

Clues

by JJ-the elusive

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Rating: M

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This had to be the worst investigative story ever. Apparently there had been tons of kryptonite years ago in Clark's hometown of Smallville, but all they could find was a grain of the stuff. And they'd had to dig in some sort of cave to find it! And she realized that there were actually caves in Kansas, and not just corn and wheat fields that went "on and on" as Clark had explained in a dorky manner. Thus, here she was on the third day of the four day trip with nothing to do but lie on her bed and watch the corn field sway in the summer sunshine. She didn't have to turn around to see who was approaching when she heard heavy footsteps in the hallway, stopping in front of the guest room.

"Clark, tell me there's actually something to do around here than watching the corn grow and watching paint dry. Mind you, I wouldn't mind stumbling upon more naked baby pics in photo albums, but come on. What the hell did you do when you lived here?"

"W-well," he cleared his throat, pushed his glasses up with an index finger and inwardly groaned when he realized once again that he had to keep the "dorky Clark" routine in check here in his childhood home, of all places. This was supposed to be the one place he could be himself, a sort of quiet sanctuary that wasn't as cold as his other one. Lately, the old farmhouse now felt as if it belonged to someone else, or as if it was just a standing relic of his happier days. He was the only one here, now; his mother had married Ben Hubbard last year, and the couple had moved to Montana. The farm, however, was given to Clark and he had been fixing it up since then. For what, he didn't know. Lois was dealing with the separation from Richard, Jason did and didn't know he was the son of Superman, and Clark was still "just Clark".

"Well, what?" she smiled softly and slid from lying on her belly to an upright position.

He knew this was boring to her, but he still had a romantic idea of the situation, if only in his head. Why couldn't she be enamored of the dorky guy? Why just the larger-than-life superhero?

"W-well, I could show you around th-the fields, show you where I used to-"

Lois huffed, "In this heat? Clark, it's 98 degrees out and this old house doesn't have central air, so cooling off is a little difficult. Are you nuts?"

Clark smiled, shaking his head. Lois Lane was always a stubborn woman, and he knew it'd be hard to persuade her to even leave this room. Didn't matter. So long as he was here with her, just the two of them. He could be content to sit next to her all day and say nothing than to watch her across the bullpen talking to everyone but him. Sitting on the bed next to her, he stared out the window to see the familiar sight of the old barn, and the fields of corn past it.

"When I was a kid, I'd run through the corn fields, wondering where exactly I'd end up

when I came out of it. Of course I knew, well I know the land around the farm, but it was always that idea of not knowing which part you'd end up at, that was exciting."

He looked over to see Lois regarding him with an odd look that melted into a smile.

"Aw, Smallville, that sounds exciting. But not right now. What else is there to do than to play Marco Polo in the middle of a cornfield?"

He sighed and lay down, his legs dangling over the side of the bed. Well not dangling, seeing as how his legs were pretty damn long.

"We can go into town again."

"Ice cream shops can only be so much fun. Plus I'm on a diet, thank you."

"Lois, ice cream isn't exactly-"

"Shut up, Smallville. Like you really ever needed to worry about your weight, anyway. You can eat two full pints of Shrimp Fried Rice and not gain a damn pound, whereas me, just a pint and I feel and look like shit."

"How eloquent, Lois."

With a loud exasperated sigh, she followed suit and lay down, staring at the white stucco ceiling.

"What was your dad like?"

"Huh?"

Where did that come from? Well, he did end up showing her many photo albums last night, careful to keep the ones of him without his glasses from her sight. Jonathan Kent was in 90 percent of the photos, from when Clark was a (newfound) baby to his high school graduation. Sometimes whenever Clark would stay here at the house, he'd wake up and half expect to see his father outside early in the morning, tending to the animals. Jonathan Kent had been gone for 16 years now...

"...and he was the best man you'd ever meet around here. I'm really glad he chose to be my father."

"Chose? Oh, you were adopted, right?"

Did he tell her that? Yes, many years ago, though he wasn't sure he had even paid attention to him at the time.

"Yes. When I was a year old or so."

He watched her look at him with mismatched eyes, full of something he might describe as sincerity. Her voice was low, and steady. He could hear her breathing, her heart in a strange tempo. He zoomed his vision in to see a bead of sweat rolling down her forehead and disappear into her hair. Her pink tank-top clung to her torso, wet sweat stains here and there. Was it really that hot? Maybe he shouldn't have been wearing his favorite flannel shirt, then...

"Do you remember them?"

"Who?"

"Your real parents, silly."

What was he going to tell her, that he knew his parents well? Well, holographic images of them, anyway. His real parents had died, thousands of Earth-years ago.

"Vaguely."

Lois must have sensed to stop there, and not so deftly changed the subject.

"God, it's really hot. Don't you have a fan or something?"

"Maybe. It's probably stored in the barn loft somewhere. Too hot to look for it right now," he answered as he sat up and pulled the flannel jacket from his body, revealing a tight white t-shirt.

He turned to Lois just in time to hear her heartbeat skyrocket and to see a faint blush cross her cheeks. Quickly she stood up and strolled to the window, most likely trying to hide her reaction. What was her reaction to? Was she angry that there was nothing to do? He shook his head and followed her line of vision to the old water tower in the distance past the barn.

"Any water in that tower?"

He got up and stood near her- anything to be close to her- and used his x-ray vision to see that there was none. In fact it was so rusted inside there probably hadn't been any in there for years.

"Nope."

Startled at how close he was, she jumped and turned around, seeing nothing but his broad chest. She tried to calm herself down. This heat, the dead-end story, this boring town! It was doing a number on her poor mind! Okay, maybe it was just the inner voice of hers saying that she was indeed falling for Clark Kent, and that this very point in time would be opportune to let him know. But what would it do? What if he rejected her? That his crush on her was nothing more than a memory? Then their relationship would be even more awkward than it was whenever they left the Daily Planet lobby through the revolving doors.

"Lois?" His voice had gone low as he looked down at her. "Are you okay?"

She could feel her invisible wall of defense going up and she waved a hand and walked out from in front of him.

"I'm fine. Come on, let's go the barn."

Didn't he just say it was too hot to go in there? He shook his head, watching Lois with curiosity as she hastily made her way out of the room.

"Told you it was too hot to come up here, Lo."

She threw him a glance that would have made any man tremble had they said the same thing. He could only chuckle as he continued to look through boxes upon boxes for a small desk fan he remembered putting up here years ago. Of course, having x-ray vision he knew exactly where it was, but to see Lois slowly melting was hilarious and so he went about his leisurely way. His hands suddenly stopped working as he saw Lois take the loose bottom end of her tank top and flutter it up and down as to cool her body. The movement allowed for brief glimpses of smooth beige flesh, curves that he had touched many years ago. Her eyes caught his and she looked away, clearing her throat.

"Well get a move on, Smallville. By the time you find it it'll be night and it'll be cool and your search would have been in vain."

"My search?" Clark smiled as he found a box of his old high school stuff. His dad had saved his football helmet, after all!

"If I recall, Lois, you were the one who wanted to find the fan. So find it."

"Please." She flopped down on the old blue couch, sending dust up into the hazy air. "It's your fan."

He needed to be near her again, so he decided he needed a break right now. The couch sent up even more dust as he sat next to her, remembering many nights here with his friends Pete and Lana.

"This seems like it was a cool place back in the day."

She was pulling her hair up off her neck again. He loved it when she did that, the smell of her lavender shampoo would waft towards his super senses, and combined with her vanilla

perfume, it drove him absolutely crazy. In a good way...usually.

"Yeah, pretty much all of my high school years were spent up here. In fact, that spot there on the couch is from when Lana Lang spilled all of her coffee."

Lois' eyes flashed in curiosity.

"Lana? Was she a...girlfriend?"

He smiled as he wistfully remembered all his years of pursuing Lana, but when he finally had her...that was another story.

"No, she was a good friend. Why?"

Clark was curious. Yes, why did Lois care? Though she hadn't put in a snaky comment about it yet, so that was always good.

"Nothing," she looked straight ahead again and looked over to see him regarding her with a strange expression.

"What, Smallville, do I have two heads or something?"

Clark sighed mentally. What else was there to do but talk about nothing? It was hot, they weren't due back home for another day, and the subject was on something that was nothing and non-existent.

"Lois, are you jealous?"

Non-existent: Lois' love for Clark. A fact Clark tried not to dwell on too much, though it was almost impossible not to even think about Lois.

"Clark, are you out of your little farm boy mind?" She laughed a little too harshly. "Let me guess: she was the girl next door, right?"

"Yup. We dated for a couple of years, but it didn't work out. O-obviously."

He watched her eyes widen just a bit. What was her problem?

"Lois." He sat closer to her. "What's wrong?"

He looked down at her as she looked up, their faces almost touching. She smiled a fake smile he usually saw her give to people in interviews. She was putting up her defensive wall, why? Lois was a walking enigma- something that attracted him so intensely to her at first. He never knew what she was going to do, yet he knew all of her habits. It made perfect sense, and none at all. He supposed that was what love was- you were confused most of the time, but grinning like an idiot nonetheless.

"Nothing. God, Clark..." She put a hand to his bare forearm. "You're not sweating a bit!"

He could see she was - beads of moisture making her skin sparkle, slowly slipping down in a lazy way. On her forehead, her neck, between her...

He heard her breath hitch as she realized he was staring at her, lowering her eyes with a slight smile, a rosy blush creeping onto her cheeks. Clark bit his lip and decided to take a chance, putting a hand under her chin and looking her square in the eyes. His thumb reached up and traced a line across her lush bottom lip, his mouth going dry as she licked her lips a second afterward. That seemed to break the spell, and as close as they were before, they had separated to the ends of the couch, both looking at everything but each other. Clark finally found his words, and choked them out as he stood up.

"It's hot in here, Lois. Let's go back to the house."

They didn't speak a word to each other on their way back, both thinking about what had, or rather almost transpired.

He followed her to his old bedroom, the old glow-in-the-dark stars still on the ceiling, the lonely red one in the center of it all.

"God," Lois laughed slightly forcibly, "it's even hotter in here than the guest room! Not as bad as the barn, though. Whew!"

He looked around, taking in his surroundings without really seeing them. He only saw Lois Lane sprawled across his bed from childhood, the bottom hem of her tank top up and exposing that delicate skin he'd seen earlier. Was the heat getting to him? Too much sunlight after the New Krypton incident making him lose his inhibitions? Usually he kept himself in check, but to be here with Lois, right here, right now, was a gift. He couldn't let that gift go to waste, now could he?

God, she didn't even know who he really was! He hadn't seen Lois as Superman in a while, and they'd agreed earlier that there couldn't be a real relationship between them, not anymore when it came to Jason's safety. He remembered when that conversation was, because right after that he began to work with her as a partner again. His love for her never waned, and he was delighted to see their friendship blossom again. But to pull a move now would not be...honorable, and just downright deplorable. Could he do that to her, especially after he'd taken her memories of their time together all those years ago?

"Clark?" Her voice was breathy. "Are you okay?"

He licked his lips almost unconsciously, wanting to taste the sweat rolling down her neck and across the curves. Lois slowly sat up and regarded him with an anxious expression, a wry smile appearing on her lips.

"You finally caught on, huh, farmboy?"

Blinking slowly, Clark looked up, "W-what?"

"It's funny, really." She stood in front of him, reaching up to place her small hands on his broad shoulders. "It's the other way around. Usually it's you who has the crush, and me who's oblivious. So guess who has the crush now?"

"Uhm..."

"you, you idiot."

"Me?"

"Bingo," Lois' voice was a whisper as she slowly stood on her tip toes and kissed Clark Kent.

He could feel his heart beating so fast he was sure it would have jumped out if it could. Did she really just say she had a, that she liked, that she lov---- the hell with it, all he knew was that Lois was choosing him. Choosing to kiss, to crush on, to maybe even love *Clark Kent*.

He moaned when her lips reached his and her hands slid down his chest and into his hands, entwining their fingers. With a tilt of his head and a slight flick of his tongue against her full bottom lip she bid him entrance, delving deeper into the kiss. She felt his seemingly piping hot hands slip out of hers and slide up under her tank top, along her curves in a slow caress. She could feel her body temperature rising, sweating and generally getting wet in all the right places. She pulled him backwards until she felt something against her legs- the bed. At first she questioned her attraction to Clark, but now it all seemed so...right.

These months that they had been working together were wonderful, and it felt just like before he had left. Of course she'd brushed him off when he'd first returned, still hurt from his sudden desire to take a trip without telling her. She'd needed him the most during those days, and granted he was under no obligation to stay for her, she thought he'd always be there. She didn't give it much thought when he was gone, hurt and still nursing her wound. He was the one person who knew her so well, so thoroughly because he was the one person, for some reason, she trusted the most. Trust never came easy to Lois, but around Clark, it grew easily.

That trust, she surmised, must have planted the seeds of something deeper she was blind to all those years ago. Now that he'd come back and started working with her, she had an open mind. She and Richard had ended it not soon after the partnership was reinstated, and so she had thrown herself into focusing on her work and of course, her son. From then on she'd worked closer with Clark and decided she liked the nerdiness, the shyness, the kindness - everything about him. It was everything she missed, and everything she loved, really...

Clark's mind was still spinning. He was lying on his side in bed with Lois Lane, kissing her deeply and skimming a hand up her belly and further. He could hear her heart beating as loudly as his, her breath sweet and fevered against his forehead as he kissed a trail down her neck. He broke away suddenly, wincing as he felt a shooting pain up his back. Lois' hand had been rubbing up and down his lower back, and had gone over the wound that Lex Luthor had given him many months ago. It of course had healed considerably, but it would take time to heal fully as the wound went deep.

"Clark? Are you okay?"

"Y-yeah" he didn't have to fake stuttering that time, and decided the best way to stop doing so would be to kiss her again. Pain be damned, he wouldn't let it get in the way.

To Lois' delight, he took the upper hand and shifted his body so that he lay above her, holding himself up on his forearms. This of course naturally made his lower body shift downwards and she responded by wrapping her legs around his waist and lower back, eliciting a low growl from her lips. This however made him jerk in what seemed like pain, the second time it seemed like something was wrong. Annoyed, she pulled her lips from his and lay back with a huff.

"I'm- I'm sorry, Lois. It's just that---," He tentatively put a hand to one of her legs, sliding it down onto the mattress.

'That what,?' Lois asked herself. Was there something wrong with him, a deep psychological problem? One that affected his ability to express his love? Was this why he didn't really have a girlfriend before?

"That what, Clark? You keep jumping the closer we get, and that was pretty close. So what would happen when we-?"

"Lois, it's... complicated."

She saw a strange expression twist his face as he looked away from her and lifted himself off, sitting on the edge of the bed with his back to her. What, was he not going to talk to her now? Fine, she could play this game, the look anywhere but in each others eyes game. What was his deal? He definitely felt the same way about her, so what was stopping him?

"Is this about something? Someone?"

No answer.

"Clark, would you just talk to me instead of ignoring me?"

Sighing, she reached to straighten his t-shirt which had ridden up. Quickly, Clark stood up and walked out of the room, leaving a hurt Lois in his wake.

Maybe the pain was another way of reminding him who he was, and what he couldn't have. He told her as Superman that they couldn't be together- and so what if she was with Clark? It would be the same thing- his enemies were a threat to him, and her. They could possibly find her by tracking him, and worse he wouldn't be there half the time for her. What

good was a relationship when he wasn't there? It was best that he was alone, that he not drag her into this, no matter how much he loved her. He could hear her calling his name, but tried to tune her out as best as he could, which wasn't very well at all.

They flew back home that night, barely speaking a word to one another save for the necessities. God, she hoped their friendship hadn't turned sour just because of one stupid afternoon. One hot, steamy, wonderful...Lois shook her head, stepping out of the shower. They hadn't even talked about their story, or lack of thereof.. Guess it wouldn't make tonight's edition, after all. Thus, she'd picked up her son from his Aunt's and gone straight home. Tomorrow would be very awkward to say the least.

"Mommy, I made you a picture!"

Smiling, she took his latest masterpiece and took a better look. Black sky, bright yellow stars with a single red one in the middle.

"I love it, baby - what's it of?"

Jason's eyes lit up as he lowered his voice to a whisper. "It's Krypton! It's where Superman's from! An' he tells me all these stories about his daddy and his daddy's daddy, and how people lived!"

Lois put it up on the fridge next to all of Jason's other artistic renderings, complete with stick figures, stars and much use of primary colors.

"Okay kiddo, off to bed."

She came into work later than usual, staying at her sister's house for breakfast when she'd brought her son there for the day, then getting a bagel from her favorite place around the corner. She knew he'd be there, bright and early - or not, if he was out covering an assignment.

"Lois, my office, now!"

She rolled her eyes. Not even here for five minutes and Perry was yelling. Upon entering his office, she'd found she wasn't alone. Great. Clark sat, rather uncomfortably in one of the couches in front of Perry's desk, squirming when she'd regarded him with a not--so--friendly stare.

"So Lois, Clark was telling me how there was no story. That you found nothing to support the rumors, so instead you wasted four days doing nothing! What the hell went on over there?"

"Well, uh..." She really didn't have anything to say. Everything went on, it was just something she couldn't really talk about with anyone but Clark.

"And," Perry went on, his eyes getting wider, "this was *your* baby! Your story! You were so sure that there were whole chunks of the green stuff! And I let you go, I assumed your leads were solid! Hell, you only had one contact! I shouldn't have-"

"Chief, if I may-"

"No, Lois. That's it, the two of you do stories I give you until further notice. The two of you - out! Your assignment was emailed to you. Now go!"

They quickly scrambled out of the office- Lois in a huff, and Clark with a slightly scared look as usual after leaving the office. She shook her head- he didn't even say anything to defend her! They were both there, weren't they? Or was he going to ignore that whole part of their trip, too? He was just as silent as he followed her out to the main hall where the elevators were located. With her thumb Lois jabbed the up button, then spun around quickly and grabbed him by the tie.

"You." She pushed him to a closet down the hall. "In here, now."

"L-Lois, what-" he sputtered as she locked the closet door behind them and then lunged at him with a kiss.

"Lois." He broke away from the kiss and backed up against the door. "People saw us, I-- I think when we came in here."

Lois grinned. "So?"

"W-well." He avoided her lips by turning his head to the side. "People are going to talk, and I don't think---"

"Think what, Clark?" She stood back. "That we might have a thing for one another? That we might be together? And what's so bad with that, tell me? What's so bad about it that you had to walk away without a word yesterday?"

He sighed and crossed his arms. Did he have to explain it to her? And ruin things more? Why did everything in his life have to be so complicated when it involved Lois? He watched as she stepped forward as she had yesterday, placed her hands on his shoulders and lifted herself up for a kiss. He could try resisting some more, but it would only work for so long until his rational side caved in.

"What's so bad," she half--whispered as she traced kisses up his jaw, down his neck, over his Adam's apple and down his throat, "with me loving you, and you loving me?"

"Lois." He had finally found his voice, and his head apparently. He tried pushing her hands away as they worked at unbuttoning his shirt, only for them to land on his waist, rather low on the waist. Luckily, she'd only opened a couple of buttons and he quickly re-did them for fear of her seeing what lay underneath.

"Clark?" She smiled slyly as she grabbed his hands with her own and loosely placed them on her hips. His breath caught in his throat when she stepped closer to him, allowing his hands to slip behind her and land on her-

"Lois! Wh-what are we - we shouldn't be doing this, we're at w-work and-"

She only replied with a smile and slid up against his body, kissing him once again. He tried suppressing the moan, but couldn't as his body reacted to the brief feeling of her pressed so intimately against him. She made a sound when he placed both hands firmly on her bottom and picked her up, finally pressing their bodies together fully.

Clark kissed her hungrily, pressing her against him as hard as he could without hurting her. With her legs wrapped around his lower back, it sent a shooting pain up his spine when they of course pressed against the kryptonite wound. He didn't care, he just wanted to keep kissing her. There went his logic, reasoning and most likely sanity. And just what did he expect to happen here? He drew back from her kiss when she began to laugh softly.

"What's so funny?" He drew a deep breath, lightheaded and deprived of oxygen after kissing her so thoroughly.

"I thought you didn't want this."

She wiggled a little to signal she wanted to be put back down and he did with reluctance.

"Want what, exactly, Lois?" He could play her little game, whatever it was. Whatever it was Lois was trying to accomplish, he didn't know but he might as well go with it.

"This," she answered quietly as she took his hands and slid them under her loose blouse, closing her eyes from the pleasure of feeling his hands closing down on her naked flesh.

His breath caught in his throat again as he realized she was wearing nothing under the dark blouse, feeling her skin react to his tentative touch. She spun around and put her hands on his, still under the clothing. Her hands left his and reached behind him, pushing him forward and against her. Craning his neck down, he kissed her neck softly as his thumbs and

forefingers played with her nipples, rolling them slightly.

"What's so..." Her voice was husky. "...Bad about this?"

Once again her hands reached up for his and placed them under the hem of her short skirt, which was already bunched around her hips. He heard her gasp softly as his hands met the warm, wet cloth between her thighs. Her breath was coming out in short, uneven huffs as he put his mouth hard against hers. He was extremely confused when she spun out of his arms and stood before him; eyes wide, face flushed, and her chest heaving as she tried to catch her breath.

He opened his mouth to speak, but she beat him to it.

"You jolted a bit when you had me picked up against you."

He couldn't give her an answer.

"And I have the door locked so you can't up and leave me this time."

She sighed and gave him an annoyed look.

"Are you that dumb, Clark? Really? Let me get to the gist of it all. Ready? Okay: I think that scar on your back hasn't healed, Earth's sun isn't red, and our son looked just liked you did as a baby. If you seriously are seriously having doubts about us being together, cape or not, then you're royally screwed, buster. What the hell is so bad about us being together? That I'll be in danger? That Jason will be? You were obviously enjoying everything, Clark. Can you really deny yourself that? Deny yourself what I feel for you? And don't--" She put up a hand. "--Don't apologize, dammit! You're always apologizing. I don't care about the bad things, past and present. You obviously came back for a reason, and it's because this is your home, Smallville. Your home is here, at the Planet, with me and Jason. Is that such a hard concept to understand? And don't give me that look!"

She sighed and took a deep breath, going on again, "Look, I'm not angry. I'm done being angry with you, I love you too much to be. I love all of you. The nerd, the farm boy, the guy who can lift ten cars without breaking a sweat. No matter who you are for me, I'll always end up falling for you. Face it, Smallville. You're stuck with me, whether you like it or not. And no, I'm not unlocking that damn door!"

He grinned-, Lois stared incredulously.

"How'd you figure it out?"

"Really? That's what you say? Fine. I figured it out because I'm a reporter, Clark. One!," She held up an index finger. "Jason's always drawing pictures of stars with a red one, looking much like what you've got on your ceiling at the farm. Two, good try at hiding certain pictures from me when you were showing me the photo albums. I snuck a peek at them when you were on the phone with your mom for a gazillion hours. Which is good, because now I can finally tell Lucy that he didn't get those ears from me. And three, I saw your back yesterday. Which isn't as clever as the other two, but balances out the other two because it's the simplest and--"

"Lois. " Clark's voice was soft as he cupped her face with one hand. "It won't be easy. And there's always the chance that--"

"So what? Life isn't easy! Clark..." She put her hand on his. "Don't leave me again. Don't you dare. If you do, at least come back to me afterwards. I know you won't be around all the time, but at least we'll be together when you are. We won't always be safe, but we won't be if we're not with you."

There was silence as they regarded each other - Lois' eyes watery and pleading, his intense and if possible, bluer.

"You always amaze me, Lois. I never know what you're going to do, I never know what

you do. You know," he laughed softly, "this is the second time you've outsmarted me. Last time all you had to do was use a gun full of blanks."

"Well..." Her voice was thick. "Women are from Venus, and are smarter than men from Mars, or Krypton for that matter. Well-established fact."

"Well then I guess you know that I love you, too." He reached down and placed a gentle kiss on her lips. "And that I won't be trying to unlock that door anytime soon."