

Frantic

by RouthFan

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Rating: K+

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"No, no, no, no... No!" Lois slammed her trembling palms against the black computer screen. She rocked it viciously as her screams echoed through the empty newsroom.

"You evil piece of crap... I'm going to drop you out the window if my story doesn't pull back up..." she hissed. "I miss typewriters."

Lois feverishly raked her fingers through her hair that was pulled into a haphazard topknot. A well chewed pencil held it in place and another was receiving the brunt of teeth marks as the harried reporter clamped it tightly between her teeth.

It was a late Friday night, no one else was there except Esmeralda, the night cleaning lady. Her vacuum was the only noise in the darkened bullpen. Lois sighed in frustration as she violently flicked the computer on again. Perhaps that would make the evil machine spring to life with her article miraculously intact.

"No signal. Going to sleep" flashed across the screen before it fell dark again. The hazel bloodshot eyes stared back through the reflection on the dormant screen.

"Are you kidding?" Her hand slapped the side of the monitor and then she began to pace the hallway between the rows of empty desks.

This could *not* be happening. Of all the nights she worked late, this was the one she did not want...no, *could not* spend all night re-writing and fixing her article. Her eyes flew to the clock on the wall that read "9:10." *Sure the one time I don't save it before I'm done.*

Lois had a date. Not a hot date... but still, she did not date often since Keith and herself went separate ways. He was an architect and just did not understand the devotion to writing that accompanied the title of world renown journalist. It was just dinner with an old friend, nothing more. Thank goodness her escort for the evening was as competitive of a journalist and understood the importance of a late dinner reservation. It was at least a night out in civilization where she did not have to talk to the television set over Chinese takeout as a substitution for a real conversation. It was only the thought of escaping her life for a few hours that set off a rumble of butterflies beating against the insides of her stomach, nothing more. Clark Kent was certainly *not* the source of her nerves.

She was determined to leave The Planet with a slim margin to dash home and discard her suit. However, with her article that performed a vanishing act, the time she had allotted herself was decreasing rapidly. To prevent herself from performing an act of violence against the machine at her desk, she flung off her heels and stocking-footed, made her way over to the large floor length windows. Lois pressed her forehead against the cold glass and stared out amongst the impressive skyline that twinkled. She watched the city lights and traffic below.

After a few deep breaths she strode over to Perry's office, picked the lock and began to re-type pieces of the article she could recall from memory on his computer. There was

absolutely no way her boss had a crappy computer and she'd be damned if that insufferable piece on the Governor's impeachment would be lost into oblivion twice.

An hour later, a printed copy of her resurrected article with a blazing pink post-it note thanking her editor-in-chief for use of his computer rested on his desk. They were the only indications of her presence after she shut the door to Perry White's office and trotted back to her own workstation. Lois pilfered through her belongings at the cluttered desk before she sprinted out of the office. The frantic woman weaved through the busy Metropolis streets to arrive home with barely enough time to piece herself together. She had to find *some* semblance of a "date" outfit in her closet instead of a drab skirt suit.

"Stupid morons... learn how to drive," she grumbled as her fist angrily punched the horn. "Get out of the way for those of us who *actually* have dinner reservations to get to tonight."

Lois exhaled in utter frustration as her fingers dug into the steering wheel. It was going to be close. How embarrassing it would be if Clark Kent stood on her doorstep waiting for her to get home. Just once, she would like to greet him at her door in something other than a business suit or an unflattering sweatpants and t-shirt combination she often wore when they had late night rendezvous as they wove together evidence for an article's looming deadline.

Kal El flashed through the inky sky over Metropolis. Lights from below were a blur as they whizzed beneath his feet. After preventing a horrific mid-air collision of a Boeing 777 and an Airbus 340 over New York LaGuardia's Airport, sirens screamed in his ears. He arrived to a blazing high rise fire with thick black smoke that poured out windows of the 24 story building.

"It's an older historical building with an under performing sprinkler system," the fire chief barked as he touched down amidst the fire trucks that gathered at the intersection. "Superman, we need your help, with the fire in the middle of the building, we can't get to the top floors and with those updrafts in the stairwells...I don't know if we can save those guys up there before the thing collapses."

"I won't let you down, just have your men ready to help the people I can get on the ground." He spoke briefly before taking to the sky again to extinguish the blaze and retrieve the stranded people above the flames.

He worked rapidly yet gently as he plucked individuals from their residences and brought them safely to the waiting paramedics and fire crew. With the building now free of people, he dampened the flames with his icy breath. Kal El's mind wandered to earlier in the day and the difficult situation that now presented itself.

Over a brown bag lunch in the Metropolis library's dusty microfilm room, he found the courage to ask his partner to join him for late dinner on a date. What was more of an amazing feat was she said *yes*. He was going to be late for a date with Lois Lane and she was going to kill him. It had only taken a total of ten years to finally get a date with Lois as his low-key persona. He knew he could have easily asked her as Superman, but there was more to him than that. As Kal El, who he really was were pieces of his public persona and the private quiet man who reported the news; a conglomeration of sorts, but he could no longer allow Lois to pursue someone who did not exist.

Superman rocketed through the skies as soon as the last rescued pair of feet touched the cement. Usually he remained to briefly speak to those he rescued but tonight, tonight he had dinner reservations and he was going to be late. Perhaps his amazing speed would not be fast enough, especially since he still had to stop at a florist. He couldn't do *that* in his iconic blue suit. How embarrassing it would be for Lois to sit on her couch fuming as he had to make

another excuse for his tardiness as Clark. Just *once* he would like to be on time and that possibility was shrinking more rapidly by the second. *Great, now what were her favorite flowers?* She never actually told him that sordid detail, he had to guess.

"It's just Kent, it doesn't matter what I wear," Lois stated to the large pile of discarded clothing on the bed. "Come on, pick something," she muttered. Her hands came to rest on her hips in annoyance.

It really was just her partner for nearly a decade. They had been through various situations where he had seen her at the most unattractive state. Dark circles, bloodshot eyes and haphazard hair from long dull hours of exhausting fact checking... it did *not* matter what she wore, he was her friend. Her oldest friend, yet there she was, in her bathrobe and disappointed with the lack of options her closet provided.

Her hands frantically flung each hangar to the opposite end of the closet again as she hoped that something remotely appealing would materialize. *Oh great, is that really the time? I've got five minutes! Ugh, forget the hair.* She swept it up again and adhered it in place with a clip as she finally chose snug black trousers and a fitted ice blue sweater that clung in all the right places. It was not the most recent purchase, but it was a favorite and she knew fit her well. Not that it mattered anyway.

To quell the nervous knots that formed, Lois poured a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon before her "date" arrived. Well, more like friend who happened to be male. Oh hell, she was nervous, which was completely absurd. She *really* needed to get out and date more if this is what got her excited. Lois turned to look out the sliding glass door from the patio that overlooked the bay and sighed.

He was out there somewhere. Guilt nagged a part of her with the need to settle an uncomfortable open-ended situation with the Man of Steel. It was near impossible since he had been somewhat busy. Time to discuss their personal relationship that was in limbo was not an option. The only times recently they met were strictly professional, however not out of want on either part. That much she was certain of simply looking into his eyes. They certainly had chemistry, every time they had kissed she felt an amazing connection that no one ever had been able to match. It was enigmatic and addictive. She knew he was equally eager to further pursue the early stages of their relationship but as a city's savior, time was something he did not have the luxury of spending often with her.

The buzzer to her apartment broke the quiet as well as her thoughts and caused Lois to start. Her elbow jutted outward, knocking the glass along with the burgundy liquid onto the living room carpet.

"Fantastic..." she grumbled. "Can my day *really* get any better? Oh shit."

She furiously blotted the carpet and cursed profusely under her breath as a loud knock sounded. *Forget the stain*, a potted plant was slid over the burgundy blotch before she stood up and adjusted her sweater. Was she really going on a date with her partner? She had definitely lost her mind. *It was just Clark.*

It had been frustrating when he chose what to wear. Work attire was not only unflattering but sadly so were the majority of the suits in his closet, except for *the* blue suit which was not an option except underneath whatever clothing that was to be worn. Emergency situations that required his assistance were at a fever pitch the prior month, which did not leave an exorbitant amount of time available to purchase any new clothing. Clark's reporter's salary did not allow

much for it either.

He threw together a worn pair of dark khaki chinos, a navy button up shirt and tweed sports jacket his mother gave him years ago. She declared that some day he would use it, although he had not seen the purpose for it at the time. It was a given he did not have much availability for dating when he led two busy lives. Clark briefly glanced in the mirror and sighed. It would have to do, now he had to find a florist still open that hopefully, carried white hydrangeas in January.

Lois and Clark walked at a brisk but comfortable pace. The haze of their warm breath that mingled with the icy air formed a veil around them as they made their way toward the Sapphire Tiger. It was an upcoming Indian restaurant where even in the late evening hours, it was difficult to obtain a reservation. Fortunately, working for the newspaper and having a favor from the Lifestyles editor had proved an advantage. Somehow, the restaurant was able to "fit" them in.

Lois occasionally stole glances of admiration at her partner who, curiously transformed from office nerd to somewhat of a classic appearance and understated confidence. It felt odd to watch his mannerisms free from restless fidgeting. He was calm and, well, admittedly handsome. The odd sensations of butterfly wings beating against her stomach returned the moment she saw him and remained for the rest of their stroll. She really *did* find herself romantically curious and drawn to the tall solid man at her side. His warmth radiated and his arm hung awkwardly next to hers.

Her own ached to take it and grasp firmly but she was not certain if it was too forward. For a woman who never lacked confidence or inability to make a fast decision, it provided quite a conundrum for her mind to wrap itself around. He did ask her, she knew he was interested otherwise why did he bother. He never did say it was a date though. *Oh hell Lane, why not? It's too cold anyway, soon you won't be able to feel your own arm let alone his. Just take it. Don't be such a sissy.* She swallowed hard as another hazy breath was expelled and their arms met.

A brief acknowledgement elicited surprise from her male companion as his eyebrows rose. The corners of Clark's mouth turned upward in pleasant acceptance. When his ice blue eyes met with Lois's warm hazel ones, his breath was held. He felt the immediate connection rocket through his fingertips and travel to the soles of his feet.

"I'm cold and you're warm," a mumble came from the woman who nestled into his torso. "How do you manage to do that at these temperatures anyway?"

"I guess it's a family trait." He smiled as the door opened to the restaurant.

"You can be my space heater anytime Kent." She flashed a warm smile that melted his soul. He loved that woman and desperately wanted her to reciprocate his feelings. She was with him tonight, perhaps she did.

During the meal of *Tikka Masala, Aloo Gobi* and *Sagg Paneer*, the wine and conversation flowed smoothly as both enjoyed each other's company. Lois had surrendered her logic of forbidding a potential office romance and gossip that was sure to ensue. She readily sipped wine at a steady pace, engaged in banter laden with inuendos and allowed herself to relish the evening. She could not deny any longer she felt an amazing sensation dance along her arm as it linked with his, nor could she ignore the heated tension weighed upon both their shoulders that grew with each tick of the clock at the dinner table.

After the meal was finished Clark reached across the table, stroked her face to brush

away a piece of her hair that had slipped from her hairclip. It was *the* moment. All conversation stopped and they simply stared at each other. It was an accumulation of years of illusionment, years of denial that she harbored nothing beyond a healthy friendly competition for her partner...and it all came crashing down around where she sat. Their relationship had always been far more significant and profound than a mere office friendship and they both knew it. Clark was gentle, smart and always cared for her beyond any reasonable expectation. She was in love with him and at that moment, Lois came to the realization, that she always had been. The stark reality of the situation was earth shattering.

"Lois? Are you alright? You're awfully quiet."

Concern emanated from Clark's deep voice. Had he been too forward? It was a horrible mistake and too soon after she ended her relationship with Keith. She was spooked as evident from the widening of her eyes and sudden rapid acceleration of her heart rate.

"I'm fine Clark. It was a nice dinner, thanks." She stood and glanced over her shoulder warmly as he helped her with her coat. "You clean up pretty nice you know?"

"You've mentioned that... A few times. But I won't tire of hearing it." A tentative grin spread across his face despite the nervous sea rocking in his stomach as they stepped onto the cold dark streets.

Her heart rate remained elevated for the duration of the short walk as did the lack of conversation. Dinner went extremely well, then suddenly she ceased talking. He could not recall saying anything to cause the disrupt from an otherwise pleasant evening. Lois could be so challenging to interpret at times, yet at others as clear as plain text on a page. At present, he was perplexed with her behavior and became uneasy as her condo building was a few feet away. Clark was tired of remaining cautious as he had been around her for the past ten years and could remain passive no longer. The tall reporter was finished with it and decided to cast off his unassuming façade, to drive straight to the point and address his concerns.

"Did I say something to offend you?" he jabbed.

"No, Clark. Why would you think that?" Her stomach churned, he sounded different. Lois could not put her finger on the reason, but it was familiar.

"You haven't said a word since we sat at the table and have kept me at arms length."

Her eyes widened as he stepped to close the gap between them. His aftershave tingled in her nose along with the chilled air. It was captivating as her heart banged against her sternum so heavily, she was certain it would crack her breastplate.

"I have?" It was there again, that particular something, the glimmer in his eyes, his smooth voice triggered a haunting sense of *déjà vu*.

Her weight shifted nervously as her hands dug into the pockets of her hounds-tooth coat. It was all she could do to prevent herself from indecently grabbing the handsome man in public. The radiating heat and mere inches that separated the couple burned in her soul.

"Yes, you have... and you know what? I'm *not* going to ignore it and pretend that come Monday at work in the bullpen everything is fine and our date *never* happened."

"Date?" she squeaked as her toes curled. He *did* intend it to be a date. The admission caused the burning sensation to intensify and radiate to her flushed cheeks.

"A *date*. Lois, in case you've missed it..." his voice grew more steady and deep.

Clark rapidly brought his hands to her face, drew her toward him and he kissed her. He deeply kissed her the way he had as his heroic personality, when each brush of their lips burned with a white hot intensity of a thousand suns. His tongue heatedly explored her mouth as he pressed his body firmly against hers. At that moment, Clark felt every muscle in Lois's

body relax as she melted into his arms.

When he pulled away, Lois's eyes flew wide open in astonishment at the sudden bold move her partner performed. No one had ever made her feel that way...*ever*. The only person who came remotely close was not from this planet. Clark Kent's incredible ability to cause every inch of her skin to sizzle was amazing and completely unexpected.

A sly smile spread across her rosy lips as she eagerly leaned forward to meet his again. Lois became aggressive with a blazing fire, her teeth tugged on his bottom lip before both of them pulled apart. She breathed heavily and kept her heated gaze fixed on her handsome date who's eyes burned equally with desire. Without a glance, a key was retrieved from her pocket to unlock the front door and they slid into building's entrance.

The shy and cautious partner she had known for a decade had disappeared and the surprisingly dominant man who stood before her was confident and intoxicating. Once inside the lobby, he leaned into her torso and pinned her against the marble wall. His heavy warm breath tingled on her neck as his lips traced her collar bone and traveled to her jaw. Clark broke contact with her trembling skin only to hotly kiss her fully on the mouth again. Both of their hands frantically splayed across the other's torsos and slid around their backs as their lips parted to gasp for breath. Lois could feel the solid weight of his frame against her chest as her hands felt each ripple of muscle in his firm back.

Lois caught her breath enough to regain her ability to speak.

"Clark, I need to tell you something... somewhere during the time we've worked together I've... I've not been honest with you or myself for years. Somewhere in the middle of all of it, I fell in love with you."

Bewildered, Clark froze. His face remained inches from her as his eyes scrutinized every detail of hers. She loved him, all of him. He had to tell her everything despite how difficult he knew it would be. If they were to have any possible chance of having a relationship, let alone a successful one, she had to know and it was not exactly something that could be told in a lobby with video cameras.

Her heart suddenly descended to the very bottom of her feet as her hands turned cold. He had not said anything but seemed to contemplate her words. She had really screwed all of it up royally. She was wrong. *Step one, open mouth... step two, insert foot*. Lois became frightened that perhaps she spoke too soon and became too candid with her emotions. It was difficult enough for her to have actually said the words and Clark's lack of response only magnified the uncomfortable feeling that was growing.

Without any further exchange of words, his large warm hand enwrapped her clammy palm and silently began to ascend the steps in the lobby toward the elevators. Inside the elevator, he stood tantalizingly close and the sheer magnetism from the couple created incredible tension as the car painfully crawled to the penthouse level.

When his hip brushed against hers again, the direct body contact triggered the skin beneath Lois's clothing to sizzle. *Oh Lois, keep your hands off him for five minutes! You know damn well there are cameras in this elevator, like the guys in the security office need a treat from one of the famous residents to start any further gossip*. She already knew there would be plenty the following morning for the racy public display of affection with her co-worker who was almost as well respected in the journalist community.

She ached to escape the awkward and heated situation as she found the climbing numbers above the elevator door the only available distraction. It was far better to focus on that, than the amazing chiseled torso and arms her partner had apparently kept hidden beneath his

clothing for years. Her mind began to wander to the tantalizing image of her handsome date's shirt on the floor in her living room as her hands roved what had to be an amazing physique as he relentlessly kissed her with smoldering intensity.

It was simply torture to feel her hips against his as the car ascended at an agonizing rate. It took all of his willpower to remain still and keep himself away from the nape of her neck he longed to kiss. Clark steeled himself to admit everything to Lois and became extremely nervous. The reporter chose to remain silent for fear that if he spoke before reaching the confines of her apartment, it would be too tempting to enwrap himself in the blissful moment of passion and allow the more significant concern slide away.

"Ding."

Both exhaled in relief as the doors slipped open and the pair exited into her penthouse level condo. It was embarrassing enough that Clark had not said a single word since her profession, but to taunt her in this fashion, that was just torture and humiliation. Clark had not said a thing about how he felt about her.

"Well, here we are. Would you like something to drink? Water? Wine? Coffee?" She scurried to the kitchen.

"Lois? Um, wine sounds nice. Thanks," he called from the foyer. Clark was not certain how to proceed. Lois had suddenly abandoned him in the doorway when he needed to tell her the most life altering detail for both of them. Her mood changed suddenly. Could she tell who he was by the way that he had kissed her? He silently berated himself for his carelessness. If she came to her own conclusions regarding his identity, she would never forgive him for keeping it from her for so long. He *had* to be the one to tell her.

Lois closed her eyes and exhaled. Damn she was nervous. She knew as well as any adult over the age of thirty, that an invitation of alcohol or coffee in someone's home after a date may as well be a blatant statement of "spend the night." She did have to face him and everyone else in the office Monday morning and would prefer to do without the idle gossip. *To hell with the consequences Lane, you've known him for ten years... ten years is a long time. I had no problem jumping into the sack with Keith after knowing him for three weeks.*

Ah, Keith. Like Clark, he often had remained wordless at a potentially self-incriminating comment... many men in her life used silence as a pervasive method of escape from what they actually felt. When she kissed Clark, she felt every ounce of passion radiate from his touch but perhaps he did not love her and she had horribly misinterpreted everything.

His blue eyes burned intently as she felt them follow her steps from the kitchen with two full wine glasses in hand. She floated across the living room and came to rest beside the handsome man as she eagerly sipped from her own glass. Clark politely tapped his glass against hers and matched her actions. His eyes darted toward the sliding glass door and to the horizon beyond before they returned Lois. He signed and stood.

Lois could no longer continue with the best behavior she had been on all evening. The crushing silence finally was too much. She was a reporter after all, Lois Lane always had to get to the root of things no matter what the consequence. To hell with manners.

"Clark, say something. *Anything*. I practically melted into a puddle five minutes ago in the lobby. What gives with the cold shoulder? Why did you drag me all the way up here back to my place when you very well could have just said goodbye downstairs."

"Lois, there's something I need to tell you," he stated firmly in a fashion that sent a shiver down her spine. His voice, it was strong, deep and familiar. It was not his own, yet somehow it was.

"Don't you dare sit here and think just because you're sitting on my couch with a glass of wine doesn't mean I'm providing you an open invitation to sleep with me. Look, if you don't feel the same about me, fine. Just be honest. We've known each other too long for anything less. I can handle it. I'm a professional and I am fully capable of separating personal feelings from my professional life..."

"It's something I needed to tell you alone. I couldn't have told you in the lobby." He sighed and pensively gazed into her eyes. "I just hope you'll understand..." His thumb lightly traced her lips. "Lois, I've loved you since the day I met you--"

Her cheek melted into the palm of his hand as her hard expression softened at his admission. "You love me...*you do?*"

"Yes, I *always* have. When I met you in the office..." Clark's eyes searched hers and swallowed before he continued. "and when you fell from the helicopter."

"Clark, I don't understand. You didn't see me fall from way down there. You said you *didn't* see it happen from the ground."

His heart throbbed against his chest as he set both glasses of wine on a table. Clark brought her hands to his face and sighed as her hands came to rest on his glasses frame. His warm smile disappeared as he became somber and apprehensive. He continued.

"You're right, I didn't see it happen from the ground, Lois." The glasses slid off his face and fell from her hands, clattering onto the hardwood floor. "I caught you."

Lois's face grew hot and her hands began to shake. "You *caught* me" she whispered. "Clark," her voice grew in volume and she abruptly stood. "Just because you bear a slight resemblance to Superman doesn't mean you have to tease me about it. I admit it... *okay?* I have a crush on the him and he's *almost* as good of a kisser as you. Mocking me about it, that's just mean."

"Lois... I..."

"Now you *listen* to me," she hissed. "I'm tired of being played as a jackass in all of this." Her face reddened as tears began to splash down her hot cheeks. "I didn't think you were capable of being an asshole. That's what I thought made you better than everyone else."

It was completely absurd. Ridiculous. There was no way in hell her quiet and somewhat wimpy partner was the bold man that saved millions of people and captivated the world with his humble charisma. *Come on. Right.* He was *not* Superman. Her supposedly mentally stable partner of a decade had lost his mind. He was insane.

Clark fainted... *fainted* when they were mugged. Got jammed in revolving doors on a regular basis, consistently failed to make it through an entire meal without wearing it on his tie, dribbled photocopy ink on his pants... the list went on. Additionally, there was not a chance Lois was *that* stupid. She was a reporter, a *damn* insightful one and there was no way that sordid detail had been underneath her nose for a decade without detecting it.

"I think you need to leave Clark." She strode to where he stood and recoiled her hand to drive it across his face. His hand followed rapidly, grabbed her slim wrist and led her hand to his expansive chest.

"Open my shirt." He stood at the sliding glass door and began to loosen his tie.

Her eyes grew wide in astonishment as she yanked herself free from his grasp. "I will *not!* I *said* leave."

"Fine."

His steady hands released hers as they began to unfasten the buttons of his shirt and spread it apart only to reveal the trademark blue uniform with red and yellow emblem

underneath. His face, free from the obstruction of his glasses, turned from the emblem that was exposed to Lois. Her mouth was agape, her eyes uncertain of what had occurred. *It seemed so real, down to the exact unique unearthly material of the raised shield on his chest. Where the hell did he get this?* She probably seen it that close far more than any other person. If she could not discern the legitimate suit from a copy, no one would.

He turned from her trembling frame, slid the door open and stepped onto the large patio. It was painful to watch and disheartening. What had caused this man to snap? Proof positive she always found herself hopelessly attracted to some true winners in life. She began to fear what could happen if he really had lost his mind and tried to fly off her balcony. Street pizza and a front page news story.

Lois followed suit as she found her voice again. "Clark... I think you need help. I know you've harbored *some* jealousy toward Superman, but donning a Halloween costume to deceive yourself and take me along for the ride, that's just disturbing."

"You still don't believe me then," he murmured.

"No! Are you nuts? Oh, yes... you *are*!" she screamed as he stepped closer and wrapped his hands around her tiny waist. "Clark? What's gotten into you? You know damn well you had better get your filthy hands off me! Oh holy crap, you are one sick *psychopath*! I did learn a thing or two when I grew up on a military base and don't think I won't beat you to a bloody pulp" she wailed. She wriggled and frantically attempted to pry herself free from his iron clad grip. Lois looked down to determine if her leg was strategically located to knee him in the groin if it was necessary. She was not about to allow herself to be raped by a first rate nut job.

"Lois," he said with an eerie sense of calm. "Just look."

She suddenly realized her feet and the larger pair that were inches from her own were not on the ground anymore. Her arms began to tremble and the pair drifted gently upward from the patio, into the sky and stars.

"It can't be..." she breathed. "I can't believe, I mean, I wanted to... but never in my wildest dreams had I thought..." her voice trailed off.

"Lois, it's alright. I understand. I wanted to tell you for years, since the moment I met you. I shouldn't have kept it from you for so long, *I* should be apologizing to you."

Her face grew hot despite the cool night air that swirled around them as they gained altitude. She had made such a complete fool of herself. Lois had blown it. The man of steel whom she had been drawn to since the moment she fell into his arms had been beside her for years. How many times had he saved her under the guise of the shy reporter?

"I'm sorry I kept this from you Lois."

Guilt began to seep through her bones at the multitude of occurrences she had brushed him aside and unknowingly dreamt about the man whose desk was directly across from hers. She had been torn between two men who were in fact, the same person. It was a heart wrenching conclusion she came to that her rash behavior had certainly lost him forever.

"I don't, I um... I don't know what to say. Except by the way, that I still love you--" Lois's heart rate accelerated as his amazing blue eyes gave their undivided attention to her. His face was warm, concerned but began to grow hazy as her vision became obstructed with forming tears. "But I understand if you don't want to have much to do with me at this point, since I've made such an ass of myself in front of you more times--"

His hand traced up the small of her back and continued up her neck as he bent his head to brush his lips against hers. Her lips parted as his tongue slid between them. A warm surge of adrenaline broiled upward as her own lips began to explore every fold of his. He pressed his

hips firmly against hers as she hiked a slender leg to curl it behind him. Her hands slid across his broad shoulders and began to pull the navy blue shirt farther apart and slid it down his arms. He paused and felt her lips spread into a smile. He gazed upon her. Lois's eyelids fluttered with contentment.

"Lois," he breathed. "I love you. I always have."

At his remark, they flew open again and tears that had been kept at bay rolled down her cheek. Her hand traced along the top of the red and yellow crest and her eyes turned downward.

"Um, this is embarrassing but, I don't know what to call you," she fumbled.

"Clark is what I've been called that since my adoptive parents found me, and all I can remember." They drifted higher, slowly rotating in the starry sky. "Kal El is my real name. It was given to me at birth. Before my parents died."

"Kal El. I like the sound of that," she whispered before she kissed him. "I love you Kal El. I always will."