

Street Fair

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Rated: G

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Summary: This is a story that takes place during the summer after "[Autumn in Paris](#)" and before "[A Wedding in Paris](#)" in my Visitor series. The story stands alone, but it would assist the reader to read the entire series.

Story Size: 7,044 words (40Kb as text)

Stories in this series:

- "[An Unexpected Visitor](#)"
- "[Autumn in Paris](#)"
- "[Street Fair](#)"
- "[A Wedding in Paris](#)"

A/N: It's summertime. Lois and Clark are taking in the sights and sounds of an exciting street fair located in the old town section of Metropolis. Our intrepid reporters are taking a break from work and rescues as Superman and UltraWoman. Yet, they are not alone. Bernie Klein and his beautiful Nigerian lady friend, Abrihet Sensei, are with them. These two unique people, each has an important decision to make. Romance, like a classic love song playing melodiously in the background, lingers gently in the air ...

Napier Avenue does not exist in the series, but in my Visitor universe and in some of my other stories the setting is mentioned. Located on this cobblestone street is where most of the shops that our favorite reporting duo like to hang out at. Of these shops, two as well as their proprietors do not belong to me: *The Metropolis Book Nook*, run by Margaret Hart, was created by Scarlet Burns based on a character briefly seen in the pilot. We all know about Uncle Mike and his fabulous restaurant, *Café Americana*.

Legal Disclaimer: I do not own most of the characters mentioned in this story, nor is financial compensation expected. But once again, there's a lot of enjoyment for me as a writer of fanfiction for this much-beloved television series. Blue Owl, Ken Janney, and MikeM, thanks for the great beta work!

A special thank you to Millefeuilles for helping with French words and phrases!

Now, let us begin ...

Chapter One

Two very distinctive couples soaked up the sun while moving easily among people crowding Napier Avenue's faded red cobble stone streets, which normally had noisy automobiles rumbling over their old and uneven surfaces. A festive block party was taking place today, the avenue was closed to all four-wheeled conveyances.

One couple was in their late twenties. The husband was a tall, handsome man with black hair, brown eyes and olive complexion, he wore a checked short-sleeve shirt over blue jeans and comfortable sneakers. Beside him walked a gorgeous woman with fine brown eyes and a smile that lit up his life. She wore a relaxed lightweight sleeveless white blouse over tan walking shorts. These two people were very easy in each other's company, taking in the pleasures of the afternoon as they moved in the midst of a happy throng in their city. Famous investigative reporters for the *Daily*

Planet; Clark Kent and his wife, Lois Lane-Kent were experiencing a rare day off with good friends ... who also knew about their secret identities as Superman and UltraWoman.

Lois and Clark's companions were older. Bernard Klein, who had just turned forty-five and was only now beginning to enjoy life away from textbooks and the insulated existence of a lab worker at S.T.A.R. Labs. Instead of wearing his old 'uniform' of tweed jacket, old khakis, rumpled shirt and bowtie he now sported a pair of freshly starched jeans and a cream-colored golf shirt. His usual expression of constant stress and worry had vanished, he was now appreciating the outside and much that life had to offer. The reason for this change in attitude? The woman who softly held his hand in hers and whose bright smile was only for him. She wore a flowing long yellow caftan with a white lace inlaid pattern in the front, the perfect dress for walking around the city in late summer.

Dr. Abrihet Senai was a professor of Metallurgy at the Sorbonne in Paris, she and Bernie had met electronically when he had discovered her book on the metallurgy of sword making. They began an intense online correspondence which lasted for many months. Her theories about how metal workings in the past could help industries today intrigued him and other metallurgists so much that she was invited to share them during a conference at S.T.A.R. Labs.

Upon her arrival in New Troy, it did not take long for them to realize they had much more in common than a deep love of science. While she stayed in Metropolis the two scientists began seeing each other. As the day for her return to France drew near, they decided that Bernie would move to Paris for three months as a guest lecturer at the Sorbonne, thereby getting to know one another better. When he returned, the relationship was stronger than ever, and they continued dating despite being separated by such long-distance.

Now people walked, talked, and gawked at ethnic foods, games of chance, tents displaying brightly colored t-shirts, jewelry, baked goods, and other items of interest.

Once a year, the Napier Avenue Association hosted an outdoor bonanza to attract people from all over New Troy, thereby encouraging commerce for several vendors and long-time shops in the area. Featured as well were foods provided by up-and-coming restaurants, outfits from clothing designers and musicians from trendy neighborhoods throughout the city.

Clark Kent looked at two stands; one featuring Greek street food and the other homemade ice cream. "These gyros smell delicious!" He then turned to his wife and asked, "What do you want Honey?"

"A strawberry vanilla ice cream in a waffle cone. Oh, don't forget the sprinkles!"

"What, not chocolate?" He answered in surprise.

She flashed him a mischievously smile. "Nyahh! I'm going to be boringly old-fashioned."

Walking besides them, Bernie said quietly, using Abrihet's nickname "Care for anything, Bree?"

"*Oui*. A gyro with lamb. My *estomac* (stomach) is still on Paris time. Right now I would be eating *dîner*."

"If only there was some way to have your physiology instantly adjusted to the Eastern seaboard, so you wouldn't have to experience hunger and tiredness at a different pace than the rest of us." Bernie sighed.

"You mean 'jet lag', Bernie." Clark said teasingly.

Cocking his head ever so slightly, the scientist looked momentarily confused and answered innocently. "Didn't I say that?"

Everyone giggled and even Bernie joined in on the joke. He was still catching up with humor outside of the laboratory. He and Clark stood on a short line and then brought the women their treats. They walked over to the sidewalk, and munched, moving

from one tent to another, while watching throngs of people milling around the fair.

Lois called over to Abrihet, “How do you like being back? Are you having a good time?”

“*Merveilleux, merci! Il pleuvait* (It was raining) in Paris yesterday. Yet here, what an exquisite day! No need for an umbrella! Today is my first time attending such an open air market in New Troy.”

Indeed, the day was stunningly gorgeous. Spring had long passed, and the weather had transformed swiftly into summer. The air was crisp and light, without a hint of humidity. High above them the azure sky held wafer thin wisps and curls of white clouds, so there was no fear of rain ruining today’s walk through Napier Avenue’s Third Annual Street Fair.

Bernie Klein gave Abrihet’s hand a gentle squeeze and whispered in her ear. “It is all the more beautiful with you by my side, *chérie*.”

Clark watched the intimate exchange and then glanced over at the brunette beauty who was his wife. He remembered that head-over-heels feeling of being in love. It was simply great to see their friend Bernie Klein, a long-time bachelor, experiencing the same delightful pleasure.

Abrihet and Bernie had not seen each other in well over a month. He had a black-tie affair that was sponsored by WayneTech and was being held in the Sheridan Hotel on Thursday evening. Since Bernie had been asked to deliver a speech, he wanted Abrihet to share the event with him and was reluctant to attend without her. He normally did not ask either of his friends to act as an airline service, but after dragging his feet for several days he relented and shyly made the request. Clark was only too happy to comply, knowing how much Bernie missed her.

Fortunately, because it was the summer and her classes for the week were done by Wednesday afternoon, Abrihet was able to take five days off from her job at the Sorbonne. On Wednesday evening at eight o’clock, she was packed and ready when Clark Kent arrived at her building. First he took the bags, one, a garment bag, containing her evening gown, shoes and woven silk wrap she planned to wear that night. At super speed, the trip across the Atlantic and back was less than thirty seconds to Bernie’s laboratory at S.T.A.R. Labs. He returned a minute later for Abrihet, who now held a large white bakery box in her arms. On the top of the box *Chez Morel* was stenciled in silver letters. The boulangerie was owned and operated by Clark’s old Parisian friend, Amandine. Inside on a layer of wax paper were pains au chocolat (chocolate buns) for Lois, *a tarte aux pommes* (Apple Tart) for Clark and *Kouign Amann*, or butter cake for Bernie.

After thanking Abrihet for taking the time to get the pastries, Clark brought her safely across the ocean and she arrived at S.T.A.R. Labs courtesy of Superman Express ... at two o’clock in the afternoon, east coast time.

Following a quick drive to the Luxor Hotel and, after taking a brief nap and then a relaxing bubble bath, Abrihet dressed in a stunning red gown and was ready for an evening with her man. Bernie, who was understandably excited, picked her up at 6:00pm so they could enjoy a leisurely drive to the conference center.

The WayneTech event, hosted by Ms. Silver St. Cloud, had been a complete success. After the speech, Bernie and Abrihet ate a sumptuous gourmet dinner of garlic butter grilled steak and shrimp with asparagus tips sautéed in lemon, balsamic vinaigrette and olive oil paired with a light chardonnay. After sharing a plate of tiramisu they danced the night away. The lessons in Ballroom dancing she had taught Bernie were not wasted. The shy scientist was at first a little awkward, but in time he relaxed and enjoyed the music, the dance and, most definitely the woman in his life.

Among the intelligentsia of WayneTech and their colleagues, it was now firmly acknowledged that despite the Atlantic between

them Bernard Klein and Abrihet Senai were an official couple.

While Abrihet was in the lady’s lounge, some of Bernie’s co-workers began to ask questions about a wedding date and others dropped hints about where to go for an engagement ring and wedding bands in the Topaz District. Bernie was a little red-faced when Abrihet returned yet did not mention the conversations to her.

Friday was spent together shopping for a new living room set to replace the old plaid sofa and loveseat he had purchased second-hand years before. Kitchen appliances were purchased for Abrihet to use when she stayed in Metropolis. Bernie’s two-bedroom apartment was nice enough, yet slowly but surely, between buying new furniture and items Bree left behind between visits, the apartment was getting cramped. The office, already filled with his files, charts and several old notebooks, now held an additional small desk and chair so Abrihet could have a personal workspace whenever she visited.

With all these design changes, Bernie’s residence of ten years no longer had the appearance of a bachelor’s pad, but more a home that had acquired a ‘woman’s’ touch. It was a pleasant enough apartment, but he was seriously considering purchasing a large townhouse near where Lois and Clark lived.

Along with one other item for the lovely Abrihet, an item that would provide perfect symmetry to their relationship.

Now the two were spending Saturday afternoon with the Kents. Tomorrow, Clark would have to fly her back to Paris, but for now they intended to enjoy each other’s company as much as possible.

Lois had just finished the ice cream cone, but suddenly she stopped in mid-stride, her super hearing perked up over the din of the festival, the distinctive shearing sounds of metal breaking. On her right was a wide and massive iron platform which was being erected for local bands to play music later that afternoon. To hers and everyone else’s horror, the platform started to sway dangerously inward. Several of the workers underneath the stage scrambled out and ran as the main support struts were failing.

Unfortunately, one heavysset man who struggled to get out from underneath the center of the stage, couldn’t move fast enough. His coveralls had gotten snagged on a crossbeam and his legs held fast. If something didn’t happen quickly the man would lose at least one of his legs.

Realizing the situation, at super speed Lois ran into an alley. Within the blink of an eye, UltraWoman appeared and had pulled the hapless worker out before the platform collapsed. Behind her, Superman zoomed under the platform, propped it up and using his heat vision and fused the weakened struts into place. It was as if nothing had happened because the stage was once again smooth and flat.

“Sir, are you uninjured?” UltraWoman asked, as they gently landed on the cobblestone street.

The stunned worker, who was mopping sweat, grime and grease from his face, looked at the beautiful heroine and managed to utter a few words. “Yeah, I ... I think so... Thanks, UltraWoman!”

Quietly, Superman came to stand by UltraWoman’s side as many of the workers ran over to see if their friend was safe and to get a better look at the colorful crime fighting duo. A short, stocky man who wore a Metros baseball cap came running up to them, rivulets of sweat pouring down his face.

“Superman! UltraWoman! I’m Peter Quince, the Napier Avenue Fair manager. Thanks for saving my guy.”

Superman folded his arms nodded and said with twinkle in his eye. “We were in the area and were happy to help Mr. Quince.”

He looked over at the bandstand and said. “Wow! It looks perfect. But I’m going to have the engineers give it a thorough inspection to make certain its safe for us to use.”

Placing arms on her hips, UltraWoman nodded and said, “A wise precaution Mr. Quince. We are glad to be of assistance.”

Quince thanked them again, shook both their hands, then, without ceremony, Superman and UltraWoman lifted into the air and flew away.

Seconds later Clark and Lois appeared at their friends’ side. The foursome continued walking along crowded Napier Avenue as if nothing had happened.

Bernie said in a low voice, “Never a dull moment with you two around, that is a certainty!”

“How exciting! Shall that rescue appear in the *Daily Planet* tomorrow?” Abrihet asked eagerly.

“No, in a crowd this big there have gotta be reporters from other publications, let them write it up. We are *supposed* to be having a good time with friends. Not working!” Lois said.

“Marriage, has definitely changed you Mrs. Kent!” Clark said. “All for the better, Farmboy!” His wife answered.

The couples walked along until they saw a familiar boutique. Which caused Lois to exclaim, “Oh Abrihet, look! *Darcy’s* has a sale! There’s this great suit I’ve been wanting to try on. Let’s peek in there and see if they have it in my size.” Turning to Clark and Bernie she said, “We’ll meet you at Uncle Mike’s in fifteen ... uh make that twenty minutes.”

Quickly, the two friends walked down the street and stepped into Lois’ favorite clothing store.

Bernie looked after them, sighed and said, “It’s going to be more than fifteen minutes. My wife ... I ... I mean Bree likes the dresses in that shop as well. We discovered it after having dinner at *Café Americana*.”

Clark did not miss Bernie’s slip of the tongue yet decided to ignore it. “Don’t worry, if I know Lois, this little ‘peek’ is going to take at least an hour. The last time this happened I was able to accomplish two rescues outside the city! Maybe we should stop by The Metropolis Book Nook and see what titles Margaret has on hand.”

“Yes, there is a book about Galileo I am interested in purchasing, Bree has wanted Lumberg’s book, *Metallurgy Fundamentals* for some time.” He was silent for a moment, then Bernie said, “Um, my friend, when did you know Lois was the one?”

The abrupt change of subject did not catch Clark by surprise, he suspected the gentle scientist’s life was steadily moving in this direction. The contented expression worn on Bernie’s face for the past few months spoke volumes. “The moment she blew into Perry’s office and interrupted my interview. Unfortunately, it took two years to convince Lois we are right for each other.”

They walked together for a few minutes before Bernie said, “While we were in Paris and once I began to get comfortable with the language, my guest lectures and transportation around the city, everything was so easy between us. After class, we would visit with friends or take a walking tour, one of the best was by a charming older red-haired woman named Sylvia Caldwell, an America ex-pat who lives in Paris. It was only the three of us, and she gave us an insider’s view of Paris that only a true local can provide.”

“Oh really? What made her tour different from the others?”

Bernie looked down at the cobblestone street they were walking on and said, “It was an exceptional private day tour around Paris. We did not walk the beaten path, leaving the touristy crowds behind. She showed us the hidden side of Paris and its history. For a brief moment, we went back in time to when France was Gaul and discovered the older sections of the city most tourists never experience.”

His curiosity piqued Clark asked. “What sites did you visit?”

“The first one was the theatre, *Arènes de Lutèce* in a small park on high ground in the Latin Quarter of the Left Bank. Most visitors to the city wouldn’t notice it because of the location,

tucked behind apartment blocks. I believe Ms. Caldwell said in the 1st-century AD, built into the slope of the hillside outside the Roman city, it was one of the largest such structures in Gaul. It could once seat 15,000 people and was used also as an amphitheatre to show gladiatorial combats. The other was Public thermal baths, *Thermes de Cluny*. Now the *Musée de Cluny*. It was interesting to examine its structure and learn how such a large facility was heated.”**

“Impressive.”

Bernie said in a wistful tone. “Yes, it was. We also took food tours which was delicious and then a rather unique photography tour at the heart of Montmartre.”

“Is that where you have all those fabulous photos of you and Abrihet at the apartment?”

“Yes indeed! Now I’m back in Metropolis, after a long day at work I come home to an empty space. Oh, spending time with you, Lois and many other friends, is satisfying, but life is not the same. One half of the equation is missing. Bree’s e-mails and phone calls are great. Hearing that lovely distinctive voice is so soothing, but it’s not the same. She is the one. The only snag is who moves where? We are both committed to our careers. I can’t see taking her away from the Sorbonne. For me it shall be difficult to leave S.T.A.R. Labs ...but better that, than be miserable without her.”

In a way, Clark understood. This was a huge decision and it would have an impact on both of their lives. He faced a similar problem while trying to tell Lois about his ‘other job’. Nonetheless, he was confident that they would make the right decision. So he asked without hesitation. “When are you going to propose? What about the ring?”

“Next month. Abrihet is unaware of this, but I have an Air France flight already paid for. Maybe I can ask her while we walk around the city? Our conversation and the moment shall present itself. One thing is an undeniable guarantee. I am *not* asking her anywhere near the Eiffel Tower.”

Surprised, his friend said, “Why not? It’s a popular spot for proposals!”

Bernie pretended to shudder and then said. “That is precisely the reason why. How can my proposal of marriage – the final section of an elegant proof -- be a genuine surprise if we go to the one place in Paris where so many such events take place?”

“Okay, than *where* will the great surprise take place?” He was moved by Bernie’s exciting dilemma.

“Location shall be determined upon my arrival in *la Ville Lumière*. Did you know that Paris was one of the first cities in the world to have gas lights on its boulevards and monuments? The other reason is because of its role during the age of enlightenment. That is why it is called the City of Lights.”

“Ah, so it will be at some other monument? But one that not a lot of people are aware of?”

“Perhaps. Speaking of rings, since our ladies are occupied, let’s stop by Lazar’s jewelry store first, then on to the Book Nook. If they are as good at finding the right ring for Lois, they can help me get an appropriate engagement ring for Abrihet.”

Clark chuckled. “From the way you are talking, September is a long time from now! That ring is going to burn a hole in your pocket.”

Bernie’s face, which was deeply reflective only moments before, brightened with a wide grin. “I know! Isn’t it fantastic?”

Part Two

As Lois and Abrihet stepped inside *Darcy’s* upscale boutique, they left the noisy festive street carnival atmosphere behind and entered a calm environment, designed to allow the customer to shop in tranquility. Light classical music flowing from the speakers installed above them further enhanced the relaxed mood. A tall, young woman with blonde hair, a sprinkle of freckles over a

pert nose and clear blue eyes approached them.

“Good afternoon, ladies. My name is Selena. Is there anything I can help you with today?”

“I was interested in trying on the suit in the window. Do you still have it in a size 4?” Lois asked.

“Yes, we do. While I go get it, would either of you like a glass of water?”

After eating the slightly salty lamb gyro, Abrihet realized she was thirsty. “*Oui!* Oh, please excuse. I ... I mean yes. Thank you.”

The salesperson vanished and a moment later, presented both women with glasses of cold sparkling water with ice and a wedge of lemon. After drinking, they each went to different parts of the store, looking for new outfits to try on while Selena searched for Lois’ suit.

Twenty minutes later, Abrihet held up a mid-length green dress, her practiced eye carefully inspecting the tailoring of the garment.

“Oh, really pretty dress! Do you need it for a special occasion or is this just for date night with Bernie?” Lois asked as she went through the racks looking for a dress that could work in the newsroom. Lately she had taken to wearing brighter colors rather than black, blue or gray. Since her marriage to Clark, life was fuller and richer than it had ever been. Her personal metamorphosis was seen in the fact that she smiled more and was a much nicer person to be around.

Selena, with quiet efficiency, had set aside the suit Lois wanted in a fitting room. She had also set up a room for Abrihet. As each woman picked up a garment Selena would come by and hang it up in their respective fitting rooms. The saleswoman suggested a pair of pants to work with a blouse and scarf already in the room.

“*Tou les deux.* (Both) A colleague’s daughter is getting married next week. This little frock shall work perfectly for the reception. As you know, in France, marriages are performed by the mayor or his assistant in a civil ceremony at the *La mairie* (town hall). If the couple wants a religious ceremony, that happens afterwards. I shall be attending the wedding and reception. Afterwards, it would be perfect for a romantic dinner with Bernard.”

Lois nodded, “There is never a wrong time for a romantic dinner ... especially in Paris! Although I have to say, my first date with Clark in the City of Lights took place after a stakeout where we ... and Jimmy caught a jewel thief!” *

Abrihet’s dark eyes widened in surprise. “*Mon Dieu!* Was that the adventure with *le Fantôme*? Bernard told me about it. The robbery took place at the same jewelers who fabricated your engagement ring and wedding bands?”

Lois rolled her eyes. “Yeah, The Phantom, so called because he used sleeping gas and no one was conscious while he grabbed thousands of dollars in uncut diamonds. Urgh! That cheesy nickname! Yes, the jeweler, Mr. CJ Abelhammer, did create our rings. He’s such a gentleman, when we discovered in the course of our investigation that his store was The Phantom’s next target, Clark was determined to make sure he and his staff were safe.”

Abrihet grew silent and then said, “Lois, *mon chérie*. How long before you knew Clark was your *désir de Coeur* (heart’s desire)?”

The abrupt and unexpected question caught Lois off guard. She thought for a minute, remembering all the obstacles thrown in front of them before realizing they couldn’t live without each other. “Too long. I fought him every step of the way. In those days, ‘Mad Dog’ Lane was going to get a Pulitzer Prize before reaching the age of thirty. If I had realized just how important he was to me, it could have saved us both a great deal of unnecessary heartache. Why do you ask?”

Before answering, Abrihet accepted a pair of black woolen pants, from Selena, who then departed to assist another customer. They were just her size and lined with silk, she felt the light-

weight woolen material, appreciating the feel and craftsmanship of the garment. She was nervous about starting this complex conversation with her young friend. Yet, what is to be done? She needed to talk with someone. Her sister, Kuma was in London, completely unaware of this new and *extraordinaire* (incredible) aspect of her life. Her *Iya*, (mother) lived in Nigeria and had no contact with her since she had run away before an abominable planned marriage had taken place. Lois was waiting, so with a tiny sigh, she spoke.

“Bernard has become the most important person in my life. Returning to Paris after each visit to him is becoming more *difficile*. It was so easy when he lived nearby. After work, I walked a few blocks from my office to his apartment. On the way I would stop at the market for a loaf of freshly baked bread, cheese and vegetables, Bernard likes fresh Brussels sprouts and a bottle of wine. It took some time before he would drink red wine without it being chilled! Often we would have *dîner* by candlelight, discussing events at the Sorbonne and the impact on the school and its students. Ah, the conversations often moved into a myriad of other subjects, I can converse with him about anything!”

Lois nodded slowly, with a wry smile, “Clark and I used to do that when we were dating. Of course, he did more of the cooking than I back then. Since then, because of his patient help, my talents in the kitchen have improved! Having someone to chat with at day’s end is one of the joys of being a couple. It’s obvious you have both have become very close.”

“*Oui.* But we did not spend all our time with just each other. Sometimes after work I would attend get-togethers with my friends and share our thoughts on best-selling novels. Bernard would join with scientists who work on fascinating projects and discuss their research at a local café. But always before we went to sleep we would call each other, simply to say good-night.”

Lois’ lips tugged into a tiny smile as memories from the early days of her relationship with Clark came to mind. How many times had she said good-night to him only to remember something else? Finally, she would reluctantly say good-night and then hang up. The smile still tugging at her lips she said, “Sounds familiar.” She changed subjects abruptly when she found a dress in the color of burnt orange.

“What do you think?” she said, while holding it up.

“*D’accord* (okay). The cut and color is perfect for your figure and complexion.”

Lois agreed and headed for the dressing room. Meanwhile Abrihet purchased the green dress, black pants, a burgundy silk blouse and a multi-colored oblong scarf. It was not necessary to try them on, she intended to have her *retoucheuse* (seamstress) alter them to fit her perfectly.

She returned to the dressing room area just as Lois stepped out, happy to show off the outfit. The dress was flattering to her figure; double breasted with covered buttons and detailed buttonholes, the perfect outfit to move effortlessly from newsroom in the day, to cocktails at a corporate event in the evening.

Abrihet clapped her hands once in approval. “Ah! Monsieur Kent shall enjoy seeing his wife in this frock! The fabric and detailing is exquisite. Sadly, I did not see many dresses here with pockets, this one is the exception. For work in the newsroom, yes?”

“When you are a reporter sometimes you have to be able to wear something at work and then leave immediately for a corporate press conference.”

“Without having the luxury of going home to change via Superman or UltraWoman?” This last, Abrihet said in a voice pitched so low only Lois, with her special abilities, could hear it.”

“Exactly! Now, this little number is a keeper and yeah, Clark’s gonna love it!” With those words Lois dashed back into the dressing room and with a ‘little’ super help, was soon waiting in front of the cash register to make her purchase.

As they waited for Lois' purchases to be rung up, the two women continued their conversation. "Ah well, our time in Paris has not been completely perfect! Bernard was such a *touriste* when he first arrived!"

"Poor Bernie! I can definitely see that happening. Please don't tell me he wore his lab coat off the plane!" Lois said with a groan.

"No," Abrihet said with a sigh. "He was not that terrible. Still, many Parisiennes have such a sense of fashion, they immediately know when someone is a tourist. From their brand of clothing, the way they speak and the corporal attitudes. For instance, shoes. He wore a pair of trodden down leather oxfords with his Brooks Brothers suit. It took time, but now he not only wears beautifully polished shoes, but also a dash of color in the form of a pocket square in the jacket's breast pocket. When I first came from Nigeria I had to learn these things. Now, between his mastery of the language and clothing chic he is more ... Parisian. Whenever Bernard is in Paris with me, he is much relaxed and confident ... not the busy scientist and S.T.A.R. Labs administrator."

Lois had to admit in the year since Abrihet had entered his life, their gentle friend had seemed much calmer and assured. It was true, he no longer wore nerdy bow ties, old shirts and frayed corduroy pants. He was always a wonderful scientist and a good friend, willing to help her and Clark during a crisis, but Abrihet made him that much better.

Her friend sighed, "Now that Bernard resides in the Metropolis, I ... I miss him terribly. The phone calls, e-mails and letters are not enough. My apartment has always been my refuge at the end of the day. Yet now when I arrive home *c'est silencieux*, like a seashell without the sounds of the ocean and my heart is unhappy. Does that sound peculiar?"

Again, Lois' memories of her life before a certain 'Hack from Nowheresville' came into it flowed like a dismal rain through Lois' mind. Days of non-stop work and her former boyfriend Mitchell Shapiro complaining about his constant headaches, coughs and watery eyes. She shivered at the memories and said without hesitation, "No. Not at all."

Upon emerging from the shop with their purchases they stepped back into the carnival atmosphere of the street fair. Their little 'peek' at *Darcy's* had taken an hour. Lois asked tentatively. "It sounds like you are deeply in love with Bernie. If you don't mind my asking, what are you going to do about it?"

"I have made an important decision." Abrihet said softly, but there was no anxiety or tension in her voice. "Should he propose, I am prepared to depart from my position at the Sorbonne."

Completely surprised, Lois said, "Abrihet, are you sure? This is a huge step!"

"In any mature relationship, compromises must be made, yet I cannot ask him to leave his position at S.T.A.R. Labs to live with me in France. I have moved from Nigeria to France. At this age the changes will be difficult, but not impossible. It is one matter to live apart while courting, but to do so in a marriage? No."

"But... but what about your teaching career at the Sorbonne! It took years for you to reach that position. Don't classes start again next month?"

"Yes. There are several very good teachers, such as my friend, Professor Albani who can take over my classes and they shall accomplish the task with how do you say? Consummate skills."

Still reeling from this revelation, Lois continued. "Fine! But if Bernie proposes, what are you going to do after all the excitement of planning the wedding and honeymoon have passed? No one, especially me, can imagine you staying quietly at home waiting for him to come back from work."

"*C'est Vrai*. I have been thinking about that. It's time to finish writing *Medieval Metals*. Being away from the demands of teaching will allow me to work without distractions. Living here will provide the source materials to do so. There is also another *livre* (book) I have in mind to begin work on."

Lois neatly sidestepped a man who was so involved with gnawing on his sausage and peppers sandwich like a hungry wolf he did not see her. Without missing a beat she said. "Another book? What kind of book?"

She shrugged. "On metallurgy of course. But rather than focus on the history of swords it will look into the science behind the American steel industry. Starting first with blacksmithing. Do you realize there is a rich history of materials science and engineering that studies the physical and chemical behavior of metallic elements, their inter-metallic compounds, and their mixtures, which are called alloys ..."

Lois chuckled to herself, why was she concerned about Abrihet's adapting to life in Metropolis? This was a former Nigerian princess who ran away from her home in order to pursue an education in France. During that time she had taught Clark how to Ballroom dance and had gained a coveted position at one of the most respected learning institutions on the planet. Lois had no doubt the top metallurgists in the country would be making their way to New Troy to consult with this determined woman scientist.

Ten minutes later they met Bernie and Clark in front of *Café Americana*.

"Clark, were you and Bernie able to stop by *The Metropolis Book Nook*?" Lois asked

"Yeah, we did and got a few textbooks and novels. I finally got *Lightening Riders: Stories of the Pony Express*." Her husband's eyes beamed at the mentioned of the book that provided a detailed history of an important part of the old wild west.

"Great! You've been looking for that out-of-print book for months!" his wife said.

"Bern, was there a copy of *Metallurgy Principles* in stock?" Abrihet inquired hopefully.

He held up a paper bag with the name The Book Nook, stenciled on both sides. "Yes. I have it right here, along with a biography of Galileo."

Lois smiled, "A bit of light reading after dinner?"

"Perhaps, but not this evening." He continued in a mysterious tone, "Bree and I have so much to do and her visit is short, we won't have much time for reading. Mike is holding a table for us. Considering how much foot traffic there is on Napier Avenue tonight, we need to get inside as soon as possible."

Yeah, Bernie's right. Uncle Mike's restaurant is crowded, I see our table in the back." Clark said.

"Lois, did you get a *livre* (book) from Margaret's shop?" Abrihet asked.

As they stepped into the restaurant, Lois asked, "I wanted to. Did she have the latest Elka Lodi thriller?"

Clark made a sour face. "Yeah, she did. Honey, why do you read that trash? She literally takes stories from the headlines and turns them into third-rate dime store novels."

She laughed, her beautiful face shining. "We all have our vices. Happily, this is a small one! Come on people let's get inside, I'm hungry!"

With a collective chuckle, the two couples entered the restaurant.

A long pleasant time later, after a scrumptious dinner, they exited *Café Americana*. After exchanging farewells, the Kents went one way and their friends walked towards the Metro. Bernie was planning on taking Abrihet to her hotel, The Luxor. He was hoping that on the way they would chat.

In a voice that sounded nervous and a little shy he said, "Bree, once we get to your hotel. Can ... can we talk for a small bit of time? If your body's adjustment to Eastern Standard Time is a problem, it can wait until later."

She smiled up at him and said, "*C'est Vrai*, we can always talk. Is that not one of the things we appreciate about each other?"

Especially since we are now in the same country and time zone?” After saying this, she tried and failed to stifle a tiny yawn.

Slowly, he took her hand and gave it a gentle squeeze. “Ah, Bree, you are exhausted, maybe we won’t talk too long. I ... I was thinking about coming over for a visit early next month ... uh that is, if it will not conflict with your class schedule?”

A sense of happiness that washed over her like a gentle rain, she asked. “For how long *mon amour*? I can make my quick version of beef bourguignon, so we may have hours left over to relax or perhaps take a walk? The Pont des Arts Bridge is a lovely place to stroll over to. Especially since many artists will be painting and sketching. I love watching them work. Perhaps a spicy Jollof rice with tomatoes and roasted *poulet* (chicken)?”

“Jollof rice would be delightful! It’s my favorite Nigerian dish.” He swallowed nervously and then put his right hand in the front pocket of his jeans, fingering the receipt for Lazar’s jewelers. He had purchased her engagement ring, a square-cut sapphire surrounded by small white diamonds and a quarter diamond on each side in a yellow gold setting. Due to its unique design, the ring had to be handcrafted, but by this time next week he would be holding it in his hand. Clark was right, although not about the actual ring itself, the anticipation was so great, that the receipt was burning a hole in his pocket!

He wanted to propose there and then, but like any good scientist working on a special mission, he had to keep this life-altering project close to his heart for the time being. For now he had to content himself with walking beside the love of his life. So he said, “Three or four days at the most, John Irons wants me to take over a few projects for him. Once again, our time together will be brief, but I promise it will be worth it. Now, *chérie*, what about this bridge? Can you tell me a little bit about it? Is it an architectural marvel?”

She smiled again. Certain that his visit would be worth it and while he was there they could possibly discuss outlining her new book ... among other things.

“Clark?” Lois asked with an impish tone.

“Yes honey?” Her husband said as they moved past artists and vendors packing away their wares and dismantling the large canvas and plastic booths. The streetlights high above cast their electronic glow on the waning groups of people heading home from the fair. The festive atmosphere had gone, but a sense of playful energy still lingered. Now that the sun was setting, the air was cooler and pleasant, what better way for Lois and Clark to enjoy Metropolis at night than walking?

“Not including the surprises that come up with our ‘other’ jobs. What do you think about attending a wedding in Paris?” Lois asked.

“Really? What makes you say that?” he asked in a teasing tone.

Her fine brown eyes sparkled as she said, “Abrihet is thinking about leaving the Sorbonne to move here if ... when Bernie proposes. It going to happen soon, because let’s face it, those two can’t live without each other.”

Even in the darkness, Lois could sense the gloriously beautiful smile that appeared on her husband’s face. “I’m really glad to hear that, because Bernie just ordered a beautiful sapphire and diamond engagement ring and is thinking about where in Paris to ask Abrihet to marry him.”

Lois also smiled with genuine happiness, her friends would soon be together in Metropolis, finally living on the same continent rather than apart. She wrapped both her arms around Clark’s waist and gave him a fierce hug. Several people looked back in amusement and surprise at a handsome couple laughing aloud as they walked down Napier Avenue.

Continued in “[A Wedding in Paris.](#)”

* Café Americana

** [Lutetia](#)