

Place Your Bets

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Rating: K+

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Author's Note: Written for the 12days of Clois, Christmas challenge. Prompt #11 Shopping

Gemma Out may have been many things but she was not a shopper. She blamed her mother's many attempts during her childhood at dragging her into the clothing stores to buy clothes that were more 'ladylike' while all Gemma wanted to do was throw on her Metropolis Meteors shirt and watch football with her Dad.

So she was rather surprised to find herself enjoying wandering around the department store trying to find suitable Christmas presents for her friends and family.

She already had gifts for her parents and younger brother which just left her sister, best friend Polly and boyfriend Ryan. Her sister would probably want a gift certificate for a book store and Polly always needed more clothes, which meant another gift certificate. So that just left Ryan for today.

Gemma bit her lip as she looked around the store. Ryan had started at the *Planet* around two years before her but they had always been friends despite working in completely different departments but now that they were dating she didn't just want to get him a box of chocolates like every other year. She wanted something special.

She wandered towards the computer section of the store. Ryan liked computers, maybe she'd find something there. She was about to see if she could find an assistant to help her when a familiar voice floated over from the next aisle.

"How about this one?" Lois Lane's usually sharp voice asked with uncharacteristic softness.

Gemma was about to walk around and say hello when the last possible person she would have expected replied, "I don't know, Lois, it looks a little fragile."

It can't be... Gemma thought, feeling just a bit like a stalker as she shifted a few objects on the shelf to make a window she could see through. But sure enough standing right next to Lois, looking at a range of electronic keyboards, was Clark Kent.

Clark Kent and Lois Lane out shopping together. About two months ago something like this would not have been out of the realm of possibility. But then two months ago, shortly after Richard White resigned, something had happened to split up the famous partnership.

She remembered Polly telling her breathlessly how Lois had been up on the roof to get an interview with Superman then as soon as she had come down she had stormed into Perry's office and asked that she no longer be partnered with Clark. Gemma hadn't had time to ask more about the incident before Polly had rushed off to spread the gossip but, she remembered,

that had been the day of her first unofficial date with Ryan and she hadn't really been interested in what was happening on the City beat.

Over the next few weeks though, it had become impossible to ignore. Lois would flare up at the merest mention of her partner, or ex-partner by that point, and went out of her way to avoid talking to him or interacting with him in any way.

Yet here they were, out shopping together as though they were friends again. "Are you sure?" Lois asked Clark. "He's getting much better."

"I know," Clark agreed, "But Jason still doesn't trust himself and that's the important thing."

Gemma felt her eyebrows shoot up. Clark was helping Lois buy a Christmas present for her son? As far as she knew that wasn't really something a journalistic work partner did. A romantic partner maybe...

She risked another peek through the shelf. Lois sighed and turned around to face Clark who smiled at her in a way that partners generally didn't smile at each other unless they were something more. Suddenly Gemma was acutely aware that neither of the two people sharing a private moment in the next aisle knew she was there. She turned around and walked quickly out of the store lest her two colleagues realise she had been spying on them.

Ryan's present would have to wait.

"Lois and Clark?" her boyfriend asked later that night as he tried to untangle the Christmas lights. "Out shopping. Together?"

Gemma nodded. "They were shopping for Jason as well," she told him, pouring two glasses of wine. "You can't say it's normal for two people who only work together to go out Christmas shopping for her son."

"It's not," he agreed, still struggling with the lights. "But when have those two ever been exactly normal? I mean one second they're best friends, the next she hates him and now you say the next they're out shopping for her son."

"Or their son," Gemma muttered as Ryan finally got the Christmas lights untangled.

"*Their* son?" Ryan raised his eyebrows. "I thought Jason was Richard's."

"He might be," she agreed, "But there are surprisingly good odds on Clark being Jason's biological Daddy."

"Odds?" Ryan shook his head. "You sports writers bet on everything don't you?"

"Well sports can get a bit predictable, sometimes we need something just a bit more interesting." Gemma grinned, "Right now most bets are on who will do what with whom after how much eggnog at the Christmas party."

Ryan laughed as he hung up the lights. "You got anything on it?" he asked.

Gemma shrugged. "I might," she said, not giving anything away. "But I can't wait to tell Polly about this, she'll love it."

"Maybe you shouldn't tell just yet," Ryan said slowly, a mischievous glint in his eye as he came over and took his glass of wine. "I have an idea."

"Really?" She leaned forward. "Like what?"

"This betting thing you sports types have going?" Ryan asked. "Maybe we could get a bit of a Christmas bonus out of it."

Gemma grinned, seeing where he was headed. "Why, Mr. Sandler I like the way you think."

The *Daily Planet* Christmas party was well underway when Clark stepped out of the elevator adjusting his tie. He quickly spotted Lois in the kitchen and made his way over, letting the sounds of the party wash over him as he did.

By the time he got to the kitchen a slight frown was creasing his forehead. Thankfully Lois was the only one in the kitchen when he arrived. "What's wrong?" she asked upon seeing his face.

Clark glanced out the window looking from the kitchen to the bullpen and noticed several people glance quickly in the other direction as they saw him. "You know the bets the sports writers always place on the Christmas party?" he asked. Lois nodded and Clark continued, "Well apparently this year..." He shot another glance through the window and again several people pretended they hadn't been looking. "This year, everyone's talking about us."

"Really?" Lois asked with a grin which hadn't been the reaction he had expected.

"Really." He nodded, Lois was silent for a moment before turning back to him.

"You know what I'm thinking, Clark?" She grinned wickedly at him.

"What?" Clark asked, wondering if he should be worried. He could tell Lois had had a bit to drink and hoped she wasn't thinking of something stupid.

Lois grabbed his tie and pulled his face down to hers, "I'm thinking we should give them something to really talk about," she told him before effectively preventing him from replying by kissing him soundly. Not that Clark was complaining.

In the bullpen, Gemma Out collected her winnings.