

A Revelation by Any Other Name

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Rated: PG

Submitted April 2010

Summary: Whilst taking a jog, rain causes Lois to stop at Clark's place. What will she discover?

Lois Lane found that she was starting to get winded. She'd been jogging for about forty five minutes and had lost track of where she was going. She stopped, leaning her hand against a lamppost, in order to catch her breath. It took a few moments, but she finally recognized where she was. She was about two blocks from Clark's place. How had she wound up over here? This wasn't her normal route when she jogged.

She let her mind back track to the start of her run, trying to figure out where she had gotten off course. Suddenly it hit her. Normally, she would cut through Centennial Park, and begin to circle back toward her apartment, but tonight there had been some sort of rally going on in the Park and she decided to avoid it. She'd just, sort of, zoned out then and kept running. Now she found herself near her partner's place.

She looked back the way she'd come. It was going to be a long run back. She glanced back up the street toward Clinton, and Clark's apartment. Should she drop in on Clark and borrow enough to call a cab to take her home, or should she suck it up, and make the long run back?

She carried her keys, ID, and change for the phone with her whenever she ran, but not nearly enough money for a taxi. She, also, never took her credit cards with her anymore. Not since that time last year when she'd been mugged and a couple of kids had run off with her wallet. It took days, and a multitude of phone calls to get that mess straightened out.

Lois chewed on her lower lip as she contemplated what she should do when the decision was taken out of her control. A flash of lightning startled her, followed very quickly by a tremendous boom of thunder. She glanced quickly up at the sky. When had all those clouds moved in?

Rain began to fall. It started softly, but in moments it had built in intensity and the wind had begun to pick up significantly. She was getting wet; and getting wetter by the second. She took off at a sprint toward Clark's place.

It didn't take but a few minutes to reach Clark's front door, but even so, she was thoroughly soaked.

Lois pounded on the front door, calling out her partner's name. There was no answer. She stood on the stoop and fumed for a few minutes. Why would Clark be out in this weather?

Well, there was no way Lois was going to stand around, possibly catching her death, waiting for the farm boy to come home and invite her in. She immediately began searching for a hidden key. Hiding a key outside your place in a city like Metropolis was a bad idea, and she had told Clark that ...many times. But this was Clark, and within a few minutes she had found it. Hidden in the bottom of a hanging flower pot, which no longer held any flowers, was the key.

You could take the Clark out of the country, but you would never take the country out of Clark. She smiled. She

wouldn't have it any other way.

Grimacing in contempt over the fact that Clark only had one lock on his door, Lois quickly let herself into his apartment.

"Clark?" Lois called out. Just because he didn't answer her knock didn't necessarily mean he wasn't home. He might not have heard her over the rain, though her partner always seemed to have very good hearing.

Nope, no one home. Lois walked quickly through the living room and to the bathroom door. She turned her head and peeked into the bedroom area. Clark wasn't there either. Her first task was to get herself dried off, so she entered the bathroom and closed the door behind her.

She stripped her sodden sweat suit off and tossed it into the corner. She was just starting to shiver a bit from the cold rain she'd endured. She eyed Clark's shower and the desire to stand under the hot spray was like a physical hunger. Lois noted that Clark had a couple of nice, oversized bath towels hung on his rack. Normally, she'd tell herself that the person's space she was invading wouldn't mind and she'd do what she wanted to do. Strangely enough, she knew that Clark wouldn't mind if she used his shower under the circumstances. So it was without any guilt that shrugged off her underwear and cranked the shower until it was steaming.

Lois stayed under the hot shower until she nearly fell asleep. Stepping out onto his bathmat, she reached for the larger towel. She wrapped it around herself, then gathered her wet clothes and draped them over the shower curtain rod.

Lois had to smile. She hadn't known Clark quite a full year yet, but she felt comfortable enough to hang her underwear in his bathroom. If the guys at the Planet could see her now, tongues would wag. She shrugged her shoulders. Let 'em wag. Clark was her partner and ...her best friend. It was a revelation that had come slowly to Lois Lane, but she liked it. She'd never had a best friend before. The idea of letting anyone get that close to her had always been too scary. The better people got to know you, the more power they had over you. That wasn't a thought that Lois was comfortable with. Yet it didn't bother her that Clark knew so much about her ...who she really was. She knew he wasn't the kind of guy who would ever use it against her.

As she was wrapping her wet hair in the smaller towel she heard a noise in the apartment. Clark must've come home; at least she hoped it was Clark. She decided to play it safe and sneak a peek quietly before she made her presence known.

She reached for the doorknob and turned it slowly.

Clark, as Superman, flashed into his apartment via the balcony and immediately spun out of his wet suit and into a pair of shorts and a T-shirt. He dropped the soggy suit into the corner of the kitchen. He'd take it to the bathroom later. Right now he wanted something warm to drink.

He pulled a box of his favorite tea out of the cupboard and set it on the counter. He grabbed a large mug out of the sink and filled it with water. He stared at the liquid, focusing his heat vision on it, until it began to bubble and give off some steam. He was just about to pull a tea bag out of the box when he heard a gasp. He turned toward the sound.

"Lois?" She was standing in his living room wearing only a couple of towels. One was wrapped around her body and another turbaned her head. Her mouth was hanging

open.

“Clark?” The word held more than a hint of questioning in it.

Panic flooded through Clark. It didn't matter what she was doing there ...in his bath towels. What mattered was that she'd caught him doing something super, as Clark Kent. Several questions flashed through his mind. What had she really seen? Had it been enough to have given him away? Could he explain it away?

“Only,” her voice faltered as she pointed at him. “Only Superman can do that!”

Dozens of lame excuses flashed through Clark's mind. From flat denial to ignoring her comment, and everything in between was considered and instantly rejected. The truth was, Clark was tired of the lies and he wanted Lois to know. He just didn't want to go through the drama and the hurt that he knew would be forth coming from Lois. He knew all about her trust issues, and she would see his lying to her all this time as a betrayal of the friendship they had built.

Suddenly a plan sprung to mind. He took a breath and turned toward Lois, his expression was one of mild amusement.

“Well, it's not like on the old TV show, ‘The Greatest American Hero’, the powers aren't in the suit.” He gave her a quizzical look. “But you know that, Lois.”

Clark purposely drank down the scalding hot liquid in a couple of quick gulps, and then using super speed, rinsed out the cup and put it back into the cupboard. Lois just sputtered.

“So, Lois, not that you aren't always welcome, but what are you doing here? Coming out of my shower no less.”

Lois took a few steps toward him. “I was jogging and was caught in the rain.” She reached out and touched his arm. “Clark?”

Clark turned, completely ignoring her puzzlement. “Where are my manners? Would you like a cup of tea?” He turned and gave her a sly smile. “You know it won't take but a few seconds to heat up another cup of water.”

Lois opened her mouth, and closed it again, a couple of times before words finally came out. “You're Superman.”

Clark nodded and chuckled. “Yeah, and I don't think I've ever actually thanked you for keeping my secret for so long. I know you're more than smart enough to have figured out how dangerous it might be for my parents and friends if that sort of information became public knowledge, not to mention what a nightmare my personal life would become.”

Clark placed his palm against Lois' cheek. “Thank you, Lois.”

“But, you never told me.” The words just trailed off as Lois was stuck for any more to say. Clark guided the bewildered reporter, like a lost child, toward the living room and sat her on the couch. He took the chair opposite.

“Look, I know that I've been pretty successful keeping my actions as Superman, and my life as who I am, Clark Kent, separate and a secret from the world at large, but I knew that I would never really fool you. Let's face it, we work together every day. No one knows me like you do. Hey, you're Lois Lane, it's not like I ever had a chance of keeping you in the dark about my extracurricular activities.”

“I ...”

“Oh, I knew that I could trust you, and I'm really glad that you know the truth, but I have to admit that I'm curious.” Clark leaned closer and gave Lois a warm smile.

“Tell, me was there ever a time when you were tempted to write that Pulitzer shoe-in expose?”

Lois grabbed Clark's hands between her own. “Wait a minute!”

Lois was holding Clark's hands between her own and she felt like her head was going to explode. Clark was Superman. Clark was Superman! And he acted like the revelation was no big deal. According to what he'd said so far this evening; he assumed she already knew. But she didn't, or hadn't known. She hadn't even had an inkling.

Now that he'd admitted to being Superman, some things made more sense. But something still wasn't right. Clark's whole laize faire admission just seemed to ring ...wrong somehow.

“So, I suppose all those ridiculous excuses you made, when you ran off on me, were just an excuse to go and become Superman.”

“Of course.” Clark smiled. “I'm sure glad that those were just in case any one was nearby who might overhear us. I sure would've had a tough time if I'd had to come up with excuses that actually would have fooled you.”

Lois was beginning to grind her teeth. She felt like a fool, and she didn't like that feeling. The fact was, she hadn't known that Clark was Superman. She hadn't even entertained the possibility, and in hindsight, she should have. What kind of investigative reporter was she? In a way, Clark was correct. With her reputation, and her abilities as the top reporter in Metropolis, there should have been no way that she wouldn't have ferreted out Clark's dual identity.

On the other hand, she was secretly thrilled that apparently Clark was comfortable with the fact that she knew he was also Superman. Still ...

“Okay, but if you knew that I knew,” Lois almost choked on that one. “How come you never made any references, or used your powers as Clark when we were alone together?”

Clark gave Lois a look of confusion. “Of course I used my powers around you. I had to be circumspect because I could never be sure how alone we might be. Which is why I never mentioned anything out loud. But you can't tell me you weren't aware of how we conveniently *found* so many secret rooms, or hidden desk drawers. And then there were all those faulty chains and poorly tied ropes that just happened to be used to secure us when we were caught.”

“Yeah, well, I'm still wondering why you never just leaned over and whispered ‘Lois, there's a fire on Park, I have to go’ instead of making up all those terrible excuses.”

“Those excuses were for public consumption, they were never meant for you, Lois. You know that.” Lois noticed a frown begin to crease Clark's forehead. “Wait a minute. Are you trying to tell me that I've been wrong all this time? That you really didn't know that I was also Superman?”

“What?” Lois had to suppress a cough. “Of course not. I knew early on that my Mr. Green Jeans partner secretly moonlighted in tights.”

Clark raised his brow. “So, exactly when did you realize that Superman and I were one in the same?”

Lois had to fight the urge to squirm. “Oh, I don't remember exactly. It was probably a gradual realization as I got to know you, and Superman, better. It's not as if a pair of glasses and some hair gel were really that great of a disguise.”

Clark nodded, and grinned. “Yeah, well ...why didn't

you say something?”

“What?”

“If you knew, why didn’t you say anything? Why didn’t you tell me you knew?”

Lois suddenly felt her throat constricting. “Ah ...well, I wasn’t sure that you knew that I knew and I didn’t want to worry you.” She almost smiled in triumph over her quick thinking.

“Uh, huh.” Clark gave Lois a penetrating stare.

Realizing she was only clad in a couple of towels, Lois was suddenly feeling quite exposed. She needed to get out of this situation. She needed time to think.

“You know, Clark, we can discuss this all later. I’m standing in the middle of your living room dressed only in a towel. I really need to get dried off and get home.”

Clark smiled. “I’m sorry. I should have taken care of that right away.” He walked into the bathroom and came out a few moments later with Lois’ sweat suit in his hands. “Here you go, Lois.”

Lois took them from him. “They’re dry.” The suit was warm to the touch. Lois glanced at Clark as he winked. “Thanks.” She quickly stepped back into the bathroom. Her underwear was still hanging on the curtain rod, but they had been dried also. She got dressed.

In a few minutes she came back out and was searching for her shoes.

“Would you like me to dry your hair for you?” Clark gestured toward her damp locks.

Lois shook her head. “No, that’s okay; I don’t want you to accidentally set my hair on fire.”

Clark laughed. “That wouldn’t happen. At worst I’d merely singe off most of your hair.”

“That’s a comforting thought.”

“I have better control than that.” Clark flashed his heat vision across Lois’ head. She could feel the warmth. Within moments her hair was dry again. “Would you like me to fly you home?” He glanced out the window. “It seems that the rain has stopped.”

Lois felt a little flutter in the pit of her stomach. She never turned down a chance to fly with Superman, but somehow it seemed even more intimate now that she knew it was actually Clark she would be flying with. For all the confusion that this evening had brought to her, she couldn’t deny that Clark was her best friend, and now that she knew he was Superman ...well, who knows where that friendship would lead.

“That would be great, thanks.”

Her jaw dropped as Clark began to spin, then ended up in the middle of his living room dressed as Superman. The suit felt cool against her exposed arms, but she felt a growing warmth spreading through her body when he lifted her into his arms.

Using his super breath, Clark pushed open the door to his balcony. They stepped out onto it and in moments were airborne into the night. The clouds were beginning to tatter, and bright stars were poking through. It was going to be a beautiful night.

Lois surreptitiously glanced up at Clark’s face. She still wasn’t certain exactly what had happened this evening, and she was definitely going to get to the bottom of it ...someday. But for now, maybe she’d just enjoy knowing that her partner, and her best friend, was also a god in tights. Not a bad combination. Not a bad combination at all.

Fin.

THE END