

Restraint

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Rated: PG

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Summary: A what-if based on the episode “Pheromone, My Lovely.” What if Superman had been affected by the concentrated spray? What will Lois do when he comes to her? Granted, no matter what she does, she’ll get a lot more than she bargained for.

Story Size: 7,484 words (40Kb as text)

A/N: A special thanks to Chereche and those on FOLC’s Skype group who acted as soundboards for this fic ^_^.

An alternative take on the idea is also explored in the author’s [“Impulse.”](#)

The police walked Miranda to the patrol car as his boots touched the runway. That had certainly been very close. She had nearly sprayed the entire city with the fully concentrated pheromone. He didn’t want to even imagine an entire city on that at one hundred percent concentration, the Daily Planet on two percent had been enough!

He shook his head, his thoughts straying to Lois as he recalled one particular moment a few days before: when she had been running to him while in that white dress, throwing flower petals.

Dr. Friedman had said that for the pheromone to cause someone to ‘fall in love’ one had to already be physically attracted to whoever they were drawn to. That meant Lois was attracted to him, Clark Kent, at least a little bit.

He smiled as he turned, suddenly remembering where he was as his eyes settled on Lois, who had just run up to him and said something. She looked at him expectantly, and his heart swelled.

“I love you, Lois,” he said softly.

He wasn’t sure if she had heard him, but then she slowly approached, her eyes wide with joy.

“Oh, Superman. You don’t know how long I’ve waited to hear you say those words. But — ” She grimaced. “ — You’re not yourself. So I shouldn’t take advantage of the situation ... oh, what the heck?”

His confusion was instantly replaced with bliss as her mouth met his and the sound of her heart echoed in his ears.

After a long moment of ecstasy, he tentatively pulled away, a part of him questioning whether or not he was

dreaming. Everything no longer felt real as he became aware of someone incessantly tapping his shoulder.

“— Will Miranda be permanently...?” Lex Luthor asked, pointing at the deranged woman being loaded into the patrol car.

Why would Luthor care? he wondered, but he answered anyway.

“No, I diluted it. It’ll wear off before tomorrow,” he said. “There was less than one percent in what she inhaled.”

“I see,” Luthor stated, barely containing a sneer.

Clark ignored him. He was such an evil man. One day he would fall.

He blinked, his mind oddly cloudy as he refocused on Lois still leaning against him.

He needed to return to work. He didn’t want Lois upset with him.

“If you’ll excuse me, Ms. Lane. I’ve got to fly,” he said, smiling down at her before stepping back and launching into the air.

He made it to the Daily Planet with plenty of time to spare, which was fortunate; it gave him time to calm his thoughts and focus on writing up at least the portion of the article he safely could without making Lois question how he knew what he did. He didn’t feel it was worth using the typical excuse of saying he had spoken to Superman. Especially when he was having a hard enough time as it was with the odd pressure in his head. Having to lie and sound convincing didn’t seem within his capabilities just then.

He looked over when he heard Lois’ heartbeat, noticing it before she had even stepped out of the elevator. He closed his eyes and just focused on that wonderful, soothing sound.

“Hey, partner, ready to write an article?” Lois asked, suddenly right beside him.

“Oh! Yeah. I’ve actually started writing it,” he said, indicating what he had done so far. “What do you think?”

“Excellent!” she said, moving over as he slid back to allow her room at the keyboard.

He slowly inhaled, taking a moment to enjoy the smell of her hair and the trace amount of perfume intermingled with her natural scent. Comfort enveloped him, and he had to stabilize himself as a dizzying sensation swirled around him.

Whoa.

Clark stilled, part of him realizing what he was feeling was not normal, but another part of him not caring. This felt great! Just being near Lois was better than a full day in the sun! Oh, he wanted to be closer.

He blinked and suddenly realized he was slowly leaning toward her and edging closer into what he knew she would consider too close.

What was he doing?!

He straightened up and forced himself to breathe normally as she shifted back in the chair, oblivious to his growing desire to be closer to her.

“It’s incredible. Love without boundaries, without insecurities or hang-ups or reasoning. You could be swept off your feet by just about ... anybody,” she said, rereading the article.

“Not just anybody,” he said softly.

“Anyone you have even the faintest attraction to,” Lois corrected, still not looking at him.

He hummed, but it wasn’t in agreement. His mind was dwelling on something completely different before he mentally slapped himself.

“Clark! Are you trying to give me a heart attack? Why did you jump?” she asked, glaring at him for startling her.

“Sorry. I, uh, something on my clothes poked me,” he said lamely.

He was at work! And even if he wasn’t, those thoughts were not appropriate! What was wrong with him?!

She returned to the article, thankfully ignorant to his thoughts.

“There!” she said, shifting away from him and motioning for him to read what she had added.

He beamed, all previous self-reproach evaporating as he looked over her words.

“It’s perfect,” he said, and it was, other than a misspelled word he quickly corrected with no comment. “I’m so glad Miranda failed and that you’re okay.”

Lois smiled at him, and his breath caught in his throat. She was so beautiful.

“Thanks, me too. This week has been one I’d prefer to forget, but considering everything....” She grew flustered and he could hear her pulse quicken. “I don’t think I, well, thanked you. You could have....” She looked away with a blush. “But you didn’t. Any other man I think would have, with little or no reservations. I guess what you had said when we first met is true, you’re ‘not a typical male’. So, thanks.”

He wanted to kiss her right then and there, but they were at work, in view of their coworkers, and she had just praised him for having self-restraint. He smiled softly at her, a pleasurable sensation coursing through him as he allowed her thanks to fill him up.

“I could never take advantage of you, especially in that way. Caring for someone means putting them before yourself. Be that someone a friend or more,” he said, continuing to stop himself from reaching out to her.

“And when you offered yourself once I woke up?” she asked teasingly, her eyes soft.

“Everyone has their limits,” he said, heat suddenly rising in his cheeks.

She laughed and playfully hit his chest with her hand.

“So you lied earlier. You *are* attracted to me,” she said pointedly, but there was no heat in her words.

“Any man with a beating heart should be,” he said before he could process, let alone censor, his words.

She blushed so hard her ears went pink and she hurriedly returned her attention to their article. “Okay, sending.” She clicked the mouse and sent it to Perry.

“Well, I think we can definitely call it a day,” she said, standing up.

He nodded as he allowed his eyes to scan across her back when she turned away from him. He imagined his hand brushing against her smooth skin, down from her shoulder, along her spine to her —

What was he doing?!

He closed his eyes and turned his head away.

“Yeah, I need to get home. I have a few things I have to do this weekend,” he said gruffly.

He needed to get away from Lois before he did something she wouldn’t like!

Lois nodded as she faced him. “Me too.”

Did she look disappointed or relieved?

Both?

He blinked. “Have a good weekend, Lois.”

“You too,” she said.

He made a beeline to the stairs. He couldn’t risk being in an elevator with Lois right then. Who knew what he’d do!

He needed to cool off.

After making sure no one could see, he shot up into the sky, blurring into his uniform. There. He was now away from Lois and away from any chance of making a fool of himself or somehow hurting or upsetting her. He did not want to disappoint or frighten her by displaying unsolicited advances after she had just thanked him for not being a typical male!

He needed to go talk to his parents because something was happening to him. Could he have been affected by the spray? He hadn’t been before, but then that had been such a tiny concentration. Maybe he could go someplace and sleep it off?

He glided numbly over Metropolis, flying much slower than his norm.

What was he doing again?

He wondered what Lois was doing. Did she have any plans this weekend? He should have asked before he left.

Maybe he could drop by and say hello. She liked whenever he came to visit her, and after the day/week she

had, maybe it'd be best to check and make sure she was really okay. Even though she faced death more often than most didn't mean she was used to it.

She had almost died.

Again.

If he hadn't heard her in time....

He felt sick and changed course.

He approached her building and allowed his senses to stretch out, quickly triangulating on her location.

She had just entered her building and was on her way up to her apartment. Eagerly, he waited for her to close her front door before he shot to her window.

Tap-tap

He didn't have to wait long for her to hurry to the window and open it for him.

Lois was still a little frazzled by her conversation with Clark, but she figured it was to be expected. She wasn't used to such compliments, and on top of that, the past few days had been rather turbulent.

It was a good thing it was the weekend. It would give them both a few days to put the awkwardness behind them.

She unlocked her front door and stepped in before turning back and re-locking all the bolts.

One could never be too careful.

Tap-tap

She instantly recognized the sound and inwardly squealed in glee.

She hurried to the window.

"Hi, Superman," she said shyly, instantly thinking about their recent kiss.

"Hi, Lois," he said, stepping in as she closed the window behind him.

He sighed softly as he looked at her, and she was struck by the emotion in his eyes. Completely unguarded and earnest.

"Is everything okay?" she asked.

Was he upset she had kissed him?

"I wanted to see you. Earlier, if ... if I hadn't heard you, you would have...." He frowned and shook his head. "I just wanted to make sure you were alright after everything."

She blinked at his concern. "I'm alright, thanks to you." She smiled. "Again."

He smiled briefly before growing serious. "I don't know what I'd do if anything happened to you, and I don't think I can continue to hide from you."

Lois couldn't believe what she was hearing. It was a dream come true! But.... She frowned as Superman looked down and rubbed his forehead.

"Hide from me?" she asked, confused.

"How I feel. I love you so much!" he said, stepping toward her and touching her shoulder as he leaned forward.

His lips met hers, but instead of the intense, searing kiss they had shared before, this was soft and gentle, tender and loving.

He pulled back and smiled dreamily at her.

She gaped at him as she came to the only conclusion she could. Good Lord. He was still affected by the pheromone!

"Superman, I think the pheromone ... Miranda's 100 percent solution must be affecting you," she said, growing nervous.

She could remember bits and pieces of herself under its influence. She had grown more and more insistent with Clark and, from what she could recall, had even become rather forceful. What if Superman lost complete control of himself like she had with Clark?!

Of course, it wasn't as if she was opposed to his affections, but the thought of what would happen once he recovered from the pheromone.... She wouldn't do that to him. Couldn't do that to him. But what if she couldn't convince him to stop? Unlike Clark, she wasn't stronger than the one attracted to her!

Superman blinked, straightening. "What? It is? But I've always loved you. It's not making me love you, I promise!" he declared, mortified.

She wondered for a split second if she should tell him to leave, but then realized that was a horrible idea. The world couldn't see Superman like this!

"I believe you feel that way, but — gosh, I can't believe I'm saying this! — but I think it would be best if we just calm down and sit to talk about what's happening."

Superman beamed at her suggestion.

"Sure, we can talk. As long as I'm with you," he said.

She led him to the kitchen, her mind scrambling to form a plan.

"Okay, would you like something to drink? Coffee, tea?" she asked.

"Oh! Let me, Lois. You sit down and relax," he said, not asking as he went around her and then zipped about the kitchen in a colorful blur, grabbing two mugs and making both coffee and tea before opening and closing the fridge.

And then he set her coffee mug before her, gently stirring it for her before sitting down with his mug of tea across from her. He looked hopefully at her as she picked up the mug and carefully sipped it.

Her eyebrows went up, and he seemed to tense in worried anticipation.

"Wow, it's perfect," she said. "Even better than when I fix it. What did you do?"

Superman smiled, pleasure clear on his face as he relaxed. “Heat vision. Even heating of the coffee grounds while pouring the water,” he said, before taking a drink of his steaming hot tea.

Of course he didn’t need to sip.

“Thanks. You know, if you ever needed a job, you could work as a barista. I imagine you would get a lot of customers,” she said.

He grinned at the compliment. She was taken by how happy he seemed to be. She couldn’t recall ever seeing him smile so frequently or being as expressive in general.

Before, part of her had wondered if he just didn’t feel as much because he wasn’t human, but now it was clear to her he had the full width of expression — he had just reserved himself.

“Okay, let’s get back to Miranda’s concoction. How do you feel?” she asked, watching him closely.

“Good. Really good. But I always do when I’m with you,” he said. “You make me feel wonderful.” He leaned toward her, his elbows on the surface of the table as he drank her in with his eyes.

This was going to be harder than she thought. Well, at least he was keeping his hands to himself. If he tried to kiss her again, she wasn’t sure what she’d do to be honest. To be in his arms....

Good grief. She needed to get a hold of herself! Having one lovesick individual in a room was bad enough.

“Superman, I need you to focus for me,” she said.

He sat back up, like a boy who had just been given an important task by someone he greatly respects.

“Okay,” he said, serious once more.

The transformation was actually rather endearing. And frightening, she realized a second later. She had control of Superman.

“You’ve essentially been drugged, Superman. The same stuff that made the Daily Planet drunk on love has affected you as well — probably because it’s at its most concentrated form. I need you to try your best to fight what you’re feeling, or at least do all you can to push it down. Acting on what you’re feeling while you’re not yourself....”

“Fight what I’m feeling? But I’ve loved you since the moment I first saw you, Lois. I can’t fight what I’ve been doing for months!” he said fretfully.

“You’ve really loved me for that long?” she asked, now confused about what to do.

Sure, the pheromone had made her exaggerate her feelings toward Clark, but they had never made her lie or concoct stories. So ... maybe he really did love her.

He nodded, pleadingly.

“Then why haven’t you told me before now? Done something to let me know?” she asked. “I mean, a few

times I’ve wondered if you might feel something toward me, and I’ve hoped, but....”

“I was afraid.”

“Afraid?” What could scare Superman?

“That you won’t like me. All of me. And that once you learned the truth, you’d be angry and want nothing to do with me.”

Lois frowned. What was Superman talking about?

“Why would I be angry?” she asked.

“That I didn’t tell you my secret,” he answered, looking away.

“Secret?” Lois whispered. “Wait. Give me a moment to think,” she ordered before he could speak. She needed to slow down and process. She had a feeling the way she went about this would be extremely important later.

He was still clearly under the influence of this drug and she didn’t want to cause him to do anything he’d regret. Whatever this secret was, he had kept it from her for a reason. It had to be very important, otherwise he wouldn’t have. Even though she didn’t know him as well as she would like, she knew he was a good man and wouldn’t hide something for nothing.

“Okay, without telling me your secret or doing anything you might regret later, is there a reason *why* you kept whatever this secret is from me?” she asked.

“Many reasons, but primarily because it’s dangerous. Very dangerous. If the wrong people learned this, everyone close to me would be in danger, everyone who knows and kept it hidden especially, and if the world learned ... I wouldn’t be allowed to be me anymore.”

Lois blinked. That answer didn’t help clarify things at all and had actually only confused her more.

“Okay ... so is it a bad secret? Hiding something bad, I mean?” she asked, bewildered.

Superman stilled. “I ... I don’t think so, but you ... you won’t be happy about it, I don’t think.”

He slumped, dejected.

“Well, as long as you’re not the frontal assault of an invading Kryptonian army to take over Earth, or something like that, I can’t think of anything I wouldn’t be able to forgive you for.”

His eyes shot up to meet hers, joy and relief clear on his face.

And then he blurred and was no longer on the other side of the table. Instead, he was right next to her on one knee, kissing her hand!

“Thank you, thank you, Lois!” he said.

And before she knew it, he was planting kisses up her arm!

“Whoa, big guy! Superman, slow it **w**ay down. Remember, you’re not yourself right now, you have to focus!” she exclaimed, even as a large part of her was

seriously questioning why she was even trying to fight his advances.

He stopped mid-kiss, rearing back in surprise.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to go so fast. I ... I didn't scare you, did I?" he asked, suddenly worried.

"No, no, you didn't scare me," Lois insisted, mostly honest as she tried to decide what she should do.

Maybe she'd be better off guiding instead of outright fighting him? Protect him from himself until the pheromone is out of his system.

It had lasted about 48 hours in her. Would it last that long in him? Dr. Friedman had said its effects depended on initial attraction and one's metabolic rate. Hopefully she would be able to outlast however long it lingered in him.

"Superman, why don't we take things slow and get to know each other? After all, even though you've saved my life several times, I don't know much about you or your life. Like, what's Krypton like? What's your Kryptonian name? I doubt it's 'Superman'," she said with a smile as she indicated the chair beside her. "I mean, as long as it doesn't give away your secret. I don't want you to do or say anything you will regret," she added hastily.

He grinned as he sat down. "Okay. My Kryptonian name is Kal-El," he said.

"Kal-El," she repeated, testing out the name.

He closed his eyes in bliss. "After I learned my name I wondered how it would sound coming from your lips," he sighed. "It's better than I had imagined."

There really wasn't any safe conversation to be had, was there? He was so high on that witch's brew, almost anything could be twisted into something romantic to him.

Heaven help her.

Wait. What had he just said?

"When you learned your name? You mean, you didn't always know it?" she asked.

This had to be safer, right?

"I only learned it this year, a few months ago, actually," he said happily.

This had to be a record. She had never been confused so many times in such a short amount of time.

"A few months ago? But you've been Superman for longer than a few months," she pointed out.

"Oh! Well, yes, of course! I learned it from the globe! My Kryptonian parents, Jor-El and Lara, made it for me, but it got stolen soon after I came to Earth, and I only took it back earlier this year, and it took time for it to reacclimate to my presence for it to activate and talk to me," he rambled.

Lois was baffled.

"Wait, I'm confused. Why wouldn't your parents just tell you your name? Were you in stasis and lost your memory or something?" she asked.

Superman, or Kal-El rather, slouched with a sigh.

"I never really knew my parents. Krypton's gone. My parents sent me here just before its core exploded. They didn't have time to make a ship big enough for themselves, just me. I don't know much, but I'm..." He cleared his throat. "As far as I know, I'm the only survivor from Krypton."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she said, placing her hand over his.

No wonder he was normally so reserved! He had lost everything and everyone!

"Thanks, but as sad as I am, a larger part is relieved to finally know. Since the moment I learned I was adopted, I had always wondered where I had come from and even what I was. My parents didn't know — they just didn't want me to be discovered. Even now, Dad warns me to be careful because there are people out there who would love to dissect me like a frog," he said.

"Your parents? Your dad?" Lois asked, trying her best to keep up.

"Sorry. Adoptive parents. They found me when I landed. They thought I was a meteor, but instead I was a baby in a spaceship."

"A baby," Lois breathed, astonished.

It had so many implications....

"Yeah. My mom says I was a cute baby. I bet you were a cute baby too," he said, staring at her with a goofy grin on his face.

Sigh. Still drugged.

But this gave her something to work with. Keep him talking, she told herself.

"I was a chubby baby, and I had a stuffed ducky. I carried that thing everywhere for the first few years of my life. I actually still have it," she admitted. "What about you? Did you have any favorite toy or stuffed animal when you were little?"

"Blueberry," he said. "A little brown teddy bear. Don't ask me why I named him Blueberry. He's in my tree house with my globe right now. I had to sew his tongue back on several times over the years. He used to be very soft and fuzzy, but his fur is now all flat. He's still adorable, though."

Lois smiled, unable to keep from imagining him as a little black-haired boy cuddling with a well-loved teddy bear. And then her thoughts strayed to the teddy bear in her own room. The one Clark had won for her at the fair in Smallville. She sighed happily.

"Teddy bears do make everything better," she said.

"I used to tell Blueberry everything," he said, scooting his chair closer to her until they were touching.

Lois went still. The heat from his leg pressed up against hers was impossible to ignore. And then he began

moving his arm, and she strongly suspected it would be around her shoulders in a moment.

“Why are you always so warm?” she asked, blurring out the first thought that came to mind in an attempt to distract him. To distract herself.

“Oh, uh, I’m not sure. I’ve always been warm. Warmer than normal, I mean,” he said, fumbling.

“Do you ever get hot or cold?” she asked, curiosity taking over.

“I’ve only been uncomfortable a few times, temperature wise, and it’s always been from being too hot. That heat wave caused by Luthor’s power plant had actually been a little uncomfortable, though looking back, I think that had been more from stress than actual heat,” he said thoughtfully, before growing serious. “I don’t like Luthor. He’s really the only person I might actually hate. He’s responsible for a lot of horrible things.”

“What?” she asked, utterly dumbfounded. “Lex?!”

Superman shivered at hearing her say the billionaire’s first name.

“What has he done?” she asked, almost afraid to ask, but she had to know!

Even if it meant being more surprised and confused than she already was.

“I wish I had proof, but I’m very certain he ordered the deaths of Dr. Samuel Platt, Dr. Baines and a number of others. I’m also extremely confident he’s responsible for the bomb that almost destroyed Prometheus.”

“What?! Why?!”

“Well, think about it, Lois. Who had the most to gain if Prometheus failed? Who had plans for a new space station ready to move in if ‘something happened’? He would have been praised as the savior of the space program and would have made millions upon millions, if not billions, from the patents developed,” he said.

“But that doesn’t automatically mean he’s responsible,” she argued, even as she admitted to herself that, of the possible suspects, Lex was certainly at the top of the list, considering everything.

He had the means and the motive.

Why had they not continued investigating the near-destruction of Prometheus? The one responsible for planting the bomb had never really been found, after all. And, now that she thought about it, shouldn’t the FBI or some other government agency still be investigating? But she hadn’t heard of any progress or even the existence of such an investigation. It was almost as if it had never happened as far as they were concerned. What if.... Her eyes widened. Superman might be right.

“He all but admitted to it when I confronted him, but he knew I couldn’t prove any of it, so he just smugly smiled as he lifted his glass at me and said, ‘As they say,

let the games begin’,” Superman said, eerily imitating Lex’s voice perfectly as he raised his hand in a mock toast.

“He what?!” Lois cried. She was now certain Superman was correct. That demonstration was too realistic to be a ruse, and besides, Superman had no reason to lie.

“But his tests on me were the worst,” he continued, and Lois wondered how long he had been waiting to get all of this off his chest.

“Tests?” she asked.

What was up with her asking one word questions lately?

“Superman?” she asked uncertainly.

He suddenly looked livid. She had truly never seen him so angry.

“You almost lost an eye because of one of those tests!” he snarled. “All because Luthor wanted to see if I could survive a blast.”

His hands clenched into tight fists.

“And then he all but threatened that more people would be put in danger if I stuck around!” He closed his eyes, fuming for a long moment before relaxing.

He looked up at her and she was afraid to move. Anger was gone from him, but what surfaced in its place terrified her even more. Unconditional love.

“I might have left and let him win if it hadn’t been for you. You said that whatever I can do, that’s enough. You saved Superman.”

Lois gasped. “I did? Clark told you what I had said?”

Superman was about to answer but she continued, babble mode on.

“Of course he did. I really should want to throttle him for telling you everything, but I suppose in this instance it was really good he did. Hmm, does he know about Lex?” Her eyes widened and she jumped up to her feet and began pacing the kitchen. “That’s why he doesn’t like him! I had thought it was jealousy or something, but because there’s no proof... though if he had told me you had told him you suspected Lex, I would have listened! He can be such a lunkhead!” she all but shouted. Superman blinked at her and leaned back a bit, looking worried.

“Superman, as soon as you’re better, we’re going to get to the bottom of whatever Lex is up to, and actually, I’m in a pretty good position to discover things. I could do some digging right under his nose!” She rubbed her hands together.

“What?” she asked, suddenly noticing Superman was staring at her.

“I love it when you babble,” he said, standing up.

Oh no. He had that dazed, dreamy look again. She backed up and bumped into the counter behind her as he approached her.

Before she knew it, his hands were on her and he was kissing her shoulder and moving his way up her neck and to her cheek!

“S-Superman!” she gasped, pushing him away.

She was almost disappointed when he stepped back.

“What’s wrong?” he asked, confused and looking concerned as well as hurt. “Did I scare you again?”

“N-not quite, but remember, you’ve been drugged. You’re not yourself.... Why don’t we go watch a movie?” she proposed, desperate to put some distance between them.

Was this how Clark had felt? How had he resisted for two *days*? It had barely been two hours since Superman had tapped on her window, and it was already taking every fiber of her being to remain steadfast.

Steadfast. That’s a good word.

She needed to remind herself why she was remaining steadfast. She was doing it for Superman. For his sake. Just like Clark had remained steadfast for her. Well, at least for as long as he could.

She hurried to her living room, ignoring the fact she was all but running from Superman as she tried to decide what movie would be safe to watch.

Nothing even remotely romantic, that’s for sure, which unfortunately meant her options were pretty limited.

Her eyes skimmed her sparse choices.

Lethal Weapon, Die Hard, E.T., and the first Star Wars.

Okay, Star Wars was definitely out, due to the little kiss Leia and Luke share and the incessant flirting from Solo.

Die Hard, too, unfortunately, since the kiss in that was at the very end of the movie. She felt that was just asking Superman to do something when the credits began to roll.

She grabbed Lethal Weapon and E.T., but then hesitated.

Was E.T. a good idea considering... ?

She glanced back at Superman who had stopped by the couch and was watching her.

“What’s wrong?” he asked, now approaching.

His cape swooshed behind him, brushing against her couch as he passed.

Goodness, how strange was her life? Here she was, trying to pick a movie that would not encourage a drugged superhero to kiss her senseless.

“I’m not sure which movie to pick,” she said, biting her bottom lip in unease as he looked down at the two movies in her hands.

“Well, I saw Lethal Weapon recently, but I’ve never really seen E.T. When it first came out, the premise kind of put me off, and my parents didn’t want me to watch it. But I think I could enjoy it now,” he said, unconcerned.

“Oh. As long as you’re sure,” she said uncertainly.

He smiled confidently. “As long as I’m with you, I’m fine with whatever we watch.”

“Okay, but just to warn you, there are some ... sensitive scenes. I think it might have been best you held off on seeing it. However, it does have a happy ending,” Lois said, calming slightly.

She could do this.

“Okay,” he said, still smiling at her.

Maybe.

She put the movie in and pushed play before going to the couch. She hoped that wasn’t a mistake as Superman sat down beside her.

It didn’t take long before he put his arm across the back of the couch behind her, but she didn’t comment, deciding to choose her battles.

Fortunately, there weren’t any battles she had to take on as the movie progressed. Lois glanced at Superman, admittedly paying him more attention than the movie itself. Time went by.

Superman was captivated by the little alien accidentally abandoned by his kind, and he leaned in when the little guy was taken in by the boy, Elliott — thanks to a trail of Reese’s Pieces.

Lois felt Superman’s arm wrap around her shoulders, but she didn’t have the heart to dissuade him, especially when things didn’t escalate as she had expected. Though the reason why became clear when the menacing federal agents showed up again.

Her mind suddenly wandered to Bureau 39 and Jason Trask. Had Superman been chased before? His reaction suggested that was likely. His eyebrows were lowered, and his body was motionless in remembered stress.

And then when E.T. began displaying his special powers, Superman became even more enraptured, but when the movie took a dark turn with Elliot and E.T. getting sick, he looked positively ill. He only got worse when the doctors began working on E.T.

Lois instinctively took hold of his hand and began to seriously question the wisdom of watching E.T., but fortunately, the happy ending came soon enough, and E.T. was on his way home.

“Good movie, huh?” Lois said, instantly reminded why she had chosen E.T. when Superman turned and smiled at her.

“Yeah. Though I’m glad I didn’t watch it before now,” he said, pulling her close.

Her cheeks pinked instantly, and she did her best to disengage herself from him. She wasn’t particularly successful.

“Uh, Superman,” she said, leaning away from him.

“Kal-El,” Superman corrected, his posture quickly melting into what might as well scream ‘danger-danger’ to Lois.

“Kal-El, remember, you need to try to keep control of yourself. The drug, remember?” she tried, praying her words would get through to him.

They seemed to, thankfully.

Regretfully.

“Do you remember?” he asked softly.

“Remember?” she asked, a little confused but latching onto the reprieve.

“When you were affected, like I am. Do you remember it?” he asked.

“A little. I actually try not to remember,” she admitted.

“I hope I remember. I never want to forget how good this feels,” he said, closing his eyes as he gently squeezed her hand.

Lois doubted she had ever blushed as much as she was right then.

“Well, I’m glad, but it is getting late and I think we should turn in and call it a night. I can get you a pillow and blanket, so you can sleep on the couch, if you like?” she rambled, standing up quickly.

“If that’s what you would like to do,” he said.

“Yes! Yes. I’ll be back with your bedding,” she said, hurrying off.

She returned a minute later and stopped at the edge of the living room.

Superman was sound asleep, still sitting up on the couch.

Carefully, she placed the pillow on the arm of the couch and draped the blanket on his form before gently nudging him to lay down.

He didn’t resist.

She tip-toed away, thanking anyone listening for the easy end to the night.

Waking up was exceedingly uncomfortable. His head felt like he had been whacked by a sledgehammer made of kryptonite.

Squinting, he stared up at a ceiling that was definitely not his own, and the blanket on him was certainly not the comforter his mother had given him when he had first moved to Metropolis.

Where was he?

He slowly sat up with a groan before he suddenly froze at the sight of his sleeve.

He was in his uniform.

And he was in Lois’ apartment.

What had happened last night?

He held his head with his hands, trying to remember despite the pounding headache.

He could remember feeling strange when he had returned to the Planet after handling Miranda. And then all but fleeing Lois for fear of doing something to offend her, but then things got really murky.

Lord, he had come to Lois as Superman.

He had undoubtedly been affected by the pheromone.

Had anything ... happened?

He really couldn’t remember, but he was out on the couch by himself. That had to mean things hadn’t escalated out of control, right?

He desperately hoped so.

A gasp disrupted his troubled thoughts and he looked up to find Lois staring nervously at him.

“Superman?” she asked. “How do you feel?”

He squinted at her through his headache. “I think I have a better idea what a hangover feels like.”

She sagged in relief and slowly approached him.

“Uh, what happened?” he asked.

“You don’t ... remember?” she asked hesitantly.

“Not really. I remember feeling strange after ... Miranda’s arrest, but things quickly get ... cloudy.”

“Well, I’m not sure where you were for the hour before you came to see me, but after you arrived here, we spoke some and then watched a movie,” she said, doing her best to play it cool as she sat down beside him.

“And I ... wasn’t too much trouble? I didn’t do anything too... ?” he asked, watching her closely.

“Nothing I couldn’t handle. Really, Superman, considering everything, you were a gentleman compared to some unruly men I’ve encountered at clubs,” she said, trying to put him at ease.

He relaxed a smidge, but was still concerned.

“So I didn’t try to ...” he began, trailing off as he grew frazzled. “I mean, I was affected by the pheromone, and ... I’m sorry if I did anything to make you feel uncomfortable. I ... I would never consciously do anything to —”

Lois took mercy on him and placed her hand on his arm.

“It’s okay, Superman, nothing like that happened. And even if something did, I wouldn’t have blamed you. You were drugged, and drugged because you had saved the city from becoming permanently ... unstable.”

Superman heaved a sigh of relief. “Thank you, Lois. And thanks for preventing me from doing anything ... unbecoming.”

“Glad I could help. After all the times you’ve saved me, it was nice to help you for a change,” she said, pleased. “Which reminds me, I think I could help you with something else. You told me your suspicions about Luthor, and I think Clark and I could get started on finding some proof of his crimes; what do you think?”

Superman startled. “I told you?”

“Well, yeah. You were pretty adamant. I really wish you had told me sooner, but I know now, and I suppose you had your reasons for keeping it to yourself. If Luthor did even half of what you said, he’s pretty dangerous.”

“Is that what we talked about?” he asked.

“Well ... “ She looked at him worriedly. “That and a few other things. Things you probably wouldn’t have divulged under normal circumstances.”

“Like what?” he asked slowly.

Lois gave a brief sum up, feeling a quick, blunt overview would be best and less embarrassing. But embarrassment was the furthest from Clark’s mind.

“You don’t need to worry about me ever sharing anything you told me,” Lois assured, immediately assuming Superman was concerned about her knowing he had been raised on Earth.

Superman calmed his racing heart. “I know, Lois. Trust has never really been an issue, at least not for a while.”

He looked down at his hands.

“It hasn’t?” she asked, surprised. “I mean, you sort of explained a bit of your concerns, about safety and your fear of me becoming angry if I learn your secret — which I don’t know by the way — but...”

She trailed off, not sure what else to say as she watched him continue to stare at his hands.

“Superman?” she asked after a long moment.

“Would you like to know?” he asked.

“What?” she asked, not sure she heard correctly.

“My secret. Do you want to know it?” he asked.

“You do know who you’re asking, right? Of course I want to know! But I only want you to tell me if you want to tell me,” she said, leaning toward him and trying not to bounce with excitement.

“I’ve wanted you to know for months now, but things are complicated,” he said. “Very complicated.”

“Complicated?”

He nodded before slowly standing up and walking away from her. He looked out the window and took a deep breath before turning back to her.

“Even now, I don’t know how to tell you,” he said, exasperated with himself. “This moment is as good a time as any to tell you, and yet I’m drawing a blank.”

“Can’t you just ... I don’t know, say it?” she asked, bewildered.

Superman tilted his head and smiled before suddenly laughing.

“What’s so funny?” she asked, surprised. She had never seen him full-on laugh before!

“I’ve been trying to figure out how to tell you, ‘I’m Superman’, and now that I’m in front of you as Superman, I need to actually say my real name,” he said, slowly getting back under control.

“Oh. That is pretty funny,” she said, chuckling herself now.

“Oh, I know! One moment,” he said, before vanishing out the window.

Lois jumped up and hurried to the window. She wasn’t sure what she was hoping to see, maybe his prompt return, but she found he was truly gone.

Frowning in confusion, she startled when she heard a knock on her door.

Thoroughly bewildered, she went to her door and looked through the peephole.

“Clark?” she asked as she began unlocking all her deadbolts and chain locks. She opened the door.

“Hi, Lois!” he said, very chipper considering it was barely eight o’clock Saturday morning.

“Uh, hi, Clark. What are you doing here?” she asked, opening the door.

“Could I come in? I have something I need to tell you,” he said.

“I ... suppose?” she said, stepping aside and trying to figure out what was going on.

She closed the door behind him as he teetered on his heels, looking at her uncertainly.

“Okay, you had something to tell me?” she asked, somewhat impatiently.

“You’re probably wondering why I’m here right after Superman just left, right?” he asked.

“Clark, I am really confused; what are you doing here? And how did you know Superman ... was ... here....” Her eyes narrowed at him before she took a step back. Her mouth fell open.

“Hi, Lois. Um, I’m Superman.... Uh, surprise?” he said.

For a long moment he thought he might have broken her, but then she spoke.

“How is saying ‘I’m Clark’ any harder than saying ‘I’m Superman’?”

THE END