

Apologies Are Made For Chocolate

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Rating: K

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Author's Notes: Written for the 12 Days of Clois. Follows **Confessions of a Football Jersey** but it's not planned to be a series (so far).

"Mister Clark, why is Mommy so mad at you?" Jason asked innocently. Clark looked over at the little boy standing by his desk. He had hoped the boy hadn't noticed the abrupt decline of Clark's relationship with his mother. But it had been a forlorn hope at the onset. The boy had two award-winning journalists as parents and spent much too much time in the *Daily Planet* newsroom after school. He was frighteningly observant.

"She found out that I wasn't completely honest about something and she didn't like it," Clark admitted. He tried to keep the explanation simple and truthful - he just left out that the subject he hadn't been honest about involved Superman.

"I don't remember sleeping with Superman. I do remember sleeping with you," she had said in his apartment. Had it only been two days ago?

"You do?" He hadn't been able to keep from squeaking with surprise.

"Yes. I can't quite place where, or how, but I do remember that very clearly," she said. She smelled of the body wash he kept in his bathroom for her. "You loved me then. You were in love with me then."

"I still am. I love you, Lois. I think I always have."

She studied his face then reached up and pulled off his glasses. Normally he would have grabbed her hand to stop her. He didn't this time.

"Where did you go, Clark?" she asked.

"Krypton."

She was silent for a long moment as she rolled this new information over in her mind. She didn't seem surprised. She looked up at him, her expression suddenly turning angry and then... Slap!

She grabbed her car keys from where he'd left them on his coffee table and stalked out of his apartment.

Lois hadn't said more than three words to him since, even though they were working on a story together - a story Perry White wanted done *now*.

"I don't like it when Mommy's mad about things," Jason confessed. He looked over to the glass-wall that separated the newsroom from the editor-in-chief's office. Clark followed his gaze. Jason's mother was in the office, her arms thrown up in frustration. Perry was leaning against his desk, watching her.

Clark extended his hearing to listen in on the conversation. It wasn't exactly ethical but he

had a sneaking suspicion that the topic of conversation in Perry's office was Clark Kent's continued partnership with Lois Lane.

"I don't care if he's Jack the Ripper," Perry was saying. "I'm not about to break up the best writing team this paper has had since Norcross and Judd. And I'll tell you another thing, Lois. If I have to break you two up, it'll be by canning one of you."

Clark winced in spite of himself.

"But Perry," Lois protested, "I can't work with someone who isn't honest with me."

"Are you accusing him of plagiarizing you?" Perry asked.

"No, of course not."

"Lying about his sources?"

Lois shook her head.

"Inventing things out of whole cloth?" Perry suggested.

"No."

"Anything that's going to get me sued?"

"Of course not," Lois said, folding her arms over her chest.

"Then it sounds like a personal problem," Perry stated, glaring at her from beneath his brindled eyebrows. "Handle it." With that the editor pointed at the door to his office.

Lois huffed out, slamming the glass door behind her. Clark busied himself at his computer, trying to look nonchalant as she strode over to desk. She was pointedly not looking in his direction.

"When Mommy was mad at Daddy Richard, he bought her chocolate," Jason whispered conspiratorially.

"What kind?" Clark whispered back.

"Expensive," Jason whispered as his mother beckoned him to her desk.

Lois could not believe how pig-headed Perry was being. She made her request in a reasonable manner. She couldn't work with a partner who kept things from her, who abandoned her in the middle of an investigation of hare off at the drop of a fedora after some idea that had caught his fancy.

Of course she hadn't dared tell Perry the real reason Clark disappeared on her. She couldn't tell him that when Clark disappeared that meant Superman was needed somewhere. She also couldn't tell him the real reason she was so angry at the mind-mannered Midwesterner. It wasn't that Clark had lied to her all these many years - he had, but she could understand his reasons. She wouldn't have trusted her with his secret either, at least not at first.

The problem was that once she realized who her partner really was she also realized why she didn't remember making love to Superman. Why she didn't remember their time together: he had erased her memories of their time together and he had made the decision without consulting her. One of the most precious moments of her life was gone. She knew this on a visceral level and it infuriated her.

But there was still this little voice in the back of her mind. "He didn't do it out of malice... He did it because you couldn't handle it."

"He never gave the chance," she grumbled under her breath.

"Mommy," Jason's high voice intruded. "Mister Clark is sorry he made you mad."

"He told you that?"

Jason nodded solemnly.

She looked past her son to Clark's desk. He was gone.

"Do you know where Mister Clark has gone?" she asked quietly.

She watched as Jason glanced up at the nearest wall mounted monitor. Then he shook his head.

He knows. That rat bastard told my son but didn't have the guts to tell me?

"He'll be right back," Jason promised. "And Mommy, he didn't tell me. I figured it out for myself."

With that Jason walked over to Clark's desk and clambered onto the reporter's office chair as if he had every right in the world to be there.

Lois stared at her son. 'I figured it out for myself.' Five years old, yet all the pieces that had eluded her for so long - had eluded everyone for years - had come together for him.

She felt like banging her head against her desk.

"Uh, Lois? Are you okay?" Clark's timid tenor broke into her thoughts.

She looked up and he was standing there, tall and broad shouldered, shy and diffident. He had a bakery box in his hands as well as several small sacks and a to-go tray with three hot cups. She raised an eyebrow at him in question.

"Jason suggested chocolate," Clark managed to get out. "So I, uh, brought an assortment." He placed the box and sacks on her desk and handed her one of the cups. "Non-fat mocha, no foam, no sugar, no whipped," he said. He handed Jason a cup. "Carob and soy with extra marshmallows."

Clark took the final cup. He was watching her as she took her first sip. It was just the way she liked it. "Not decaf?" she asked.

Clark shook his head.

She sighed, savoring the flavor. "Richard always insisted I go decaf after lunch. He thought I got too hyper."

"I hadn't noticed it."

She gave him a sharp look then realized he was simply stating the truth as he saw it. He didn't see her 'hyperness' as the problem Richard had thought it was. She turned her attention to the bakery box. The address on the label said rue de Dunkerque, Paris. *Paris, as in France?*

She opened the box to discover pastries: Napoleons, éclairs, pain au chocolat. She took one of the éclairs and bit into it. "Now I know where you always got those great croissants," she murmured around the cream filling.

Clark chuckled. "Actually, there's a little boulangerie in Queensland Park, not too far from my place. Some of the best croissants in the world."

"Figures," Lois muttered. She peeked into the sacks - gold, silver, and velvet boxes with ornate script on them. "What kind are they?"

He shrugged. "I didn't think it mattered. I've never seen you turn down chocolate."

He knew her too well. "Don't think this gets you off the hook, mister," she warned.

"I *am* sorry," he murmured.

"For what?" she asked. "For not telling me about you know what, or leaving me like that?"

"All of it," Clark said simply.

"Including a memory whammy that wiped out about three days?" she asked, dropping her voice to a near whisper.

He nodded and it occurred to her that he was waiting to see exactly how angry she was about that.

"Can you fix it?" she asked.

"I'm not really sure how I did it in the first place," he admitted. "I suspect everything is still there, just suppressed."

"So that's how I knew you were the one, instead of the logical suspect," she asked, keeping her voice low. "Perry thinks I got schnoekered and took advantage of you and that's why you ran."

"Lois, I never..." he began.

"I know, I know," she interrupted. "You never even implied that to him. You never meant it to go as far as it did and once it was done it was too hard for you to deal with. I understand. I really do."

He was silent for a long moment. She could feel the heat coming off his body despite the insulation of his jacket. He smelled of pine and ocean air with just a touch of musky undertone and she wondered how she could have possibly missed it for so long. He smelled like Superman.

"It wasn't like that," he said softly. "It was wonderful. And I should never have done what I did but you were hurting so badly."

"So, what do we do now?" she asked, opening one of the fancy boxes. She took a piece and bit down. It was rum-filled but he'd been right, she really didn't care what kind it was. Then she held the box out to him.

He took a piece and popped it into his mouth. Lois suspected he was trying to buy himself some time as he tried to come up with an appropriate response.

He finally swallowed. She watched him scan the surrounding desks to see if anyone was paying any attention to them. No one was.

"Tomorrow's Valentine's you know," he said. She thought she detected a glimmer of a smile.

"And?" she prompted.

"Dinner at Angelino's?"

"Dinner as in a date where we don't talk about our assignments, and I dress up in anticipation of not staying that way, and you actually stick around for dessert?"

To Lois's immense surprise, Clark ducked his head and she was sure she saw a blush climbing up his cheeks.

Finally he nodded.

"Angelino's, huh?" she said with a grin. "Don't think this lets you off, Farmboy."

His shoulders slumped even more.

"But it's a start."

He seemed to relax a little.

"In the meantime, you owe me a pair of Jimmy Cho pumps," she said, popping another chocolate into her mouth. "And I owe Superman a 'dear John' letter."