

That Ol' Revelation of Mine

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Rated: PG-13

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Summary: In this TOGOM ("That Old Gang of Mine") rewrite, someone points out the obvious to Lois after Clark is shot, and it doesn't take her brilliant mind long to come to a super conclusion.

Disclaimer: I don't own them and I'm certainly not making any money off them. This is purely for entertainment, and I always put my toys away as good as or better than I found them.

Author's Notes: Okay, so there are already a million and one variations on the TOGOM theme, but since I'm new to writing for this fandom, I can't resist throwing my own out there to join the melee. This is my first alternate take, but I'm sure it won't be my last. Enjoy!

Lois Lane was shivering. It was a fairly warm autumn evening, but she felt cold, so very cold. Little wonder, considering what she had just witnessed. Her partner and best friend had just been ruthlessly gunned down because of her. He had died protecting her. Clark Kent, the kindest, gentlest man she had ever known, was dead, and it was all her fault.

"Lane." The voice calling to her belonged to Inspector Henderson, the closest thing she had to a friend on the police force. "How you holding up?"

Lois shook her head. "I don't know."

"You're probably in shock," he said, his voice as gentle as she'd ever heard. "You up to answering a couple of questions?"

Lois took a deep breath before nodding her head. Henderson tipped his head to one side and led her away from the slowly disassembling crowd.

"Are you sure Kent was shot?" Henderson asked without preamble.

Lois's eyes grew wide. "Of course, I'm sure! I was right there. That gun was no more than three feet away from Clark's chest. There's no way it could have missed. And I held him in my arms right after... he wasn't breathing. I couldn't find a pulse... Clark is dead," she finished, her voice breaking on that final word.

"Then where's the blood?" Henderson's eyes were narrowed as he studied her face intently.

"Blood?" Lois repeated vaguely.

"Three bullet holes usually leak a lot of blood, but I didn't see a drop in there. And if you held him, you should be covered in it." When Lois blanched, he added an apology. "Sorry to be so graphic."

Lois bit out a harsh, dark laugh. "I'm a hard-bitten reporter, remember? I've seen my share of grizzly crime scenes." She closed her eyes and released a shuddering breath. "No blood," she repeated after a moment. "What does that mean?"

"I don't know," he replied thoughtfully. "But I'm sure there's a rational explanation."

"Like what?"

"I have no idea. But I'm sure you'll think of one." Henderson gave her a sympathetic smile. "Why don't you go on home, Lane.

Try and get some rest. You can come down to the station tomorrow to give your statement."

Lois nodded absently and let Henderson guide her over to one of the patrol cars. He instructed the officers to take Lois home, and then he went back to the business of investigating the crime scene.

Throughout the ride back to her apartment, the sounds of those fatal gunshots kept reverberating through her mind. Every time she closed her eyes, even if just to blink, she saw Clark's face filling with shock as he dropped to the ground. Her hands shook as she remembered the frantic but futile search for his pulse.

But where was the blood?

Henderson was right; she should have been covered in Clark's blood. There should have been a puddle of it where he had fallen, but there wasn't.

There was no blood.

What could that possibly mean?

They arrived at her apartment building, and Lois exited the car. As she rode the elevator up to her floor, two words kept playing in her mind in an endless loop.

No blood. No blood. No blood.

She methodically unlocked the series of deadbolts and walked inside her apartment; all the while, the mantra continued.

No blood. No blood. No blood.

She immediately kicked off her uncomfortable heels on her way to her bedroom.

No blood.

After stripping off the red dress that had attracted that murderous gangster's attention, she rummaged through her bureau until she found an old Smallville High School sweatshirt of Clark's.

No blood.

She slipped it on over her head, dug out a pair of leggings and pulled them on.

No blood.

She marched to her kitchen, opened the freezer, pulled out her traditional cure for anything that ailed her, snagged a spoon, and plopped down at her dining table to devour the ice cream straight from the carton.

No blood.

What possible reasonable explanation could there be for this conundrum? He'd stopped breathing; he had no pulse. She knew he hadn't been wearing a bullet proof vest. Had it been a single bullet, she supposed it might have been possible that it had been stopped by a pager or some such in his pocket; she was fairly certain, though, that the trigger-happy gangster's aim wasn't so good that all three bullets had hit the same exact place. Besides, while that would account for the lack of blood, it didn't explain the lack of breathing or pulse.

There was no blood, when it should have been gushing out of the three bullet holes in his chest.

What if there hadn't been any bullet holes?

No holes for the blood to leak from. For some reason, the bullets hadn't penetrated his skin.

Why?

Clark wasn't bullet proof. There was only one man on the planet that could claim that distinction.

Superman.

In a moment of blinding clarity, she knew.

There hadn't been any blood because Clark couldn't bleed.

There were no bullet holes because the bullets hadn't penetrated his invulnerable flesh.

He wasn't dead.

Lois slammed the ice cream carton down on the table and marched over to the phone. She dialed Clark's number, only to be fiercely annoyed when his answering machine picked up. She

frowned as she disconnected the line. If he hadn't gone home to his apartment, where would he have gone? The answer came to her after a brief moment. She dialed another number, tapping her foot impatiently as she listened to the rings. The line was picked up on the third one.

"Hello?" It was Martha Kent that had answered.

"Hi, Martha, it's Lois. Sorry to be calling so late," she apologized.

"It's all right. We were still up." Martha's voice sounded strange, almost nervous.

"Clark was shot tonight," Lois said bluntly. "Since he didn't go back to his place, I figure he's probably on his way to you, if he isn't there already."

"Lois, I'm not sure—"

Lois cut her off. "Just tell him he'd better get his shiny red butt over here, or I swear to God, I will never speak to him again."

The line was silent for quite a bit before Martha finally responded. "All right, Lois."

"Thanks," she replied. She hung up the phone and walked over to her window. She pushed it open and sucked in a lungful of the cooling night air. She didn't have to wait long; only a couple of minutes passed before she caught sight of Superman approaching. She folded her arms across her chest in that classic defensive stance as he came to hover a few feet in front of her. She studied him for a moment, scarcely able to reconcile her newfound knowledge of the man before her. Finally, she stepped back, not saying a word as he floated into her living room.

"How long were you planning on letting me think you were dead?" Her voice was hard as steel and her eyes conveyed her barely restrained fury.

"I don't know," Clark replied contritely. "I didn't plan... I didn't know what else to do."

"Were you ever going to tell me the truth?" Her gaze was intense as it bore into him. If she'd had his heat vision, he might well have been incinerated on the spot.

"I wanted to," he told her quietly.

"I thought we were friends. I thought you trusted me." To her dismay, her voice had cracked just a little as she had spoken.

"I do trust you!" Clark insisted. "We are friends."

Anger gave way to anguish. "Then why didn't you tell me?"

"I was in shock. I didn't know what to do." He sounded as anguished as she felt. "If I hadn't pretended to be killed, everyone in that room would have known who I am."

"Why didn't you tell me before? You've known me for almost a year and a half, but you never really trusted me. Even though you fought hard to earn my trust, you've been lying to me from the beginning. I thought I knew you, but I was wrong." She snorted with derision. "Mark your calendar, folks, 'cause this is the day Lois Lane admitted she was wrong."

"You do know me," he countered.

"No, I don't," she retorted hotly. "The man I knew was a normal country boy, the simple son of a couple of Midwest farmers, a little naïve at times, but worldly, too. An ordinary man living an ordinary life." Clark winced at those hauntingly familiar words. "The man I knew didn't moonlight in tights. He wasn't the superhero that saved the world on a daily basis. He didn't lift space shuttles into orbit, or pulverize killer asteroids, or stop runaway trains. The man I knew was honest, maybe even the last honest man on this planet, and he would never lie to me. He would never hurt me." Her voice had dropped to a whisper, and she blinked fast against the tears that were welling up in her eyes.

"I'm so sorry, Lois." The sorrow in his voice matched the remorse in his eyes. "I never meant to cause you pain."

"But you did," she said, her voice just above a whisper. "I don't think anyone has ever hurt me this badly."

"I'm sorry," he repeated. "So very sorry."

"Who are you?" Lois asked in a strangled voice.

"I'm Clark Kent," he replied, looking nothing like the mild-mannered reporter she thought she knew so well as he stood before her in that brightly colored spandex suit. His cape rippled slightly from the breeze that wafted in through the still-open window. "I was born on the planet Krypton. Right before it exploded, I was sent to Earth. I was just an infant. I was found and raised by a couple of simple farmers in the Midwest. I had a fairly normal childhood, although I never really got sick or injured. When I was about ten, I started developing some rather unusual abilities. By the time I was in high school I could bench press a tractor and I discovered that I could fly the day I graduated. I went to college, got a degree in journalism because I loved writing, and then I traveled the world for a few years before finally coming to Metropolis to pursue my dream job. I finally found the place I wanted to call home... and thanks to the most fascinating woman I've ever met, I finally figured out a way to use all those super powers and still be able to live that ordinary life."

"I hate to break it to you, Clark," Lois said with a grim smile, "but your life is anything but ordinary."

Clark chuckled softly. "Yeah," he agreed. "You're smiling. Is that a good sign?"

She felt that small smile start to fade. "I don't know."

"I don't know how I could ever make up for the pain I caused you, but I'd gladly spend the rest of my life trying if you'd be willing to give me a chance." Clark paused to sigh; he raked a hand through his hair, completely disheveling the slicked-back look Superman had always worn. Lois gasped as she took in the disconcerting image of Clark Kent in Superman's suit. "I don't know how much of a life that's going to be after tonight, though."

"What do you mean?" Lois asked, her eyes wrinkling in confusion.

"Think about it, Lois. As far as the world is concerned, Clark Kent was killed tonight. There was a whole room full of witnesses that saw what happened. There's no way any ordinary man could have survived being shot at point blank range. In effect, Clark Kent is dead."

"That's ridiculous. You're not dead. You're right here." She emphasized the last word with a one-fingered poke to his chest.

"All those people saw me get shot, Lois. How in the world could I possibly explain my survival?"

"Well, there was one possibility that came to mind before I figured out what really happened," Lois began, her voice shifting into a cool, business-like tone. "It's a little far-fetched, but if there's one thing this dual-identity thing of yours has taught me, it's that people see what they want to see, what they expect to see. And since you have a pretty decent credibility rating—as far as the public is concerned, anyway—I don't think anyone would doubt your story, no matter how improbable it may be."

Clark tilted his head to one side as he considered her words. "And just what would that improbable story be?"

Lois couldn't help smiling at the light of hope that flickered to life in his eyes. "The bullets hit your pager. It was enough to stun you and you blacked out. When you came to, you were in some dark, disgusting alley, and not too much worse for the wear."

"All three bullets?" Clark sounded almost cynically skeptical. "That's more than a little far-fetched, Lois. That kind of thing only happens in the movies."

"It'll work," she replied confidently.

"It's crazy," Clark returned, still doubtful.

"And a reporter that flies around in spandex isn't?" One eyebrow quirked up challengingly.

"You really think people will believe it?" Although he still sounded doubtful, she heard the tiny spark of hope that tinted his voice.

"I'm sure they will. People tend to believe what they want to believe," she reiterated. "You can't stay dead, Clark. I really don't want to lose my partner, even if I am furious with him at the moment."

That tiny spark of hope erupted into a bonfire. "Does that mean... do you think you'll be able to forgive me?"

"Maybe," Lois replied. "Probably. Eventually."

"Take all the time you need, Lois," he told her gently. "I'm a patient man."

"It may take a while," she returned.

"That's all right," Clark assured her.

"Weeks at least. Maybe months." She was testing him now.

"I'll be right here waiting for you." He was probably the first kid in class to finish the pop quizzes.

"What if it takes years?" Still testing him.

"I waited almost thirty years to find you. A few more won't kill me." Naturally, he passed with flying colors. Rather fitting, all things considered.

"You really are different from other men." Extra credit opportunity.

"I tried to tell you. I'm really glad you finally believe me."

This time it was his warm smile that earned the points.

Lois opened her mouth to reply, but was way-laid by a large yawn. "I guess I'm tired," she said by way of an apology.

"It's been a pretty eventful evening," Clark said understandingly.

"Has it ever!" She vainly tried to stifle a second yawn.

"I should go," he offered.

Lois nodded her head a couple of times. "You should probably stop by the police station and give Henderson the cover story."

"You really think we should tell him first? Do you think he'll buy it?" That note of skepticism was back.

Lois smiled softly as she recalled her conversation with the cop earlier in the evening. "I'm pretty sure he'll go along with it. You owe him a big thank you, by the way. It was his observation that steered my thoughts straight through your big secret."

Curiosity filled Clark's expression. "What observation was that?"

Lois repeated the words that had haunted her earlier. "There was no blood."

"I never even thought about that," Clark replied.

"I might not have either if Henderson hadn't pointed it out," she admitted with due chagrin.

"You're right. I owe him a huge debt of gratitude." Clark walked back over to the window, smoothing his hair back down into its usual style. "I'll let you go get some rest. I'll call you in the morning and let you know how it went with Henderson."

"Actually... I'd like to go with you. If you don't mind." She winced, hating the hint of trepidation that had slipped into her voice without her permission.

"I don't mind at all," Clark assured her. "Would you rather walk, take a cab... or fly?"

A slow smile pulled at her lips as she crossed to him. "You really don't fight fair. You know I love flying with you."

Clark grinned broadly. "All's fair in love and war."

The smile froze on her face and her eyes widened in surprise. "Love?"

"Yes, Lois," he said as he pulled her into his arms. "Love. All that I have to give is yours."

"Do you have any idea what it did to me to think that I'd never see you again? To realize that I would miss you terribly every day for the rest of my life? I believed you had died before I'd worked up the nerve to tell you how I feel about you."

"How you feel about me?" The bonfire was now a raging inferno burning out of control.

"I may be fearless when it comes to work, but in matters of

the heart... not so much." Lois swallowed hard once, digging deep for every last reserve of strength she possessed. "It took me a year just to be able to admit my feelings to myself. And then, before I had a chance to tell you, you told me that you weren't really in love with me, that you just wanted to be friends." She paused when Clark winced, obviously remembering that fateful conversation in front of the remains of the Daily Planet building not so long ago.

"I guess I should have let you speak first," he said, chagrined.

Lois nodded her head a couple of times. "If you had, I'd have told you... that the reason I had stopped that disastrous wedding... was because I couldn't stop thinking about you. The whole time I was walking down the aisle, standing at the altar... all I could think about was you. And suddenly I couldn't deny it anymore. I couldn't ignore the truth I had been hiding from for so long—that somehow, in spite of the fierce resistance I put up, I had spent the last year slowly falling in love with my best friend."

Clark's eyes had filled with a curious mix of regret and burgeoning love. "I really should have let you go first."

"Why'd you do it?" she asked softly. "Why did you tell me you weren't in love with me?"

He shook his head, a slight, wry smile pulling at the corners of his mouth. "I was afraid you'd be uncomfortable knowing I was in love with you when you didn't feel the same way."

Lois laughed, shaking her head from side to side with an equally wry grin. "It's amazing that we work so well together professionally, considering the way we keep screwing up our personal relationship."

"So... where do we go from here?" Clark asked hesitantly.

Her smile widened and her eyes began to twinkle. "We go flying," she told him, stepping closer to him and bringing her hands up to rest against the solid wall of his chest. He lifted his own hands to cover hers. "Then we go to Henderson and tell him our cover story. After that, we track down the bad guys, bring them to justice. And then..."

"And then?" Clark prodded when she trailed off.

"And then," she continued, her eyes and her smile and her voice turning decidedly sultry, "you and I can start making up for lost time."

Clark smiled, really smiled, for the first time since he had floated through her window a little while ago. It seemed strange that so little time had actually passed; it felt like a lifetime had come and gone over the last hour.

"I like the sound of that," he told her warmly, his voice suffused with more emotions than she could name. One of his hands left hers, coming up to gently cup her cheek. His thumb traced the line of her cheekbone and she tipped her head slightly into his palm. "I love you, Lois. I have from the moment you first barreled into my life."

"Oh, Clark," she breathed. "I tried so hard to dismiss you... but you made me see you. No matter how hard I fought to ignore the way you made me feel, no matter how much I denied my feelings, they wouldn't go away. They only grew stronger and stronger, until it was impossible for me to hide from them any longer." She took a deep breath before she plowed ahead, finally saying the words she knew he was longing to hear. "I love you, Clark Kent. I think I always have, and I know I always will."

The beam that filled Clark's face was brighter than the sun and every bit as warm. Her answering smile was tremulous as she lifted her hand to cup his face in a gesture that mirrored his. Then his hand slid around to the back of her head, his fingers weaving through her silky hair as he tipped her head back slightly. Their eyes simultaneously flickered down to one another's lips before meeting again. They held their gazes locked as they slowly moved towards each other. The moment their lips made contact,

that raging inferno erupted into a full-blown forest fire that would consume everything in its fiery path.

And yet, even as the passion flowed between them, threatening to overwhelm them both, the movement of their mouths remained slow, unhurried. It wasn't their first kiss, but it was the first in this new chapter of their relationship, and they each felt the need to savor every moment of their mutual explorations. Their lips caressed one another as they experimented with different pressures, light and teasing, then firm and demanding.

After a while, his tongue slipped out to trace the line of her lips—first the upper, then the lower. She sought to do the same, eager for her first real taste of him. Then their tongues made contact, and Lois was sure she saw fireworks exploding behind her closed eyes. Desire more potent than she knew existed suddenly ripped through her, sending every last nerve in her body into overdrive. Their kiss deepened and intensified as they sought to learn every last nuance of one another's mouths. She heard soft moans barely loud enough to be audible over the sound of blood rushing through her head, but she had no idea whether they had come from her or him or both.

After eternity came and went, they gradually slowed down before finally pulling apart. They didn't move very far apart, though; their foreheads came to rest against each other while their shallow, ragged breathing slowly calmed. Lois was trembling slightly, and she could have sworn that Clark's entire body seemed to be vibrating with energy. She finally braved raising her eyelids and found Clark looking back at her, his dark eyes filled with the purest love she had ever seen.

"Wow!" Her exclamation was barely more than a whisper.

"Yeah," he breathed in agreement.

She finally moved her head back a little so that she could see him more clearly. "We should have done that ages ago!" There was a little more strength in her voice, but it still held that breathless quality of someone who had just exerted a great deal of energy.

Clark laughed in response. "Well, the good news is, we have the rest of our lives to repeat the experience."

Lois gasped ever so slightly. "The rest of our lives?" she repeated.

Clark smiled reassuringly. "I'm a forever kind of guy, Lois. I really have been waiting for you all my life, and I know I'll love you for the rest of it."

"Forever?" She knew she was repeating him again like some sort of parrot, but her mind was still clouded with passion and desire, and the words—their meaning—were slow to penetrate the lingering fog in her brain.

"Forever." The word sounded like a vow.

"I think..." Lois faltered, and another mighty tremble shook her to the core. Clark's arms tightened around her, and she was certain he was the only reason she was still standing upright. "I think," she began again, "I like the sound of that."

Clark lowered his mouth to hers once more. "Good," he murmured against her lips. This kiss was brief and almost chaste compared with the previous one, but when he pulled back, she could still see desire simmering in his eyes. "I love you," he told her again.

"I love you, too," she returned.

He grinned and scooped her up into the familiar cradle of his arms. "Come on. Let's go flying." Lois giggled as they defied gravity and floated out her window. As they drifted through the glittering tapestry of the night sky, Lois sighed with contentment. What had almost been the very worst night of her entire life had somehow become the night her life truly began, and she had never felt more at peace.

THE END