

The Perfect Costume

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Summary: Lois needs a date for a costume party. A date that would be able to survive the matchmaking attempts of Ellen Lane. Someone with a skin of steel. Only he couldn't go there as himself, right? But Lois has the perfect costume for him.

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There was the knock on her window that Lois had come to associate with one of Superman's visits. She greeted him with a happy smile. "Hi! You know that my window is always open for you."

Superman smiled right back at her. "Yes, I know. Still, I think it's only appropriate to knock before entering." Taking a long look at her, he realized that Lois seemed upset. "Lois, is anything bothering you?"

Lois sighed. Superman knew her only too well. As did Clark. But she couldn't tell Clark about it. He wasn't safe. Superman was. "Yes, there's something." She paused until she saw the Man of Steel nod in encouragement. "It's really stupid, actually. But there is this costume party at my mother's place, and she insists I go there."

Clark had a hard time hiding his smile. "How badly can a costume party be worrying you? It's not as though you were dangling over the jaws of death," he teased.

Did she hear right? *Superman* was teasing her? "You have no idea. You don't know my mother. It will be awful. She wants me to bring a date. And, knowing my mother, she'll start matchmaking as soon as I get there. And I still don't know who to ask to go with me." Sadly, she shook her head. Why couldn't she have a mother like Clark's?

"You could ask Clark," Superman suggested.

"Oh no, no, no, I can't. See, he means a lot to me, much more than I'm ready to tell him, and I don't want to scare him away. And that's exactly what my mother would do. No sane man would even consider dating me if he knew what kind of family I'm stuck with. Much less a man with parents who are as perfect as Clark's," Lois babbled.

He listened intently to Lois' trademark babble, secretly enjoying every second of it. How much he loved listening to his babbling brook, she'd never know. In fact, he'd have to be very careful to never call her a babbling brook. If she ever found out, she'd kick him where it hurt. And she'd find a way to make it hurt. "And you can't ask anybody else because Clark could get jealous?" he suggested.

Lois sighed heavily. "That's not the point here. Clark and I aren't exclusive, so he has no reason to get jealous. No, the point is that I barely know any people. Most people I know are from the Planet, and I wouldn't want to ask any of them. It'd be all over the office within an hour. I don't have time to cope with any rumor-mongering sleazeball of a colleague."

"Don't you know anybody else you could ask?" Superman asked before he could stop himself.

Lois looked up at him speculatively. "Well, now that you mention it... I know *you*. Any plans for tomorrow evening?" she finished on a brighter note.

Inwardly, Clark groaned. He had known that he shouldn't

have asked his question as soon as it left his mouth. Now, he had a problem. He couldn't let Lois down, yet he could hardly appear as her date at her mother's party.

"It's not as if you had to go there as Superman. As a matter of fact, I'd rather you got yourself another costume." Lois stopped to think. Something was wrong with that. She couldn't picture Superman entering a store and buying a costume. With some trouble, she suppressed the giggles threatening to escape from her mouth. "Or I'm going get you a costume. I think that's a much better idea. Thank you for helping me out."

Lois flashed a bright smile at him as he cocked his head to listen to a call for help. His help. "Lois, I'm sorry, I have to go. We'll talk about it later."

Superman flew out of the window. And he began to wonder. Why had he ever agreed to be Lois' date? Oh, right. He hadn't.

The next afternoon, Superman knocked at Lois' window again. "Hi, there," she greeted him. "You're early. That's good. Because you still have to get into your costume. Just a question: Does the Suit come off? It doesn't matter much, because you can hide most of it under the costume I got you. Only your boots don't fit in with it. Maybe you can get a pair of black shoes?"

Clark took quick inventory of the things he had with him. "I have some with me. Why?"

Lois shot him a look which clearly stated that she thought him rather dumb. She tossed him a black something he quickly identified as some sort of robe. "Because this would look really stupid with red boots sticking out from underneath it. But with black shoes, you might just fade into the background. Maybe you want to change in my bedroom? I've got one of Clark's suits laid out for you, should you not want to wear yours underneath. I think you're about the same height."

Clark hesitated for a moment. This was going to be dangerous. Then again, the robe would surely cover the suit, no matter which one he wore. So Clark opted for getting into his regular suit. When he was done, he walked back into the living room.

Lois eyed him critically. "Yes, you look okay, I guess." She felt a slight flush creep over her cheeks. Superman looked absolutely *fantastic* in black. Droolworthy, even. Pity there was no way she could ogle his arms, though. She shook herself out of her reverie and grabbed her lipstick. Without any warning, she approached Superman with it.

"Wait a second," he protested. "What is the lipstick for?"

Lois rolled her eyes. Superman was supposed to know everything. So why did he have to ask? "Superman, you need a scar. And I'm going to give you one."

Superman shook his head vehemently. "Lois, I'm not going as a zombie!"

"Of course not. You're going as a wizard. A very powerful wizard." Sudden inspiration stuck her. "Really, that's just the costume for you. You could even pretend to be riding a broomstick."

"Wizards don't ride broomsticks. Witches do."

"Nonsense. This wizard does. He's even on the House Quidditch team."

Quidditch? Lois was talking about Quidditch? That could only mean big trouble for the Man of Steel. Lois wouldn't want him to be the Boy who Lived, would she? Knowing Lois, the answer was probably yes. "I don't think this is a good idea," he protested weakly.

"Of course it is! It's perfect." Quickly, Lois painted a lightning shape onto Superman's forehead. At least it was almost lightning-shaped. "All you still have to do is muss up your hair and put on these glasses. Meanwhile, I'm going to change into Hermione Granger." She held her hand out to him. She held sellotaped glassed in it. Cautiously, he took them into his hand.

Before he could voice any more protests, Lois vanished into her bedroom. Behind her, the door closed with the force of a passing whirlwind.

Had she been looking at him, Lois would have seen a very flustered superhero. He couldn't do it. Lois would recognize him at once; there was no way around it. She'd go ballistic. But didn't he want to tell her eventually? So, why not take this opportunity?

He flew home in a rush to get all the gel out of his hair; then he returned to Lois' place, all in an instant. That obstacle out of the way, Superman stood in front of a mirror, glasses in hand. He took a deep breath before putting them on. He looked at his mirror image, and Clark Kent in a Harry Potter costume was looking back. This costume was indeed perfect.

Suddenly, Lois opened the door to her bedroom again. "So, what do I get to call you tonight? Superman does seem rather stupid," she said, addressing his back.

Slowly, Clark squared his shoulders and turned around to face her. "You're right. Superman doesn't seem right."

THE END