

Not-So-Random Acts of Kindness

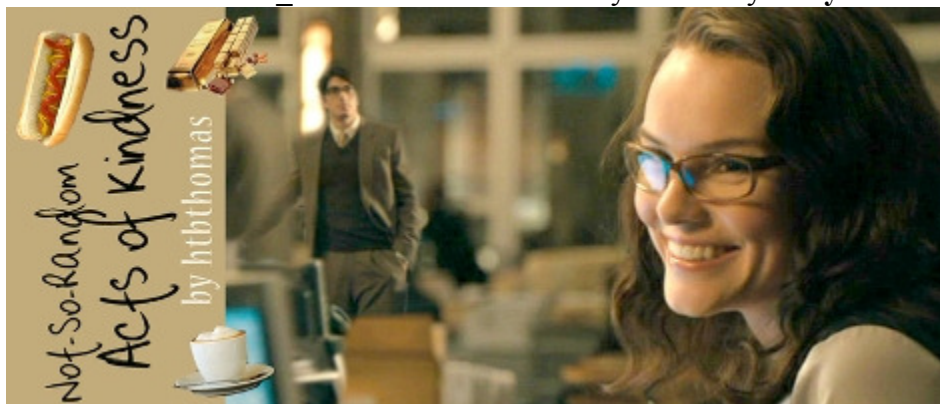
by htbthomas

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Rating: K+

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Lois tapped the steering wheel impatiently as she came to a quick stop just before the West River Bridge. Ahead of her, the sea of red brake lights seemed to go on forever. "Crap!" Of course, this always happened when she was late for work. "Why is there always traffic when I have a 9am interview?" she complained to the interior of her car, adding a few choice curse words. Her car had been the scene of all sorts of road rage, and it was only a few months old. "I won't even have time to grab a cup of coffee!"

Keeping one hand on the wheel just in case the traffic shifted, Lois dug in her handbag with the other to find her cell phone. If Clark were with her right now, she mused, this wouldn't be necessary at all. But calling for him just seemed frivolous, not to mention a little presumptuous. After all, they'd only been openly dating for a few months now, ever since she'd forgiven him for keeping his identity secret from her - the mother of his miracle child. And it wouldn't do for Superman to keep randomly showing up whenever Lois Lane needed help, would it? Not if they wanted his secret identity to remain a secret.

After a few moments, her hand closed around it - maybe she could catch one of the early birds at their desk to get a message to her contact that she would be delayed... She hoped the guy would wait on her, but he'd been *so* difficult to pin down in the first place...

The traffic inched forward a few yards, and she let up on the brake. The sudden motion of the car caused her to fumble the phone - it slipped out of her fingers and tumbled to the floorboards.

She swore again - could this day start out any worse? - and after a quick check to make sure the traffic wouldn't be moving anytime soon, she jerked up the handbrake, punched on the

hazard lights, and leaned over as far as she could into the passenger area.

Her fingers just brushed the casing when horns started to blare all around her. *What the-?* She snatched up the phone and looked out of the windows. As far as she could see, nothing had changed at all... so why all the racket? Shrugging, Lois flipped open the cell phone, tapped a few digits, and got the *Planet's* receptionist.

"Hey, Susan, this is Lois Lane, can you put me through to Perry?" Lois glanced at the clock as she waited, frowning at the time.

"*Perry White*, " her editor-in-chief answered in a brusque tone.

"Perry, this is Lois - I'm stuck in traffic at the West River Bridge. I have no idea how long I'll-" Suddenly she noticed that most of the brake lights ahead of her were going out - and pretty rapidly at that. "Oh, wait - I might get there sooner than I thought, traffic's starting to move again."

"*The West River Bridge? WGBS is reporting that there was a big pileup on the other side of the river, but that Superman cleared it out a few minutes ago. Didn't you see it?*"

Her mouth quirked to one side. "No, guess not. See you in a little while, Chief." She ended the call before he could squawk about her use of his nickname.

She looked up at the sky again, a small smile coming to her lips. She couldn't see him up there anymore, but it didn't matter. Someone was indeed looking out for her today.

Lois smiled as she stepped through the doors of SiliconStyle Inc. onto the sidewalk. She hadn't been late for the interview at all - she had actually been early. And mostly because a tall mocha cappuccino, still hot, had been waiting on her desk when she arrived at the *Planet*. She had looked around for the culprit to thank him, but one glance at the television monitors showed he was off again - this time to deal with a train collision.

Being early turned out to be a blessing. After some initial reticence, the company's founder had rhapsodized about his technology after every question. Lois could see the benefits of putting computer or cell phone technology into fashionable clothing, even if she had doubts about the initial costs. Still, the company was getting a lot of buzz, and no one had yet been able to get an interview with the founder... until now.

At that moment, her stomach rumbled, and she placed a hand on her waistline. As nice as the coffee had been, it wasn't enough to make it through the morning. She glanced at her watch: 10:45am. It was probably not too early to grab a bite for lunch, but she had *so* much work to do back at the *Planet* if she wanted to be ready for her date with Clark tonight. He was going to take her dancing - she had teased him that she doubted he could manage to avoid stepping on her feet unless he resorted to using his superpowers...

The wistful look on her face was quickly replaced with one of annoyance when her stomach rumbled again. "Looks like it's another vending-machine sandwich for you, Lane," she grumbled quietly.

The farther she walked down the sidewalk, the clearer it became that there was not a taxi in sight for blocks. Where were they? Taking a coffee break? The memory of Clark super-whistling for a taxi several months ago made her grin suddenly. It was amazing how just the thought of him dampened the day-to-day irritations in her life.

Of course, he wasn't here now, and no way in hell was she going to ask him to swoop in and rescue her from *walking*. No matter how much the damn heels were starting to hurt.

So, grimly moving forward toward the next subway entrance, feet beginning to swell and stomach growling all the way, she didn't even notice the hotdog vendor until he called out to

her. "Hey! Lady!"

She almost passed him by, the entrance only a few dozen more blessed yards away.

"Hey! You Lois Lane?"

That got her attention. "Yes, why?"

"Gotta call from Mr. Kent. He asked me t'make you a couple with the works." He held out a paper tray with a couple of paper-wrapped hotdogs. "Said he'd come by and pay for it later, but tell 'im it's on the house. He's one of my best customers."

Biting into one of the hotdogs while sitting on the subway, shoes kicked off, she didn't care how many people gave her a raised eyebrow. Somehow it seemed like the best thing she'd ever tasted.

The worst thing about the day was that she hardly saw Clark at all - they kept missing each other. When she returned to the *Planet* after her interview, she found a print out of the story they'd been working on, and a handwritten note: *Hope you enjoyed your lunch. On an errand, see you later. - Clark ♥*

That time it had been an avalanche in the Alps. And during her meeting with Perry over the tech story, she suddenly caught him sitting at his desk, typing away. They managed a brief wave, but by the time the meeting was over, Clark was away from his desk again. Not without evidence of his passing - a bar of chocolate sat beside her computer keyboard. When she picked it up to open it, she noticed the ingredients list was in German. Only later would she remember she had complained aloud that her stash was almost depleted.

Six o'clock finally rolled around, the day's work complete before the evening deadline. Jason was at his grandma's, there was nothing left to do but look forward to the evening... as long as they weren't interrupted again. It wouldn't be the first time. Lois leaned back in her chair, propping her aching feet on the edge of her desk. She wondered how long it would be before Clark returned.

As if by magic, the elevator doors chimed, and they opened to reveal Clark. He walked toward her, hands behind him, as if he were hiding something.

"What is it this time? You're going to make me fat, you realize that," she joked as he reached her.

He leaned down to give her a chaste kiss on the cheek. "Nothing like that. I just thought maybe you might like to be a little more comfortable." He pulled a pair of her favorite fuzzy slippers from behind his back.

She took them with a grateful smile, wriggling her toes into them. "Don't think this means you're going to get out of taking me dancing, Smallville. Just because my feet are hurting doesn't mean I won't be able to dance circles around you," she teased.

"Oh, I'm not trying to get out of anything... I wouldn't dare." He held out his hand to her to bring her to her feet.

Grabbing her things and threading her arm through his, they began to head toward the elevators together. She pressed the button to open the doors. "You know, this listening in on me all day? I would say it was kind of creepy... but somehow it's..." *A big turn-on*, she finished mentally.

"Um... endearing?" he asked hopefully as they stepped inside.

"Yeah, that's it." She wrapped her arms around his neck, and brought his head down for a kiss as the elevator doors shut.

Original prompt: "Something fluffy. I liked the slightly Super!stalker scenes in which he listened in on conversations, watched Lois go up in the elevator and so on. So maybe something along with that about Lois and Clark, they've started a relationship again after he's been gone for 5 years (No idea what to do with Richard! :P) and they've come to a point where their relationship has started to get more serious."

I didn't know what to do with Richard, either, for this one... just imagine that he and Lois had broken up a few months ago, right before Clark came clean with Lois. :)