

Here We Go Again ...

By [Morgana <Cynthia.McCoy533@gmail.com>](mailto:Cynthia.McCoy533@gmail.com)

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Summary: This is my answer to the Queen of the Capes' Opening Line challenge. The events from *Honeymoon in Metropolis* were used as a springboard for this fic. Many thanks to MikeM for being my beta!

Story Size: 1,538 words (9Kb as text)

Legal Disclaimer: I do not own any of the characters mentioned in this story, nor is financial compensation expected. But oh boy, is it ever fun to play in this universe!

It was Friday afternoon and the newsroom was abuzz with the sounds of activity, the evening edition deadline was looming close, as was the weekend. Several reporters were hard at work grinding out their respective articles before Perry emerged from his office.

Clark Kent dressed in his best navy suit, white shirt and brightly colored tie looked across the aisle at fellow city beat reporter, Lois Lane. She was wearing a boxy, black pantsuit which truth be told was not her best look, nonetheless for the role he wanted her to play it would work. Being perfectly attired might alert the bad guys. But the big question was, would she do it? Only one way to find out.

He stood and stepped over to Lois' desk, sat carefully in the visitor's seat and said in a slightly nervous tone. "I ... I know we're just partners, and I like to think we're also friends, but please, I need you to pretend we're ... uh ... dating."

Lois stopped typing, leaned back folded slender arms across her chest and regarded him suspiciously. "Why Kent? A friend back in Smallville wants to fix you up with his unattractive sister and having a 'girlfriend' is the only way you can get him to stop asking?"

Surprised, he said quickly. "No! Nothing like that! Remember that article I wrote last month about young couples being scammed by a shady travel agency? Well, I think those guys have set up shop in another part of town. This time I want to make sure they are shut down permanently and the only way to get all the evidence on them is from the inside."

"Wait a minute! That business was for scamming engaged couples looking to get a break on the cost of their honeymoon. How are *we* as a couple simply dating going to interest them?"

He blinked and said shyly, "I could tell them we are thinking seriously about getting married, but I ... I haven't proposed yet."

"Oh, we're just looking over our options." She asked sarcastically, raising one eyebrow

"Uh, yeah, something like that." Clark said.

"The last time we did 'something like that' was at the Luxor Hotel. You do recall how that little 'inside job' turned out?"

It took everything to hold back a silly grin as the happy memories flowed. Boy, did he ever! The maid, Ingeborg, walked in on their surveillance operation and he had to quickly throw the equipment on the bed and cover it up. Then grabbed and passionately kissed a protesting Lois before the intrusive woman discovered what they were *really* doing in the Honeymoon suite.

It was worth his embarrassed explanation to Lois afterward just to experience the fantastic kiss they shared.

Feigning ignorance he said, "No, what happened?"

Rolling her eyes in mock derision, she answered crisply "I got

showered on by a broken sprinkler system when I went across the street to investigate Thaddeus Roarke's office. Then when we came back to the suite, it was trashed by his muscle bound goon. What a lousy 'honeymoon'! Even if it was fake!"

His lips stretched into a smile and he said with a touch of mischief in his voice. "Come on Lois, we got to learn what it was like to live with someone who wasn't family. We can do it again, but this time we will be a nice, quiet young couple. Not sharing a space. Not married. No rings, annoying bellhops, nosy maids or running away from a frightening tsunami that Superman had to stop."

Catching her partner's enthusiasm, but fighting it, Lois Lane's face twisted into a grimace. "Yeah right, where's the fun in that? Still, maybe I should go ... just to keep you out of trouble. Superman cannot break off from some disaster to save a mild-mannered reporter from Smallville."

Clark brightened. "Really? You'll be my girl? Huh, I mean for investigating this story, of course."

She turned back to the monitor, studying the faintly glowing green letters on the screen and said reluctantly, "No. This article on the Coast Guard is already late. Perry will tell me another boring Elvis story that is somehow related to punctuality, if I don't get it to him on time."

Abruptly a familiar, but unwelcome voice broke into their conversation. "If spoilsport Lois doesn't want to go, I can be your girlfriend Clark, for the afternoon ... or the night." Cat Grant, wearing her signature skintight leopard jumpsuit, came over and draped her arms around Clark's neck. With skill born of long practice, her slender, elegant fingers began to caress his face, while the silver jewelry on her fingers and wrists gleamed.

Lois' eyes narrowed as she watched the gossip columnist wrap herself around her partner like a boa constrictor. She said with a frosty edge. "On second thought, I can stand to be your girlfriend for a few hours. Let me send this article over to Elsie in rewrite, she can give it a polish and deliver it to Perry before the deadline. Cat, slink back to whatever alley you came from. Come on Kent!"

Clark smiled and apologized to a pouting Cat. "Maybe some other time?"

Cat perked up and said with a distinctive purr, "Looking forward to it, handsome."

"Don't bet on it Grant, this little undercover job has Lane and Kent written all over it. Better yet, it has all the earmarks of being another Luxor Hotel all over again, but only better the second time around." Lois snapped back.

With that, the hottest team in town quickly shut down their respective machines, grabbed their briefcases and made their way up the ramp. Just as they reached the elevator, Perry came out of his office and bellowed like some great grizzly bear, "All right people! Where are those articles? A newspaper is not just the comics and advice columns!"

Several of the more experienced members of the bullpen, like Eduardo, Diane and Applegate merely pressed the 'send' button and their articles hit Perry's inbox within seconds. Sloths like Ralph were late, while frantic newbies scrambled to get the job done before Perry called out a second time.

Spotting Lois and Clark by the elevator, Perry yelled, "Lois! Where is that Coast Guard piece you promised on Thursday?"

"Talk to Elsie! Clark and I are following up on a hot tip! See you on Monday!"

At that precise moment, the elevator doors whisked open. Lois, not wanting to be dragged back to the bullpen, grabbed Clark by the tie, they jumped in and the doors closed behind them.

Perry growled, "Blast that woman! If she weren't the best reporter on this newspaper... Now she's got Kent picking up on her bad habits. Where is his story for today anyway?"

At that moment, Jimmy came over with photos in his hands. "Here you go Chief."

“Jimmy! What am I supposed to do with a bunch of pictures?” Then he began looking at the damp photos. They were clear, color pictures from the warehouse fire in Suicide Slum. Superman was carrying an unconscious fireman who had been trapped in the building.

An expression of thankfulness passed over the managing editor’s face and he said slowly. “Son, tell me you took these?”

Grinning from ear to ear, the young man said, “Yeah! CK and I were coming back from meeting with a source when we saw this happening. He interviewed the guys from the fire department and even got an update on the man Superman rescued. The fireman should be home in a couple of days, it was a case of smoke inhalation, but fortunately, he won’t sustain any permanent lung damage. Clark wanted you to have these while he and Lois check on another story.”

“Great shades of Elvis! This is front page news! Do you suppose with this new tip they can get another scoop for the Saturday edition?”

Jimmy shrugged and said, “It’s Lois and Clark, Chief. Those two have smooth moves!”

“Yeah, yeah, you’re right. Get these photos downstairs now! We’ll lead with Kent’s story. The photo of Superman carrying the unconscious fireman goes above the fold.” He said.

In his office, Perry picked up the phone and told Andy Tucker, the press gang supervisor, to be ready for an exclusive, with pictures. After hanging up he muttered. “Lois and Clark are a new reporting team, but they have really pumped up the paper’s circulation several times this quarter. Today, Kent has written a good article and if this hot tip they’re working on pans out ... Well, here we go again with another great story from Lane and Kent!”

Perry chuckled, pulled out his editor’s red pen and began going over Clark’s story.

THE END