

Meeting Mister Jones

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Summary: Years after Clark's death, Lois meets another hero.

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Lois Lane was bored. She had never liked awards banquets — except for journalism award banquets and even then she was only there to pick up her own award. But she couldn't get out of this one. The mayor was presenting Superman Foundation awards to citizens of Metropolis who had responded to the needs of their neighbors and community far above the call of duty. As city editor for the Daily Planet, Lois was scheduled to present an award to a firefighter named William Jones.

She had checked his bio — twenty-seven, a member of the MFD for three years. Metropolis born — the son of a firefighter and an ER nurse — graduated Met U with a degree in engineering. He was well respected by his peers and superiors in the fire department. He even volunteered at one of the homeless shelters during holidays. An all-around good guy. No wife, yet. His hobbies included parasailing and writing children's books under the pseudonym 'Charles W. Knight'.

She spotted Jones talking to the fire chief and took a moment to study him. Male Caucasian, average height and weight, light brown hair, light eyes, even features. He wasn't anyone you'd pick out of the crowd as being extraordinary, but then Clark Kent hadn't looked all that extraordinary either — aside from being a mouth-watering hunk.

Clark.

Had it really been thirty years since his death? It didn't feel like it even though the kids were grown with children of their own. There were still times, in that moment between sleeping and waking, that she could feel his warmth beside her, smell his aftershave.

She shook herself from her reverie. She hadn't fallen apart after Superman's death and Clark's disappearance. She made a good life for herself and the kids. But she knew that Clark would have appreciated these ceremonies more than she did.

"Mister Jones?" she said, holding her hand out to be shaken.

He took her hand and for just a moment she felt a spark of recognition. Then it was gone. But she could see in his eyes that he had felt it too.

"Ms. Lane," he said. His voice was as ordinary as his looks. A non-descript tenor.

"I'm told you're a hero," she said.

Color rose into his cheeks as he studied the toes of his shoes. "I didn't do anything anybody else wouldn't have done if they'd been there."

"That's not what your chief reported."

He shrugged. "It wasn't as big a deal as everybody keeps making it out to be. I knew the building. I knew the materials. I knew I could get in and get those kids out before the building came down. It's training and knowledge, not heroism."

Lois smiled. She had interviewed many heroes in her career and they all said the same thing — it wasn't as big a deal as everyone thought. 'I was just doing my job.' 'Somebody had to do it.'

He studied her face a long moment. "I feel like we've met before."

"You've probably seen my picture in the paper," she said.

"Maybe that's it," he said but he didn't look convinced. He sighed. "Actually, that isn't it. I was looking forward to meeting you tonight."

"Oh?"

He gave her a sheepish smile. "When I was a kid I used to dream I could fly like Superman. I even convinced myself I was Superman's reincarnation and I couldn't wait for my powers to kick in."

"The powers came from being a Kryptonian under a yellow sun," Lois said.

"Oh, I know that now," he assured her. "And I never was stupid enough to test the theory by jumping off a roof or anything. But in my dreams I was sometimes flying with a woman with dark hair. She looked a lot like your old photos."

"Well, if you know anything about Superman, you know my husband and I were his main press contacts until he was killed," Lois said.

"They never found your husband's body, did they?" he said. It wasn't a question.

'He did his homework,' she thought. "No they didn't," she admitted.

Jones gave her a thoughtful look, as though considering his next statement. "Look, I know this sounds crazy and I'll understand if you don't answer, but were you married to Superman? Is that why they never found your husband's body?"

"No, Mister Jones," Lois said. "I am not Superman's widow." He seemed disappointed in her answer.

'What did you expect me to say?' she wondered as she watched him follow the fire chief as they headed to their table.

H.G Wells once told her that where there was a Lois there was a Clark. Wells was wrong, or at least not entirely right. Lois didn't always meet up with Clark. And sometimes the situations just weren't right for them to be together.

"Have a good life, Mister Jones," she murmured to the air as he disappeared into the crowd.

Notes: TOC wanted a story about Clark being reincarnated into a different body.

THE END