

Pedestal

by JJ-the elusive

© 2-Feb-08

Rating: K+

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Lois is not the type of woman who likes to be placed high up on a pedestal. She hates it when people do the little things for her - help her with her coat, open a door for her, or help her into her desk chair. She will not let anyone do anything for her, she wouldn't even let Richard do those things for her when they were together.

"I can do it myself," she'll say in defense if someone calls her on her lack of appreciation, "I'm not a helpless damsel!"

So when Clark Kent comes back and does all these things for her, she lets it slide. She shrugs when she thinks about it. You can take the boy out of the Midwest, but you can't take the Midwestern out of him no matter how much you roll your eyes at him. But deep down, even though she won't admit it to anyone, she kind of likes it when he does it. She likes how he always looks out for her, and now her son, in every way possible. But if Jimmy opens the door for her, she'll punch him.

She knows how Clark puts her up on a pedestal in his mind. He always has, even from before he left she's noticed his not so subtle gazes of adoration. But now the gazes have turned into something else. They shift, but the constant is his affection. The looks he gives her are contemplative, intent, and even... wary. What should Clark Kent be wary about when it comes to her? Sure, he isn't really known for his backbone and is known to let people walk all over him, figuratively and physically speaking, but what advantage does she have over him that makes him wary? It's not like he's Superman, then he'd really be in trouble.

Lois doesn't like to think she's single-minded. She likes to think of herself as a critical thinker and an excellent observer. But she wonders why she hasn't made the connection before, and wonders at the same time why she feels like she has. It all starts when she finds herself thinking more often than not of Clark. Not just how he cares for her, but actually about him. About how warm his hand is whenever he places it on her lower back in a protective, endearing gesture that never fails to calm her down. About the way he seems timid but is actually a walking wealth of knowledge that never ceases to amaze her. She thinks about the feeling that when he looks at her, it's as if she's the only person on Earth. And that his eyes are almost as intensely blue as the eyes of a certain someone else she knows.

Months ago, even Richard had mentioned the similarities between Clark and Superman. Not soon after, Jason had asked her why Mr. Kent was never here when Superman was on a live news report. She thinks she has walked into a web that she's hopelessly entangled in - so intricately, so intimately, that she'll never break out. So what the hell is keeping him from saying anything, especially now since it's been almost a year since his return? After it's been

more than six months since she has become single again? After she's told him the most important secret of all- that her son is his.

But she likes how he puts her up on a pedestal. How he shoots not so subtle looks of adoration at her when they're working together. Does he not know that she feels the same way about him? That she would do anything to see to it that he's happy? That she admires him for his qualities, even if some of them aren't so great? She loves Clark to pieces, but often comes to terms with the fact that his blatant nerdiness might not be an act after all.

She wonders what he is really like. His office self is the way it used to be, and isn't. He is quieter, and more confident. His Superman self is the way it used to be, and isn't. He is distant, and more hesitant. Clark and Superman have reversed their personalities. Clark and Superman are the same person. She really needs a cigarette to calm her poor nerves.

In a fit of frustration, she wonders why she is waiting for him to make a move. Why hasn't she thought of doing something about her newfound gem of a secret? No more waiting. She's waited for five years already. So she surprises him one day at work by asking him out on a date. The way his eyebrows disappear into his hair makes her want to double over in laughter, not just because of the absurd image of it, but because this is the strongest man on the planet. This is the man that most people perceive as untouchable and unflappable, a man without everyday problems. Problems such as debating whether he should tell the woman he loves who he really is, for fear that she would reject him because of his betrayal of her trust. Problems such as feeling guilty he had left her and their child for five years, going on a fool's quest. At first she does not want to forgive him, and does not want to run into his arms. She hasn't needed him in five years, and can certainly take care of herself like she has before. But she remembers that he has flaws, just like everyone else. That he may not be human, but was certainly raised as one. Great mistakes as they are, she can't bring herself to deny that she's fallen in love with Clark Kent... whoever the hell he really is. In the end she's found that he's just a man, and remembers that it's all she really ever wanted in the first place.