

# Wasted Revelations

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Set during "House of Luthor," an in-betweeny that explores what happened between Lex's suicide leap and the meeting in front of the Daily Planet. A holiday ficathon story written for Sue S.

Disclaimer: The characters belong to DC Comics and all the others; I'm just messing with them for fun. Acknowledgements and ficathon story prompts are included at the end.

This is for you, Sue. I hope you like it.

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Clark Kent was pissed. Smashed. Totally wasted. For the first time in his life, he was completely, one hundred percent, out-of-his-mind drunk. He'd never been able to get drunk before, but then again, he'd only been without his powers once before, too. And after Trask had tried to kill him, he'd felt so good about his prospects with Lois, that trying to drown his sorrows in a bottle was the *last* thing on his mind.

He had always wondered about himself, though, and now he knew. Without his powers, he really was just like anyone else. The thought almost made him smile. At least something good had come from almost dying in Luthor's Kryptonite cage.

Clark picked up his glass and swirled the remaining liquid in a slow circle. He'd stopped counting how many drinks he'd had about the same time he realized that the alcohol was affecting him. Since then, he had just enjoyed the feeling. Intellectually, he knew that he'd regret his binge in the morning, but for the moment, the warmth in his chest and the blissful sluggishness to his thoughts were a welcome reprieve to the day's events. The fear, anxiety and anger that had preceded Lois' wedding had finally disappeared and now he just wanted to decompress.

Thinking of the day's events twisted Clark's mouth sourly and he tossed back the remainder of this drink before lifting his glass to the bartender for another. A moment later, the bartender set a fresh drink in front of him and Clark snatched the cherry out of the empty glass before the bartender could take it away.

Dropping the fruit into his new drink, Clark shrugged off any lingering, dark thoughts of Luthor, Kryptonite, and ill-timed declarations of love. Lois was safe and the world was free from the clutches of the most despicable villain he'd ever known. He smiled; that fact alone was reason to celebrate.

Clark was just lifting the glass to his mouth when he saw Lois enter the bar. In order to avoid most of the noise, Clark had selected a bar stool in the corner farthest from the door, so he had plenty of time to admire her as she made her way through the dingy room. Lois was dressed casually in jeans and a sweatshirt, her hair tied back in a messy ponytail. But even with the stress of the day's events lingering on her face, she looked more beautiful than ever.

Lois caught sight of Clark sitting at the opposite end of the bar and started making her way toward him. As she pressed through a knot of bikers blocking her way, she realized that Clark had seen her and watched as he smiled in greeting and raised his glass in silent salute. She smiled

back at him, relieved by his friendly response. As she came near, he called out his greeting a little louder than strictly necessary to be heard over the music.

"Lois. I was just thinking about you, and here you are. You must be psychic ... or maybe I am...."

Lois' steps slowed and she eyed him suspiciously, trying to figure out whether he was serious. Clark seemed oblivious to her scrutiny, however, as his forehead creased in thought. Not a pick-up line, then, just tipsy already. She glanced at the impressive pile of lime rinds, colorful plastic swords and cherry stems in front of him and blinked in surprise. Make that really drunk, then.

Amusement and concern both tugged at the corner of Lois' mouth as her former partner shrugged off his confusion and smiled at her again. After the rollercoaster ride their friendship had taken over the past couple of months, Lois hadn't been sure of the reception she would receive from him. But Clark had been there for her, wrapping her up in his protective embrace immediately following her aborted wedding and Lex's suicide. She had needed him desperately and he hadn't disappointed her.

Clark had stayed by her side all afternoon while she'd given her statement to the police and had somehow diverted her mother before taking her back to her apartment. Trying to be strong, she'd told Clark she was fine and after exacting a promise that she'd call if she needed anything, he had left. She'd paced for hours, replaying the horror of the day interspersed with self-recriminations for her stubborn blindness. When she could no longer stand her empty apartment, she'd gone to Clark's place and Perry had sent her in the direction of the closest bar.

"Definitely not psychic," Lois admitted ruefully as she reached Clark's side. She glared at the man to Clark's left until the man slipped off his bar stool and took his drink elsewhere. Lois slipped onto the vacated stool with a sigh.

"So, how'd you find me?" Clark asked.

"Who says I was looking for you, Kent?"

"Well, since you headed straight for me and didn't give Tommy the Tank a second look, I figured it was a safe bet."

Lois glanced in the direction Clark was pointing in time to see a short, balding man with a few missing teeth and a large beer gut slap a passing waitress in the backside. Lois made a face and nudged Clark's shoulder with hers good-naturedly as he laughed. "It really wasn't that hard to track you down. Perry told me you'd gone for a drink, so I started with the places closest to your apartment and worked my way out from there."

"Ah," he said before toasting her with his glass. "Lois Lane, the best reporter in town."

Lois could hear no malice in his voice, but she still felt her skin flush at Clark's words. She knew that he meant it as a compliment, but she couldn't get past her recent mistakes to enjoy it. Instead of responding, she looked uneasily around the bar. With its thick smoky haze, cracked vinyl seats and raucous crowd, it wasn't a place she would have expected to find her partner. "What are you doing here, Clark?"

"Drinkin'. Hey, did you know they have more than ten kinds of beer on tap here?"

"You don't say. Have you tried them all?"

"Naw, I think beer tastes like the inside of a barn stall, but I like the drinks with fruit." He lifted his glass as proof and paused to enjoy Lois' smile. "How about you? What are you doing here?"

Lois swallowed the temptation to answer flippantly.

Clark had been more than generous today. The least she could do is to be honest with him. “Looking for a friend, I guess. We are still friends, aren’t we Clark?”

He slung an arm around her shoulders, almost pulling her out of her seat. “Of course,” he said with a silly grin. “Best friends.”

Feeling off-balance and more than a little amused, Lois removed his arm and ordered a white wine from the bartender before settling back onto her stool. Unable to shake the feeling that she was being watched, her eyes tracked around the room again. Her reputation among her colleagues had kept most of the reporters at bay and she had taken precautions to avoid being followed, but she was still wary of the paparazzi. She started when she realized that Clark was staring at her with a soppy smile. “Why are you grinning at me like that?”

“Weren’t you supposed to ask me if that seat is taken?”

“Oh. I’m sorry. Are you here with someone?”

Clark reached over and tapped his glass against hers. “I am now.”

In spite of her best effort not to, Lois smiled. She’d walked right into that one. She realized that she had never seen Clark drunk before, but she had to admit that he was kind of adorable. Best not to let him know that, though. “Do I look like someone that would respond to that kind of line?” she asked.

“Nope. You look like someone that could use some cheering up.”

Her mock scowl softened into a self-conscious smile. “I do. Thanks, Clark. It’s been one hell of a day.”

Clark waited until she’d taken a sip of her drink before reaching for her hand. “I’m sorry, Lois. Sorry that we couldn’t get the evidence fast enough to avoid the wedding.”

“God, don’t apologize. I feel bad enough as it is. If I’d only investigated him myself...”

“Hey, you couldn’t have known. Luthor had years to perfect his act and he gave you no reason to doubt him. You just have this blind spot, Lois, and he exploited it.”

“Blind spot?” she asked incredulously. Although his facial expression was full of concern, not anger, this conversation was starting to sound suspiciously familiar. Regardless of her level of complicity in the wedding fiasco from hell, she yanked her hand away, feeling defensive. “Don’t patronize me, Clark. I know my own mind.”

He watched her eyebrows draw down stormily and he waved his arms around. “Whoa, whoa, hang on. No fighting! My brain is mush and I can’t compete. Next week, fine, but tonight is off limits. We’re celebrating and that’s that.”

Lois’ anger fled. Clark’s adamant declaration pulled a reluctant smile from her. She didn’t want to argue with Clark anymore, either. “Okay. Truce?”

“Truce,” he answered, tapping his glass to hers again. “Lois, you’re the smartest, most determined person I’ve ever met. Anyone who meets you stands in awe of your abilities, myself included. I know it was one of the biggest reasons Luthor wanted you.”

Lois blushed, looking down at his mention of her erstwhile fiancé. With anyone else, she’d have argued, going on the offensive in an effort to salvage her dignity, but even if he hadn’t called a time-out on their fight, she couldn’t with Clark. How many times had he told her that Lex was dirty? How many ways could he tell her to open her eyes and investigate the man she had intended to

marry? Clark knew her too well to dissemble, and although he would never rub those mistakes in her face, her lack of judgment and failure to see through Lex was still too painful to discuss.

Unaware of her discomfort, Clark continued talking. “What I’m trying to say is that you may know your own mind, Lois, but I think that sometimes you don’t know your own heart. Underneath that tough outside, your heart is warm, tender and beautiful, but it’s also vulnerable. I know it’s been broken before; Luthor was only the latest to take advantage of it.”

“Oh, God,” Lois moaned. “I knew telling you about Claude would come back to haunt me.”

“Come on, Lois. This is important. Whenever your heart gets broken, it leaves a scar and it’s hard to hear what your heart is saying underneath those thick calluses.” Clark held out his hand as proof of his words and then cocked his head in confusion. “Okay, so I don’t have any calluses, but you know what I mean.”

Lois watched Clark chug his drink and then stare at his hand again, his jaw ticking in contemplation. She didn’t know whether to laugh or roll her eyes. It had been a while since Clark had spouted some of his country zen wisdom, but it looked like today was her lucky day. Confucius Clark was back. Still ... the stuff he’d said made a kooky kind of sense.

Clark looked at her suddenly with a triumphant smile.

“I finally got it.”

“Got what?”

He pulled the cherry stem out of his mouth and held it up for inspection; it was tied in a knot. Clark wiggled his eyebrows. “Impressed?”

In answer, Lois shoved his shoulder. “You goof.”

Clark winked at her and Lois’s stomach made an unexpected tumble. She took a sip of her wine to hide her reaction and immediately crammed those feelings back through the door marked ‘no entry’.

Instead, she focused on what Clark had said. Lois had analyzed the past two months so many times trying to figure out where she’d gone wrong that her brain felt raw. Even with the benefit of hindsight, she still couldn’t understand how she had been so completely fooled by Lex. Maybe Clark was right.

But she hadn’t done everything wrong. In the end, Lois *had* listened to her heart and realized that it wasn’t Lex, or even Superman, that she had wanted. No one but Lex and the Arch Bishop had heard her, but she had said no. Suddenly, it was vital that Clark know she hadn’t gone through with it. “Clark, I have to tell you something. You weren’t there to hear it, but even before Perry and Henderson arrived, I told Lex that I wouldn’t marry him. How could I, when all I could think about was ... someone else?”

Lois blushed as she fumbled over her confession. Judging from the dazed look on Clark’s face, he probably assumed she meant Superman. She didn’t want to hurt him, but she hadn’t figured out yet how to tell Clark about her newfound feelings for him.

Clark opened his mouth to tell Lois that he already knew she’d stopped the wedding, but her final words made his head spin. It was obvious that even after refusing her affections, he’d been able to keep her from marrying Luthor. Well, not *him* him, but the other him. Surprisingly, he felt no jealousy. He was happy that even trapped in his Kryptonite prison, he’d been able to save her.

Unaware of Clark's inner monologue, Lois shook her head and scoffed at herself. "Not that anyone will believe I said no. Everyone knows that I was duped by Lex by now. I doubt I'll ever be taken seriously as a reporter again."

"Lois, no one has to know."

"Clark! Half of Metropolis was in the building and the rest of them will hear it on the news."

"So? Besides the two of us, only Perry, Jimmy and Jack know the truth. Let your reputation work in your favor." Clark's eyes sparkled as he warmed to the topic. "We can tell everyone that you suspected Luthor was dirty so you went undercover to distract him until we could find the evidence. Tell people it was all part of your plan to say no at the altar."

"Clark, that's ... I can't ask you to lie for me like that."

"Sure you can. I know the others will go along with it. Perry loves you like a daughter, Jimmy is in awe of you and Jack fears you; they won't say anything."

Lois noticed that he didn't mention how he felt about her, but she already knew. He'd told her in the park weeks ago. Even after she'd turned him down, he was trying to protect her. She couldn't believe he wanted to deliberately fabricate a story for her benefit. She disagreed that Perry would go along with it – he was too much an old newshound – but the idea was tempting.

Lois sipped her drink as she mulled over Clark's offer. To be able to say that she hadn't been fooled by Lex felt like a lifeline in stormy waters. Like when Clark had gone undercover at the Star, they could say they had staged all of their fights; even Perry might buy that one. She could give the exclusive interview to her partner as thanks for his loyalty and life could go on as if the whole sordid mess had never happened.

She realized immediately, though, that pretending would perpetuate her greatest flaw. She'd been so certain that she was right, that she couldn't be fooled by anyone, that she'd missed all the signs and dismissed her best friend's warnings. He'd been right and she'd been wrong. It would probably be better to face up to her mistakes and remember that she wasn't infallible.

She was amazed by Clark's ability to forgive her, though. If the tables had been turned, she probably wouldn't have been so considerate. Of course, those traits explained how he had been able to infiltrate her defenses and become so essential to her happiness. Other than Superman, he was the best man she'd ever met.

Lois stared at Clark while she thought over his words and then leaned over to kiss him softly on the cheek. "I don't deserve it, but thank you for the offer."

When she leaned back, Clark was grinning at her like a fool.

"What?" she asked.

"You kissed me." Clark set his drink down and shifted in his seat to scoot closer to her. "You kissed me and I *liked* it."

His knowing smile and husky tone generated an unexpectedly warm sensation to slide down her spine and pull her not-so-small attraction to Clark back out of its hiding place. She secretly loved it when he flirted with her and she figured that he must be *really* drunk to be so forward. "Thank God you aren't going to remember this tomorrow," she said.

"I'll remember that you kissed me."

"Clark, how much have you had to drink?"

"Dunno," he said leaning back. "I lost count."

"Well, then trust me. You're not going to remember any of this tomorrow."

"Yes, I will. Didn't you know? I have an eida ... eidetic memory. I never forget anything."

Lois snorted. "Right. You have a photographic memory. That's why you're constantly running off to return your library books when we're in the middle of an emergency."

"I never run off," he protested. "I go to help."

"Go to *get* help, maybe. Usually when I run into trouble, you're nowhere to be found. It's a wonder you ever get any Superman quotes for your stories."

Clark looked up at her and smiled as if he'd just remembered something important. "You wanna know a secret?" He crooked his finger and she leaned in close enough that he could feel the whisper of her breath on his cheek. He glanced around to make sure no one was close enough to hear before imparting his secret. "I'm drunk."

"No kidding."

Clark laughed like this was the most amazing thing to ever happen to him before. "No, you don't understand. I'm *really* drunk."

"Oh, I think I get it, Clark."

"But I've never been drunk before!"

"Never been *this* drunk, maybe."

"Nope. I've tried before, but ... nothin'."

"Uh huh. All those years of college football and traveling the world and you've never been drunk before. Next thing you'll be saying is that you're a virgin, too."

"Lois!" Clark hissed, his eyes wide.

Misinterpreting his horror, she patted him on the shoulder. "Don't worry, Clark. Your secret is safe with me."

Clark shook his head in protest, but stopped when his vision began to fade around the edges. He felt his body sway and tried to lean against the bar to steady himself, but missed and started slipping off his seat. Luckily, Lois grabbed his shoulders and helped him stand before he slid to the floor. She called for the check and paid it with an impressed lift of her eyebrow at Clark's total.

"Come on, Farmboy. Time to get you home."

Clark slung an arm around Lois' shoulder and gave her another sappy grin. "Perry, Jimmy and Jack are at my place. You should come over; we'll have a big slumber party."

He gave her a wink and then took a step forward, but didn't remember the first step down. Lois wrapped an arm around his waist just in time to keep him from falling on his face.

She struggled to get him upright. "Jeez, Clark. You weigh a ton."

"It's because I'm so dense."

"You're telling me," Lois laughed.

Clark looked behind him. "Whoa. That first step was a doozy."

"A veritable Mount Everest. On second thought, you're going to need some help sobering up. Maybe I should take you to my place first."

"Ha! I thought you said it wouldn't work on you."

Clark swayed and Lois half stumbled into a chair, narrowly missing a chance to get up-close and personal with Tommy's belly. With great effort, she got them moving toward the door again before she responded. "What are you talking about?"

"You said my pick-up line wouldn't work. But a beautiful woman just approached me, paid for my drinks and is taking me home with her. Sounds like it worked to me."

Lois burst out laughing. “Well, I guess when you put it like that .... It must have been all that sophisticated charm of yours.”

Clark’s eyes danced and Lois could see that her laugh had delighted him. She wrapped her other arm around the front of Clark’s waist and hugged him tighter to her and felt, more than heard, his contented hum. She hadn’t realized how weighted down she’d felt with things so tense between them, but she finally felt the barriers Lex had constructed start to crumble. “I’ve missed you, Clark.”

“Well, then,” he smiled. “I guess it’s a good thing I’m coming home with you.”

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The door to Lois’ apartment swung open with a bang, followed closely by a shushing noise and a feminine giggle. Clark staggered in, one arm slung over his partner’s shoulder and Lois had to tug hard at his waist to halt his forward momentum. She succeeded in kicking the door shut and turning one of the locks before Clark overbalanced the other direction and squished her against the closed door.

“Ungh, Clark!”

“Oops, sorry.”

Lois pushed at him, but he didn’t budge. “How much do you weigh, anyway?”

“Bout two hundred eighty.”

Lois’ laugh came out as more of a snort. “Feels like it.”

Lois finally heaved him upright and they lurched over to the couch. Better to get him on a soft surface before he fell down. She pulled his arm from her shoulder and he plopped down on the edge of the sofa with a sigh, and then just kept going. He slid from the seat onto the floor, knocking several pillows off and banging into the coffee table on his way. He ended up with his legs splayed out in front of him and a befuddled look on his face.

“Why’s everything spinning?”

“Think of it as a perk of the alcohol,” she grinned.

“Wow. I didn’t think I was *that* drunk.”

“Not that drunk, my rear end,” she grunted as she helped him back onto the sofa.

Clark looked up at her and winked again. “You know, I’ve always liked your rear.”

“You better watch it.”

“Oh, believe me, I’d love to. In fact, sometimes I do,” he confided with a secretive grin, “but only when no one is looking. Especially when you wear that tight black skirt ...”

“Clark!” Lois laughed, feeling both scandalized and flattered. She knew he was telling the truth, but would never have said anything normally. Even drunk, though, she trusted him not to make an untoward move on her. Teasing back, she glared at him and pointed menacingly. “Stay there while I get some food ready. We need to try to dilute your blood alcohol level into the single digits.”

Lois entered the kitchen and opened her refrigerator. She pulled out the cartons of Chinese food that Clark had ordered in for her earlier, glad now that she hadn’t been able to eat any of it. Clark needed the food much more than she did.

She placed the food on the counter as Clark struggled to his feet and stumbled to join her. He opened a carton and took a sniff, but Lois pulled it away from him. “Give me a minute; it’ll taste better hot.”

She placed the first carton in the microwave and turned it on. When she turned back around, Clark had his glasses pulled down his nose and was glaring at the food. “What are you doing?” she asked.

He slid his glasses up again and shrugged. “Trying to heat it up, but my eyes aren’t working.”

Lois stared at him baffled before shaking it off and helping Clark into a chair. “I think you had better sit down, Clark.”

She bustled around getting plates and utensils and it wasn’t long before she placed a steaming plate of food in front of him. Joining him at the table, she dug into her own food and sighed with pleasure; she hadn’t realized how hungry she was. She heard Clark moan delightedly as well and they shared a friendly smile. They ate in silence for the next few minutes, the hum of her fish tank the only other sound in the room.

They finished about the same time and Lois got Clark another serving. While he ate, she gathered a tall glass of water and a couple of aspirin and set them down in front of Clark as he finished his dinner with a smack of his lips. He eyed her skeptically when she placed the aspirin in his hand. “Trust me,” she said. “It’ll help in the morning.”

“Thanks, Lois. Where would I be without you?”

“Face down in the gutter, no doubt.”

“No doubt.”

Lois cleared his plate while he drank the water. She knew where she’d be without him – lost. She thought again about her pre-wedding revelation and she realized that without Clark, she’d be lost and married to the wrong man – and not just because Lex was a criminal.

Her head jerked around at the sound of her lamp crashing to the floor when Clark tried to make his way back to the sofa. “Where are you going?”

“To sleep on the sofa.”

“Oh, no you don’t,” she said as she hauled him back to his feet. “If you stay here, you’ll fall off again and break your neck. You can have my bed; I want you somewhere you won’t kill yourself.”

Clark spun out of her grasp and sputtered in protest as she led him toward the bathroom. “I’m not taking your bed, Lois. I can just sleep on the floor.”

“You’re not going to sleep on my floor when there’s a perfectly good bed to use.”

His face brightened as he reached into his pocket. “How ‘bout we flip for it?”

Lois smirked and took the coin from his hand. She flipped it into the air, called ‘heads’, caught it and slapped it down on her wrist. She peeked under her hand and smiled triumphantly. “Heads. I guess you get the bed.”

“I think you cheated.”

“Maybe,” she gloated, slipping the coin in her pocket. “But you’ll never be able to prove it.”

Clark stared at her through narrow eyes and then grinned smugly. “Well, it’s a big bed. How ‘bout we share?”

Lois laughed at his reference to their stay in the honeymoon suite. With anyone else, she’d be running away as fast as she could, but she knew she could trust Clark. Besides, considering the glassy look to his eye and the sway to his stance, she figured that he was only minutes away from passing out anyway. They were both stubborn enough that this conversation could go on indefinitely and he’d end up on the floor anyway. “Okay, Clark. You win.”

His eyebrows shot up before he smiled sexily. “Why, Lois Lane ... what would your mother say?”

“I thought you would’ve noticed by now, Clark, but I’m all grown up. I don’t need my mom’s permission anymore.”

“Well, then what would *my* mother say?”

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Despite her bravado, Lois was nervous about sleeping in the same bed as Clark. Not only because of her attraction to him, but since she'd already started packing up her clothing before her wedding, the only thing she had to wear to bed was a short, kimono-style robe. The robe was one of her favorites, but not something she would wear for a platonic night with her best friend.

She eyed the overnight bag she'd packed for her honeymoon, but shuddered at the thought of wearing any of the night clothes that were in there. She sighed again; what she wouldn't give for her schlumpy, brown robe or a sturdy pair of flannel pajamas right now.

By the time Lois worked up the courage to exit the bathroom, Clark was asleep, lying on his back on top of the covers, one leg dangling over the edge of the bed. He still wore his socks, tie and glasses, but at least he'd been able to get his shoes off before he'd lost consciousness. She crossed the room and stood next to him, wondering how she was going to get him under the covers. She shrugged; he'd probably be fine. She reached down and lifted his dangling leg onto the bed. When he didn't stir, she loosened his tie and slipped it free of his collar and then slid his glasses from his face and placed them on the bedside table with his tie.

She circled the bed, turned off the light and climbed under the covers, turning on her side until she faced Clark. She studied his face in the moonlight. He looked so different without his glasses and she realized she'd never seen him that way before. His features were relaxed in sleep and he looked even more boyishly innocent than usual.

Unable to resist, she ran her fingers through his hair and leaned over to kiss him on the cheek. "Good night, Clark." When Lois pulled back, she was startled to see his eyes open. "Oh. You're awake."

"You kissed me again." He smiled sleepily. "I must be an irresistible drunk."

"Irritating, maybe."

"Admit it, Lois. You like having me around."

Unexpectedly, Lois' eyes filled with tears. "I do. I was so afraid that I'd lost you and I didn't know what I was going to do without your friendship."

Clark rolled toward her and wrapped an arm around her, pulling her into a hug. "You won't lose me, Lois. If friendship is what you need, then it's yours. Forever."

"Everything in my life was crumbling. My life at the Planet, everyone important to me ... all of it was gone due to my own stupidity. I panicked and said so many things I regret."

"Me too," Clark admitted easily, but inside he was confused. What part did she regret? Saying no to Lex, declaring her feelings to Superman, or turning him down in the park? His thoughts began to spin faster until they slipped from his mind altogether. Instead, he brushed his hand across her cheek and rested his palm against her face, tipping it up so he could look her in the eye. "Everything's going to be okay, Lois."

"I know," she sniffed. She rested her head on his shoulder and they lay in silence for a peaceful moment. His promise made her feel safe and happy, but it also left her in control of wherever their relationship went. She knew that if they were ever going to move past friendship, she'd have to take the next step. "Clark?"

"Hmm?"

"I have another confession to make." She lifted her

head to look at him again. "It wasn't Superman I was thinking about while I was walking down the aisle; it was you."

She watched Clark's eyes open wide in shock as her words filtered through his addled brain. Once they did, though, his resulting smile was so radiant that it made her stomach twist. She had a feeling that if she had been standing, her knees would have felt weak. Too overwhelmed for any more revelations tonight, she placed her head on his shoulder and hugged him once more. "Good night, Clark."

Clark hugged her tightly in return. Another minute passed and sleep started to drag him under, but there was one more thing he needed to know. "Lois?"

"Yes, Clark?"

"Will you promise me something?"

She lifted her head at his sleep-slurred question to look at him. "What is it?"

"If I don't remember this in the morning, will you tell me again?"

Lois smiled. "Yes. I'll tell you again tomorrow."

His only response was a snore.

THE END

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Author's Note:

First, I owe a big thank you to Kathy Brown for being my beta and for helping me to deceive Sue about which story assignment I received (insert evil laugh here). She also gave me several key suggestions that helped to unlock the story and made it immeasurably better. Thanks, partner!

Thanks also to Sue S., without whom this story would have never been written. :D Believe me, Sue, I only lie when it's really, really important – like when I have to protect my secret identity. [g] I already knew you liked this story idea, but I hope you like the way your prompts helped it to evolve. For everyone else – I included Sue's story requirements below.

Also, I have to thank Mary Potts, aka Queen of the Capes for the first line. This story has been kicking around in my head for a long time and I had originally tried to draft it using one of her suggestions in the "First Lines Challenge" thread found here:

[http://www.lcficmbs.com/cgi-bin/boards/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get\\_topic;f=3;t=000824](http://www.lcficmbs.com/cgi-bin/boards/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic;f=3;t=000824). It's probably not what you had in mind, Mary, but thanks for the inspiration.

Sue S.'s Holiday Ficathon story requirements:

Three things I want in my fic:

1. L/C flirting
  2. Lois clueless about Superman's true identity
  3. A secret shared between L/C (but NOT a revelation)
- Preferred season(s)/holiday [if applicable]: Season 1 or 2

Three things I do not want in my fic:

1. A-plot (PWP makes such a tasty holiday treat)
2. Any villain (unless it's a passing reference)
3. A revelation