

I'm Not That Girl (Lois) – Kerth Challenge 2

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Rated: PG

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Summary: A freshly rebuffed Lois mourns the relationship she'll never have with Superman.

Story Size: 1,776 words (10Kb as text)

Disclaimer: I own nothing. I make nothing. All characters, plot points, and recognizable dialogue belong to DC comics, Warner Bros., December 3rd Productions and anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise. I don't own the lyrics to "I'm Not That Girl" either. They belong to Stephen Schwartz, the Broadway musical "Wicked," and anyone else with a stake in the franchise.

This story is in response to the 2020 Kerth Challenge #2, which specified that the next song the author listened to is the title of the fic and has to relate to the plot in some way.

Note: The song "I'm Not That Girl," comes from Broadway musical, "Wicked." It is sung first by Elphaba (later to be known as the Wicked Witch of the West) and then again later by Galinda (known later as Glinda the Good Witch and no, the spelling difference is NOT a mistake). Each reflects on how the boy they like doesn't seem to have any interest in them, but in their friend.

What the hell was I thinking?

It was stupid.

Reckless.

No. *I* was stupid and reckless.

There's no going back from this. Ever.

I opened up my heart, exposed my feelings, and let down the walls I've keep up for so long. I let him in. Opened the door wide and beckoned him in. I let him see the real me. I allowed him to witness me be vulnerable. I let him know just how much I care about him. And for what?

Another broken heart for Lois Lane. Just like always.

Of course.

What should I have expected?

More than what I got, that's what.

But what I deserve isn't necessarily what I get.

Superman and I have known each other for a long time now. I was the first person he ever revealed himself to, when he saved me from the space shuttle bombing attempt. No one else had ever heard of or seen the flying man with the seemingly limitless strength. I was the first reporter he allowed to interview him. It felt good, I'll admit. Maybe I was just in the right place at the right time. Maybe it was all just dumb luck. But I still wore that information – that I was the first to know Superman – like a badge of honor.

It didn't take long for our relationship to move from purely professional to something more personal and private. From that very first interview, I felt this heat between us. He practically flirted with me when answering my questions. I'll never forget the way he said that he was a man as much as I am a woman. It sent a tingle of desire shooting through my body and I had to wonder if he might want more out of me than just a reporter-interviewee relationship.

He soon proved to me that I was more than just a journalist to

him – a journalist that *he* sought out to present his story to the world, I might add.

Before I knew it, I'd made a new, super, friend.

He's come to my apartment I don't know how many times, all under what I *thought* was the *pretense* of checking to make sure I was okay after some close call or another. He always appears whenever I call out for him. He's graced me with his friendship when he's kept nearly everyone else on Earth at a distance. I've always felt like part of his "inner circle," though I'm not sure *exactly* how many people can honestly say they are also that close to him. Maybe Clark, if I want to be completely honest with myself.

But that's why it's always felt so special to me to be counted amongst his friends. Superman has always been seen as this untouchable hero. He's a god in a cape to most people – not human, not mortal, infallible, perfect. To the world, he's "just" a superhero, there to protect and serve or to blame when he can't do everything and be everywhere at once.

But not to me.

To me, he's a friend. Maybe not the kind of best friend that Clark is – was? – to me. Nobody has ever been as close to me as Clark...until this recent budding rift between us. But Superman is still a trusted, personal friend. He's let me see behind the mask of neutrality that he always wears in public. He's laughed with me, joked with me, teased me. I've been allowed to see the pain in his eyes when he can't save a life. I've seen the weariness he carries being the world's savior. There have been glimpses of uncertainty and doubt that I've caught, even if maybe I wasn't supposed to. For me alone he has this special smile, not too unlike the one I usually see from Clark. It's let me know that he values me as a person, as a friend, as a confidante – as much as he can afford to confide in anyone, at any rate. He's let me see that he's *not* a god, but a *man*, as much as any of us non-super-powered mortals.

My mistake was in thinking that he would ever allow me to be *more* than *just* a friend. I thought he might love me. I thought maybe he *could* love me.

Tonight proved me wrong.

I offered myself – my heart – to him. I told him about how I feel. I let him know that I love him. And he wouldn't – *couldn't* – return that sentiment. No, more than that. He flat out turned me down.

As it turns out, I'm not that special. I'm not good enough to catch the eye or the heart of someone like Superman. I don't know why. Maybe I'm not pretty enough. Or smart enough. Or my penchant for getting into trouble is too much for him. Or my measly, powerless self isn't interesting enough. Or I was too forward or desperate sounding for him.

Perhaps it's not a problem with *me*, per se. It could be that there's someone else who's laid claim to his soft heart. Some striking beauty in another city, another country, another planet. Maybe he's found someone just like him – someone from his home world of Krypton – who can keep up with him and do all the things that he can do. Maybe he's already secretly married, out of the public's knowledge.

But none of that changes the facts about what transpired tonight.

I love him.

He doesn't love me.

I've humiliated myself.

I think I embarrassed him too, in light of the gruff way he spurned my affection.

I really messed up tonight. I've potentially destroyed the relationship I used to enjoy with Superman. I doubt very much he'll want to see me again – perhaps to save face in front of me, perhaps to spare me from any further embarrassment.

To give him credit, he turned me down without mocking my stupidity in trying to love him. The perfect gentleman, right?

Although I *do* wonder about what he said. I professed my love to him and told him that it wasn't about his powers – that I would love him just the same even if he were an ordinary man with no abilities at all. And he said that “under the circumstances,” he didn't believe that.

What circumstances?

Did Clark tell him about our talk in the park today? The one in which Clark told me that *he* loves me? Was Superman eavesdropping as he flew by? Is that what Superman meant? That since I'd turned down Clark's desperate and perhaps not-quite-true declaration of love that I was incapable of feeling anything at all? Did the fact that I mentioned Lex's proposal make *me* seem desperate? Did I appear to be scrambling for a reason to turn Lex down? And I'll admit that Lex's proposal took me off-guard. I'm still not sure if I love him, if I *can* love him. Was that too obvious to Superman? Was that what he meant when he said he couldn't believe I was telling him the truth?

Am I desperate for an out with Lex?

I don't really know for sure.

I don't want to wind up in a loveless marriage. My parents had that. Maybe when they first met there was true feelings and a legitimate attraction to one another. But time has a way of wearing down even the strongest things and their love blackened, died, and turned to bitterness, resentment, and full on hatred. It scares me to think that might happen if I marry Lex.

And yet, I'm more afraid of winding up alone for the rest of my life. I can manage it if I have to. I *have been* for a long time now. I've been hurt too many times as I've dated around and this most recent break where I wasn't seeing anyone and only taking care of myself was something I handled well, I think. But no matter how tough and independent a person is, there's always going to be that underlying need to share things with someone they care about. Loneliness sets in at night. There's a gaping hole evident every time you want to share good news or seek comfort after a scary situation, only to have no one to talk to.

That's why I think I need to make up my mind. My heart may still hurt from Superman's rejection, and it may or may not ever fully reside with Lex. But Lex is a good man who cares for me. He treats me better than anyone else I've ever dated – his fortune aside. He's a decent man who's never pressured me to do anything I didn't want to. He's always treated me with the utmost respect – like I'm the center of his vast universe. And I *do* care about him in my own way. Love? I'm not really certain yet. But I can make this work.

I have my answer.

I will accept his ring the next time I see him.

Because, while I like Lex but still love Superman – even after tonight's events – I'll never have what I really desire. Being with someone “safe” like Lex or even Superman, I can't get hurt. Not the way I can with someone real, like Clark.

Superman may be that ultimate crush, that safest option, that fantasy boy, but I am not that girl. And I never will be.

THE END