

# Dear Lois

by htbthomas

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Rating: K+

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**Author's Note:** A birthday fic for **beatrice\_otter**. See more notes at the end of the story.

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The corner of the envelope stuck out innocuously, just the tip visible from inside her purse, but Lois' wrist had rubbed against it when reaching for her cell phone. Her brows creased as she placed the phone on the desk, forgotten, and pulled the envelope from the bag.

Lois turned the cream-colored envelope over in her hands a couple of times. The front read simply:

*Lois ~*

She frowned, recognizing the handwriting. Why would he need to slip a letter in her bag? He couldn't have given it to her himself? She looked toward his desk. He was gone - he hadn't come by to give her an excuse. Trying to avoid her while she read?

Whatever the reason, her reporter's curiosity wouldn't let her leave it unopened a second longer. Lois placed a jagged fingernail under the flap and tore it open with little fanfare. Unfolding the letter with a snap, she began to read:

*Dear Lois,*

*I know this probably seems cowardly, but I've been trying to figure out how to talk to you for weeks.*

No kidding this was cowardly. Who was supposed to be the fearless fly-boy between them? She pushed her sarcasm aside.

*The last few weeks have been a strain on all of us. The incident on the yacht with Luthor, the revelations about Jason, and other things... Well, my mind has been whirling. And I know yours has been too, though you're a lot better at hiding it than I am.*

He shouldn't be so sure about that... he'd proved he could keep a secret, too - the 'other things' he'd alluded to. How he could keep a smiling face, at the worst of times, she'd never know.

*But there's one thing we HAVE to stop hiding from each other - where our relationship is going. Whenever I see you looking at him, especially when he's with Jason-*

Lois looked up suddenly, over to where Jason sat coloring at his desk. Jason had been doing a lot of coloring the last few weeks. And many of the pictures featured all four of them. How it must pain his heart to see that! But he was too good a man to say anything. She

wondered idly whether he'd been talking to Jason...

*-I am more and more convinced that there is only one thing to do. You are torn between us, Lois, and so...*

*I need to step aside.*

The letter smacked down on the desk. Step aside? Was he crazy? After everything, this is the thing he felt was best for them? Best for Jason? Her fingers crumpled the edges of the letter a little in frustration as she lifted it again to read.

*I know you're going to argue with me about it. But consider Jason. How can I give him the life he deserves? He needs a father who will be there for him when it counts.*

*Just like he was there for you when it counted.*

Now that was just unfair! Damn the man and his sense of duty! Duty was not more important than love...

She had been spending a lot of time pondering all of this the last few weeks, true. While observing Richard, she would try to weigh her feelings for Clark, and vice versa. And watching either of the men with Jason complicated the issue.

But she had recently come to a decision. And she had meant to talk to both Clark and Richard, very soon. But this letter was forcing her hand.

*If it gets too awkward, I will quit my job here. I have a letter prepared for Perry already. I'm sure there are other papers, other cities, which could use a reporter with my skills.*

This was getting ridiculous! Who did he think she was? Simpering Susie in the secretarial pool? She skimmed over his signature and stood up suddenly, determined to talk with him wherever he was.

She glanced over at the empty desk... only to find it wasn't empty anymore. He was handing a couple of bills to Jason to take downstairs - presumably to get something from the snack cart. Jason bounded away, grinning.

Lois folded the letter sloppily as she stalked over to his desk. "Now, just a minute...!" she began, gesturing with the offending letter in her hand.

Then he turned to her, his blue eyes sad and resigned. Her anger dissipated immediately. He was so certain he had no hope, that he had lost his chance with her...

Lois placed a hand on his shoulder. "It's *you* I love, you doofus. You're not going anywhere. We'll work out all the stuff with Jason in time."

Then Richard smiled, a flood of relief washing over his face - and he pulled her down for a tender kiss.

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**Author's Note:** Gasp! A Lois/Richard story! This was an interesting request to fill, and my plot bunny demanded I leave the pairing off the header. Despite my Clois heart, I have a lot of love for Richard, and I don't think it unreasonable at all that Lois might choose him instead. ♥