all on your own. It took a couple of days, but you eventually accepted. Victory was mine. The net was pulled tight and knotted behind you to cut off your retreat. You were well and truly mine.

And now, in just a few short hours, you will be mine forever.

The stage is set. The ceremony space is waiting. The reception food is ready to be served. The guests are due to arrive and watch as you shed your last name to take on the name of Luthor. You are tucked away in another room, preparing yourself – painting your face, dressing in a gown of the purest, virginal white.

*I need you to need me.*

Just because I've caught you in my trap, doesn't mean I can rest easy. Even the most beautiful creatures can wither away in their cages. No, I can't just sit back and enjoy my pretty little

caged bird. I still have work to do – breaking you, molding you, getting you firmly under my control. I still have much to do to ensure that I, and I alone, am the only one you ever feel the need to need. I've already started, and you are none the wiser.

Your friends have fallen, one by one. Each of them has been alienated from you. They are becoming distant strangers with each passing day. When was the last time you spoke to Perry White, I wonder? When did you last exchange words with that Olsen kid? And what of the young street urchin, the one who got blamed for the Planet's explosive demise? Have you even bothered to check on him as he sits, rotting in his tiny prison cell? I doubt it. You've barely even spoken to your own family since our engagement. Now, I know some of that is because you often don't see eye to eye with them, but the other part of it is I've simply kept you too busy.

I may have destroyed the Daily Planet, but I've found other ways to give you the illusion that your life and decisions are still your own. I gave you that job at LNN for a reason. Even caged birds need to retain their gift of flight inside of their enclosure to make them feel like they still have freedom. So I replaced your loyalty to one news source with a new one. One I control. One where I can keep you close. But the job was more than just that. It's kept you too occupied to worry about – let alone retain contact with – your former friends and colleagues. It's made you rely on and confide in me more and more, particularly after a rough day. It's made them resent you, and your (as they see it) fragile loyalty to the Planet.

I've even managed to solve the Superman dilemma. Soon, you'll never have to worry about your friend – my greatest enemy – ever again. He'll be beyond your reach. That caped nuisance will never again catch and dazzle your wandering eyes. He'll be dead and buried in a place where God himself won't be able to find the alien's desiccated corpse. Oh, he still draws breath at the moment, but not for much longer. I would have killed him already, if I wasn't taking so much pleasure in his slow and agonizing death, courtesy of the most remarkable and valuable green stone I've ever gotten my hands on. But even I am growing weary of his stubborn (and irritating) refusal to die. So, tonight, after the wedding is over and I've fully claimed you – heart, mind, and body – I'll end his life. I have an axe standing by, freshly sharpened to a razor's edge, just for this momentous occasion. I'll draw pleasure as his blood spills and his life ebbs away, and I will revel in my victory.

You'll come to need only me, in time.

Still, one obstacle stands in my way.

Clark Kent.

My other hated rival.

You know, in some ways, he's more of a problem than Superman ever was. Superman may have been the flashy man in the tights, but he never seemed to show much interest in any mere mortal woman. He befriended you; it's true. But from what you've told me, I very much doubt that you would have ever been more than just a casual friend and trusted publicist for him. Kent, on the other hand, is far more dangerous than the alien could have ever hoped to be. He's more of a friend to you than Superman ever was. You spent almost every waking moment with him every single day at work. You spent time with him outside of work. He is, in your own words, your best friend. And anyone with working eyes and a couple of functioning brain cells can see that he is completely and hopelessly smitten with you.

That makes him dangerous.

I need to make sure that he is kept at bay – by your own hand. I need that easy friendship to crumble into dust. I need you to stop needing him, stop relying on him, stop caring about him. Because the longer he stays in your heart, the more likely you are to wonder about the “what ifs.” What if you'd opened your blind eyes to his adoration of you? What if you'd given him a chance, when he'd asked it of you? And yes, I know all about his pathetic

proclamation of love in the park. My eyes and ears are everywhere in this city. What if you'd been capable of loving him, the way he does you?

So I must eliminate him.

*Didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you crying?*

*Oh, didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you crying?*

*Feeling all alone without a friend, you know you feel like dying.*

*Oh, didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you crying?*

Already the seeds of discontent have been sewed. The friendship you'd once shared is in upheaval. The solid bedrock on which it was founded has been cracked, shifted, and eroded. It's only a matter of time before it splinters completely, and your relationship falls into the yawning abyss beneath, never to be recovered. I think, maybe, that day might be today. You've already lamented that he's declined the invitation to our wedding. I think, somehow, that you're still holding out the misguided hope that he will change his mind last minute and show up anyway. I *hope* you have that hope. It will be all the more shattering when you look out over the gathered crowd and see an empty seat where your so-called “best friend” should be sitting. The devastation will break your heart. And it will bind you to me.

It already *has* broken your fragile heart. More than once you've cried on my shoulder about how much of a distance has sprung up between Kent and yourself. It's already made you question everything about your fading friendship.

He will be the one to ultimately and irrevocably destroy his friendship with you. He will drive the final nails into that coffin all on his own. I won't have to lift a finger. I won't even have to order his murder. My hands will stay clean, and you will feel only resentment toward him, not the pangs of a longing for things to go back to the way they once were. I will be there, always, to remind you of how he turned his back on you the second you made your choice to make a life with me. And in time, you'll learn to love only me.

*I'd love you to love me.*

It's not enough just to win these battles against my mortal enemies. I want to claim you in every way. And part of that is having you love me completely. I don't doubt that you care for me in your own way. But I know you don't fully love me. Not yet, anyway. If you did, you never would have hesitated when I first asked you to marry me. There was uncertainty in your eyes, beneath the shock and surprise of the unexpected (and some would argue too soon) proposal. I've seen the way you look at me – with fawning admiration, but not quite love. Obviously, you like me in some respects – or you never would have said yes and put on my ring. Or maybe it was born out of desperation to have someone – anyone – save you from a lifetime of loneliness. It doesn't matter to me, so long as you eventually learn to love me.

And you will.

In time, you will have no choice.

I will be all that's left in your life. I will be your entire world.

All in good time, of course. Patience is the name of the game after all. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither will my conquest of you be accomplished in one afternoon. Luckily, I am a man well-versed in biding my time, in plotting and planning, and seeing my plans through to completion. So, for today, I will be content to accomplish a few first steps. In a few short hours, you will say “I do” and commit yourself to me. After that, I will watch Superman take his last breath. And all the while, I will smile with the knowledge that Clark Kent will become nothing more than a painful memory to you.

Yes, Lois. I want you to want me, for now and for always, in all things. Because there is no room in my plan for you to have anyone else.

THE END