

Left Behind

by repmetsyrrah

© 24-Apr-09

Rating: K+

Disclaimer: All publicly recognizable characters, settings, etc. are the property of their respective owners. The original characters and plot are the property of the author. The author is in no way associated with the owners, creators, or producers of any media franchise. No copyright infringement is intended.

A/N: This was written for the *Planet's* April Fic Grab Challenge, prompt- "Radiant". This is so not what I thought the muse was going to do with the prompt, but who am I to argue?

Lois Lane lay on her couch flipping aimlessly through channels as she steadily ate her way through a large tub of chocolate fudge ice cream and felt sorry for herself.

She'd finally gotten up the courage that morning to tell the General that he was about to be a grandfather and his reaction had been exactly what she'd expected. After listening to him yell for an hour and a half she had called in to work saying she'd work from home today and driven down to the local convenience store to buy every chocolate related product she could find to munch on while she completed her articles.

It probably would have gone slightly smoother if she hadn't waited so long to tell him. She was just starting to show and the rumour mill at the *Planet* had gone into overdrive. Everyone seemed to have some sort of opinion on who the father was, everyone except Lois, that was. It was still so hazy to her - almost like a dream. In fact, if she didn't have proof slowly growing inside her and making all her clothes unwearable, then she would have just brushed it off as a dream. But of course the man in the dream couldn't possibly be the father, which just sent her back to square one, having no clue and being scared out of her mind.

And, as if the universe was trying to make her life completely unbearable, the one person she would have felt comfortable discussing this with had upped and left shortly before Superman had. Clark Kent's absence had gone almost unnoticed by most of the *Planet's* staff, except for of course poor Jimmy, who seemed to be taking his friend's sudden departure as hard as Lois was. She liked to think that people were just too busy speculating on where Superman had gone to that they hadn't had much time for Clark's departure but deep down she knew they probably just didn't care. Maybe they were glad that their coffee mugs lasted longer and their reports didn't get knocked off their desks anymore but the least they could have done is *acknowledged* his absence.

She put her spoon back into the tub and was about to take another bite when the someone knocked on the door. "I'm an atheist," she yelled through the door, hoping they would just go away. Some rather fanatical Jehovah's Witnesses had moved in downstairs and seemed to be making it their mission to convert the entire building. Lois in particular had already met them three times and she had no doubt if they kept it up they'd be evicted.

"It's Jimmy," a voice called back. "I have food."

Lois couldn't help the small smile that appeared on her face at the sound of her friend's voice. She really could use some cheering up and who was cheerier than James Olsen? "Come

in," she called. "I know you have a key."

The lock turned and the door opened revealing a damp and rather bedraggled looking young man. "It's raining outside," he explained, turning to lock the door behind him. "And how did you know I had a key?" he asked, setting down two boxes of Chinese food on the coffee table.

"Because Perry always gives one to whoever he sends to check up on me," Lois said, rolling her eyes, "just in case I don't let them in."

"Well, you're only right about one thing, Miss Lane," Jimmy said with a smile. "The Chief did give me the key but it was because *I* wanted to come see you, not because he sent me. You sounded a bit distressed on the phone."

"Oh." Lois shrugged, putting the ice cream aside and reaching for the food. "That was nothing. I just wasn't feeling up to the journey in today - morning sickness and all." She waved her hand towards the bathroom, hoping he'd drop it. "You really didn't need to come all this way."

"If you say so, Miss Lane," Jimmy replied with a sigh, proving once again that he wasn't quite as oblivious as most thought. He was a photographer after all - he was paid to notice things.

"Jimmy, how many times do I have to tell you, call me Lois." She frowned at him as she dug into the rice, she may have just eaten half a tub of ice cream but she was eating for two now and the baby seemed to have the appetite of a teenager already - she hated to think how she'd be eating when it got bigger.

"Of course, Miss Lane," he replied with a grin.

They sat in a slightly awkward silence for a moment before Lois sighed. "Alright, Jimmy," she started, sitting up, "what's going on?"

Jimmy bit his lip and the look on his face was such that Lois feared he might suddenly burst into tears. Lois really hoped he didn't, she was terrible at comforting people. Thankfully he seemed to get a hold of himself before he put down his chopsticks. "I miss him," he stated bluntly, "and I know you do too."

Lois didn't even pretend not to know which 'he' Jimmy was referring to, sure Superman was getting more attention for his absence but this was Jimmy who was talking. "Clark's only been gone for about three months," she said lightly. The actual time was of course three months, two weeks and one day, but who was counting? "I'm kind of surprised people have noticed at all," she joked. Jimmy didn't smile and Lois felt a little guilty. "I was just joking, Jimmy," she assured him, "but you have to admit, Clark did seem to go out of his way to avoid being noticed."

"Yeah," Jimmy agreed quietly, "but I thought at least *someone* would notice, you know? I mean, he was a brilliant journalist but not even the Chief seemed to mind much when he said he was leaving."

Lois sighed, finding it increasingly harder to maintain a cheery attitude for her friend. Usually it was the other way around - Lois and Clark would be feeling down about their lack of progress on a case and Jimmy, the eternal optimist would bounce in and cheer them up until they found that vital clue that lead them to the missing piece of the puzzle. "He can't be gone for that long, Jim," she told him, leaning over to pat his arm. "When did he say he'd be getting back?"

"He didn't."

Lois looked up in shock. "What?"

"He never said when he was getting back," Jimmy explained. "In fact, he originally tried to hand in his resignation but the Chief wouldn't let him, made him take some sort of open-end extended leave so that he could come back whenever he wanted."

"So he may not be coming back?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper. Jimmy shook his head and Lois felt her chest tighten. This whole time she'd been operating under the illusion that Clark could return from his world trip at any moment and she would yell at him for just leaving like that, he'd be apologetic and maybe a bit surprised to find her knocked up, but then they'd go back to their normal partnership and things would all be fine.

"Lois?" Jimmy asked softly, putting his arm around her back as her eyes started to water. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Lois tried to say but suddenly in those two words she realised just how *not* fine everything in her life was. Her best friend and partner was gone, she was about to become a single mother, the world's hero hadn't been seen for months and the only one who seemed to know how hard this was on her was, of all people, Jimmy Olsen.

She was quite sure how it happened but the next thing she knew she was bawling her eyes out onto Jimmy's shirt as he held her and rubbed her back while muttering soothing words in her ear. "It's going to be alright, Lois," she heard him say. "It'll all be fine."

It seemed like forever before she finally got control of herself. "I'm so sorry, Jimmy." She sniffed, wiping away her tears. "It's the hormones you know." She waved a hand at her slightly swollen stomach, blaming the baby for the wet patch on Jimmy's shirt.

"Of course, Miss Lane," Jimmy replied softly as he handed her a tissue.

"I just," she started, shaking her head, "I just guess I never considered the possibility that he wouldn't come back. He's Clark, you know?" Jimmy nodded and Lois went on. "He's just been the one thing you could count on - well, not all the time," she admitted and Jimmy smiled, Clark was notorious for his disappearing acts. "But when it really mattered," she continued.

"He was there," Jimmy finished, "I know. I miss him too."

"Thank you for coming to check up on me," Lois said, laughing. "I bet you didn't come here expecting to have a fat old woman crying all over you."

"You're not fat, Lois!" Jimmy protested, "you're pregnant."

"Same thing." Lois shrugged.

"Is not," Jimmy protested. "Fat women you can tell are just fat - pregnant woman have this glow, this radiance that comes from them, telling the whole world they're making life at that very moment you look at them. You can even capture it on film," he told her. "And believe me, anyone who even saw a picture of you wouldn't think you were just fat-"

Jimmy's sentence was cut off as Lois suddenly leaned forward and kissed him without warning. He was unresponsive for a second before leaning in towards her just for a moment.

Almost simultaneously they seemed to realise what was going on. "Oh my God, Jimmy," Lois cried, pulling away, "I am *so* sorry!" She had no idea what had come over her, Jimmy had just been talking and then she had felt an irresistible urge to kiss him. "I didn't mean to do that," she tried to explain, she really hadn't - Jimmy was at least ten years younger than her and she'd never found him sexually attractive at all before.

"That's okay," Jimmy replied shakily, getting up from the couch so fast he knocked over a box of the Chinese food. "I - um," he stuttered, picking up his things, "I think I should go now, Miss Lane."

"Yes," Lois agreed quickly, "and I need to get some rest as well." She was still shaken from what had occurred. She had no idea what she'd been thinking and she just hoped she

hadn't upset Jimmy too much.

"I have to go to work early tomorrow," Jimmy explained as he tripped over a chair on his way to the door, "there's a new International editor arriving and Mr. White wants me to show him around."

"Of course." Lois nodded. "He's Perry's nephew isn't he?"

"Yes," Jimmy agreed, "He is. Goodbye, Miss Lane."

"Jimmy," Lois called just before he left, "I really am so sorry."

Jimmy hesitated just before he closed the door. "I know," he said. "I miss him too."