

# Anchovies at Midnight

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Rating: T

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"Where is he?!!" The coffee sloshed over its cardboard container after being slammed onto a paper-strewn desk. All eyes in the room stared at her. Water dripped down the back of her calves and began to pool around a pair of formerly expensive black heels. "Well??" Hands that had been residing on her hips flew up in the air. "Fess up... can't hide his chicken-shit fanny forever." Everyone's voices hushed and those within Lois Lane's direct line of sight averted their eyes. The air became mute with the exception of occasional clicking of keyboards and buzz of telephones.

Lois Lane was fuming. Her limp hair hung dripping onto her drenched plum silk blouse which had become plastered onto her slender quivering frame. "Mister dependable my ass," she growled. "Be gone for a minute, nature calls." Lois flopped with a squish into her chair. Arms crossed and fuming clearly stated, "Leave me the hell alone." Jimmy who either felt brave or hopelessly oblivious to her non-verbal cues decided to approach the simmering reporter as a hunter to a wild beast.

"Um Lois..." His hands fumbled with the chewed remains of pencils on her desk. "I think I happened to see him not too long ago." Jimmy had spoken to her desk, do not make eye contact, do not make eye contact.

"Really," she soothed with a sudden look of calm before another Lane storm.

"Yeah." His brow furrowed in confusion with her sudden change of character. "About ten minutes ago."

"Interesting," her voice quipped as nails drummed rhythmically on the worn desktop. "Because ten minutes ago I was practically swimming my way up Ohio Street without an umbrella since my fabulous soon-to-be-dead partner bailed on me... along with the umbrella. Nice huh?" A mild look of panic began to spread across Jimmy's face. This was going to be ugly. He was clearly in the line of fire. "And... where is my fantastic partner? Give him up James." Uh oh, being referred to in a formal manner meant his friend was on his own.

"Well I think I saw him head for the stairwell. Didn't say which way he was go-"

"Thanks for your cooperation," she blurted while jumping from her chair as if an eject button were pushed. Papers rustled on the desks in her wake along with the waterlogged clacking across the tile floor. "Kent... you had better have a damn good reason for me to spend the remainder of the day like a drowned rat." With that loud rant the door to the stairwell slammed shut.

The five flights to the roof passed quickly with fire in each step taken. "Oh, you are dead," she huffed. "Dead meat... dead... fucking dead." Panting now she silently pondered perhaps quitting smoking after all was gaining appeal. Thoughts began to swirl in her head.

Their lunch date had been over before their drinks were in front of them. Clark had *always* been her reliable friend when she really needed him. As soon as she begun to spill her guts about Richard's sudden and violent death the color had visibly drained from his face as he practically sprinted for the exit. He had left her with tears welling up and an empty chair for company. The trudge in pouring rain back to the office was a nice touch.

As Lois finished her ascent to the rooftop bullets of icy rain began to pelt her burning face. Who gave a shit, she was already drenched from a torrent of rain and freezing...icing on the cake as far as she was concerned. Clark's silhouette was marred by the rivets of rain pouring from the heavens. His shoulders visibly slumped in exhaustion. If the sudden door slam announcing someone's presence on the roof startled him, he gave no indication of it. No start, nor flinch.

Lois remained silent and strode briskly toward him. Her heels splashed in deep puddles. "That's it Clark... last straw. I've had it. Of all people-" His head began to turn toward her hysteric voice. His suit and hair saturated with water cascading off his sharp features.

SLAP!!! Clark quickly reacted as necessary and turned his head along with the connection of Lois's palm to prevent broken bones in her hand. Water droplets whizzed through the air along with his glasses soaring across the rooftop and scuttled to a halt. He quickly looked downward and wet jet black hair hung in front of his averted eyes. "Well?" Her arms crossed in front of herself. "Anything to say for yourself?" Silence stood between them accompanied by the roar of the rain on the rooftop.

"I couldn't stay."

"Yes Clark." Her voice dripped with exasperation. "I noticed when the chair in the restaurant provided a stellar conversation. Not to mention I'm not exactly singin' in the rain here."

"I'm so... sorry, for everything." He remained unmoving despite her piercing gaze.

"Come off it, Kent," her voice croaked. "I don't exactly open myself up to anyone." Sobs began to escape. *Crap. Do NOT cry.* "You are the only person I've talked to in over a year, a year Clark since Richard...Then up... and... leave. Nice touch." She threw her hands up. "I am finished with it." *Fuck it, once the waterworks start, why stop.* "You know, you could at least show me some iota of decency and *look at me* when I talk to you."

Clark blinked and slowly bent his head toward hers. Despite the deluge surrounding the pair, his unearthly blue eyes blazed at her through the dark hair in front of them. They calmly searched her face, into her soul. Something in her stomach lurched, heart racing as a wave of electricity rolled through her frame. The unexpected chemistry and connection set her on edge.

His eyes seemed haunted, troubled; the usual sparkle in Clark's eyes had vanished and appeared remorseful. Wet hair in front of his eyes tripped memories in the past, years ago and Lois held her breath.

Clark remained quiet and calmly gazed at a pair of wondering hazel eyes; a silent connection clicked. A hand visibly shaking touched his face with the tip of her long index finger pulled back the hair from his face. Long absent were skittish movements of her partner and friend Clark. He remained unmoving.

Her hazel eyes grew larger in disbelief after searching his and whispered. "No." Only smattering of rain on the rooftop her response. The air despite icy rainfall grew heated and in harmony, began to crackle with the electricity in the air overhead. Now standing a few inches apart she could feel the warmth radiating between them and his white oxford shirt underneath the dark jacket was nearly transparent. Her eyes traveled to his neckline. The brilliant shade of

blue clearly visible underneath the drenched shirt. "No," she uttered again, stepping backward. Her mouth hung open in disbelief and legs reflexively turned to rubber.

Clark stood squarely in front of her, hair pushed aside, dripping wet with tie askew and his other uniform peeking over the top of his neckline. Now it all made sense. His sudden departures, today included. His flighty response to her deluge regarding Richard. His death had been highly publicized in her own paper regarding his disappearance and hefty ransom fee related to a major crime ring Clark had helped break open in the Daily Planet. She had known he had felt partially responsible for Richard's death due to their mutual intensity and drive during the investigation. That undercover piece not only had brought stellar accolades to the paper but was responsible for many members of the Orland Heights gang imprisonment. The guilt complex was far greater than she had understood until this moment when his true self stood before her. As Superman, he had been powerless to stop it.

"Lois" his voice deepened into a familiar register that sent goose pimples dancing across her skin. "Richard, I couldn't... I couldn't stop it. I was too late. I-"

"It's ok, you did the best you could," she murmured.

"I helped write that piece that got him killed, I was sick over it."

"It happened a long time ago. He knew how risky that was to print, it was his decision." She sighed before continuing. "I've made peace with it, so should you." Her words hung in the air. "Besides, it's really hard to be mad at you when you're being heroic."

The two remained frozen for seemingly an eternity with emotions rocking back and forth inside. *Damn, I didn't think it was possible for him to look as unbelievable as he stands now.* His heroic persona as Clark and Superman, well just added to it all really. *I would kill him if he wasn't so honorable, makes it hard to strangle him when I have a stronger desire to... oh what is wrong with me?* Urge burning within her now overtook her innate sense of dignity. She strode up to him, remaining wordless both hands steadily flew to his shirt lapel and clutched them in her fists drawing his chest towards hers. Her lips pushed against his sending a shockwave through both of them. Without pause her arms flung open his shirt; buttons and water sent flying to reveal his blue suit and top of that familiar crest. He gave no pause to her actions only feverishly returning her kiss with mounting intensity while his sturdy arms enveloped her.

She pulled away long enough for both pairs of eyes to dart downward at his red and yellow emblem. Lois placed her fingertips on the top of the raised crest and gazed up at him with enough steam to melt the man of steel before her. A warm tentative smile played across her lips as they met his again growing more passionate. His firm hands traveled up her back, pressing his frame solidly against hers.

Lois gasped for breath and her eyes flung open to be met with inky blackness and utter quiet. Her heart raced, turned her head to feel the cool pillowcase beside her and the rumpled sheets wrapped around her waist. Her fingers raked through the disheveled hair as she flew upright; shaken from such a vivid dream. Her eyes rolled and head plopped back against the pillow while she digested the wild scene that had begun to play across her unconscious. She flung off her bedding and padded over to the bathroom only pausing to glance out the window listening to the sounds of the raindrops smattering the glass panes.

After a few splashes of ice cold water on her face, she drifted back to the bed and sat at the edge with her mind racing. "What an utterly bizarre dream," she announced to no one. "No more eating pizza with anchovies at midnight." She laid down with the covers returned over her bare shoulders. With a final sigh she rolled over to gaze at the glittering skyline along the

horizon as she drifted back to sleep. "Clark Kent... strangest... dream. Ever."