

Going Her Way

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Rated G

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Summary: Lois suffers through two very different mornings.

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This story has been running around my head for months now. A few months ago, I ran downstairs at the office to get something. The elevator door opened just as I approached it. I thought, "How convenient!" and went about my day. But then a few days later, the same thing happened. This time it seemed a bit weird. I finally realized that the guard downstairs has some control of the elevators. If one is downstairs with the doors closed, he can open them. He saw me coming, and so was opening the doors for me so I didn't need to go to the middle of the elevator bank and push the button.

This got me thinking, though. Mainly about first-season Lois. And here is where my thoughts took me.

A heart-felt thank you to Stopquitdon't for GEing this for me. Thanks!

Lois Lane demanded respect. From everyone and, more importantly for the purposes of this tale, from everything.

At least in her own mind she did.

And not just general, "Lois is a great reporter," kind of respect. But real respect. Where people and things bended to her will. The everyone thing she had down pat. People respected her. Many of them were downright frightened of her. She liked it that way. It made it easier for her to get them to do what she wanted.

It was the everything part that she had difficulty with. How did she get inanimate objects to behave the way she wanted?

Herein lies the story of how she finally got the respect she so highly sought. At least from one man. But then,

given who he was, it took Lois a long time to realize that it was just one man.

August 1993

Lois tapped her foot impatiently on the curb. The lights were all against her today. She should have driven. Not that she was late, really. She just hated waiting. For anything.

Finally, the crosswalk light changed to a white person. Lois nearly ran over the poor old woman in front of her in her eagerness to be the first person across.

She strode towards the big doors under the globe with an air of importance. Self-importance, perhaps, but importance none the less.

She grabbed hold of the door and tugged. The doors were heavy. They always were. And Lois worked out, so that shouldn't have been an issue, but it was. They were just that heavy. But Lois kept her head held high, and schooled her breathing so that no one passing by could tell that it was at all difficult for her to open the heavy door.

Flashing her ID at the guard, she nearly attacked the elevator button. Not that it mattered. Like the lights on the street, it was out to get her.

Unconsciously, she started to tap her foot.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.

The elevator was taking forever today. Glancing up, she saw that the closest one was still on the fourteenth floor. She gave an impatient sigh. The man on her left gave her a dirty look, but she didn't notice.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.

Maybe she would have time to grab a coffee before the elevator got here? The cart was only four feet away, and the coffee guy knew what she liked.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.

Looking up, she saw that now the closest elevator was on floor twenty. It had gone up.

She dashed out the heavy doors, ignoring the fact that they were only slightly easier to open from the inside. Drat! There was a line at the coffee cart. She glanced back inside, but everyone was still there. She probably still had time.

She got in line, trying desperately to make eye contact with the coffee guy. Maybe he'd see her and start her drink before she got to the front of the line.

He glanced at her, or at least she thought he did, but then glanced away. How rude!

"Good morning," she said as she finally got to the front.

He nodded his head at her. "What can I get for you?"

She stared at him in shock. She came to this cart for coffee at least a couple of times a week. He knew her. He knew what she drank. He did! What was his name again?

"A café mocha," she said, trying to keep the impatience out of her voice, but failing.

"Sorry, Ma'am. We're out of chocolate today."

She rolled her eyes. Figures. "I'll just have a latte then. One-percent milk."

"We don't have one-percent. Skim, two-percent, or

whole," he told her in a droll voice.

"Skim," she said. Her tone bordered on rude, but Lois didn't notice.

He fixed her drink, and Lois headed back inside. The heavy door again. Flashing her ID again.

She sighed. All new people at the elevator, so she'd missed it. She glanced up. The closest one was on the tenth floor. Didn't they ever come down to the lobby?

She punched the button hard, but more for spite than anything else. Spite against whom? She wasn't sure. The elevator perhaps? The gods that always made her day like this -- waiting, waiting, and waiting some more?

Finally, the doors opened. Some poor guy, she thought he worked in layout, was standing in front of her, but she pushed past him to get into the elevator. He turned around slightly to get out of her way and his elbow went right into her coffee.

Which then proceeded to spill all over her shirt. And was still hot.

She started to scream, to rant, to really give this guy a piece of her mind. But then she thought better of it. Last month, she'd told some guy at the newsstand what she thought of his taking the last Double Fudge Crunch bar. They'd called building security.

Seriously, like they didn't have anything better to do?

Still, it took at least forty-five minutes for them to let her go.

So, she constrained herself to a dirty look, glad she had a change of clothes at work, and turned back to the elevator.

Of course, the doors on it were closed now.

September 1993

Lois tapped her foot impatiently on the curb. The lights were all against her today. She should have driven. Not that she was late, really. She just hated waiting. For anything.

"Good morning, Lois," came an ingratiating, familiar voice from behind her. The new guy. Who was clearly a morning person.

She nodded at him, hoping he'd take the hint and not start a conversation. Perry made them work together all too often, she thought. She didn't need to speak to him anymore than was required for her job.

It wasn't that there was anything wrong with Kent. He just... rubbed her the wrong way. The way he was always smiling. The way he had come in with no real experience and landed a job working with her.

The way Perry had described him to one of the higher ups. Not that she was there for that. But it wasn't her fault that she could hear the conversation clearly from the doorway. And she hadn't been eavesdropping really. She had had a legitimate need to talk to Perry. She just sort of forgot to knock when she heard Kent's name.

And it was a good thing she had. Perry couldn't really think Kent was as talented as she was. He was a hack. And Perry couldn't really like Kent's softer style of writing. They wrote a newspaper. And not just any newspaper, but the

Daily Planet. They needed hard stories, not soft, mushy writing.

But Perry thought Clark brought a human touch to the writing. And he liked it!

So, no, she didn't like the way Perry had described Kent. And, for that matter, she didn't like the way she felt when she looked at him either.

Kind of like she was drowning in pools of chocolate. Stupid brown eyes. It was clearly just because they reminded her of Superman. Not that they were even in the same league as Superman's eyes.

Finally, the crosswalk light changed to a white person. Lois nearly ran over the poor woman in front of her in her eagerness to be the first person across, but she felt a hand on her arm.

"Slow down," Clark said, a laugh in his voice.

She gave him a withering look and kept right on walking.

They walked one block, in complete silence, and Lois groaned. Right as they approached the intersection, the crosswalk light moved to the red person. If Kent hadn't told her to slow down, she would have made this light. She turned to give him another withering look, but he wasn't there. Where was he?

"Hey, look at that," he said from her other side.

"What?" she asked as she turned toward him. She gave a dirty look to a man who pushed past her. Where did he think he was going?

Clark gestured at the street. The crosswalk sign was a white person again. How odd.

She reached out and grabbed his arm. "Well, let's not look a gift horse in the mouth," she said as she pulled him across the street.

She let go of his arm as she strode towards the big doors under the globe with an air of importance. Somehow, though, Clark reached the door before she did and swung it open. She thanked him, secretly glad she didn't need to fight with the heavy door today.

"Do you want a coffee before we go upstairs?" Clark asked her. She started to tell him no, make it clear that they were not going into the office together -- they just happened to be arriving at the same time. But then she thought better of it. She could use a café mocha this morning.

"Sure," she told him and turned back around.

Drat! There was a line at the coffee cart. She got in line, trying to decide if maybe she should skip the coffee all together.

"Hi, Clark," the coffee guy called out. "What can I get started for you? Regular coffee, light and very sweet, right?"

"Yup," Clark called back. "And Lois will have a..." he glanced at her as he asked, "mocha with skim milk and whipped cream?" She nodded her head. When had Clark learned what she liked to drink?

"Sorry, we're out of chocolate," the coffee guy called back. Of course they were.

"Are you sure?" Clark asked as he moved behind the coffee cart. What was he doing? "What about this one?"

"Hmm..." the coffee guy said. "I didn't see it there. That's just weird -- that's not where I keep it."

Clark shrugged as he moved back next to Lois.

"Thanks, Carl," he said as he paid for their drinks.

She and Clark moved back inside. Lois took a sip of her drink as she walked through the doors. Heavenly. Maybe today would be a good day.

As usual, there was a crowd of people around the elevator, and Lois groaned as she looked up. The closest one was on the twenty-first floor.

"This is going to take forever," she whined to Clark, before turning back to her drink and taking another sip.

Ding. The elevator right in front of them opened. Lois gave Clark a look. What was going on? But he didn't seem to share her confusion, and he led the way onto the elevator.

Some guy crowded in after her, his elbow going right into her coffee. It fell out of her hand and right into... Clark's?

"Here you go," he said as he handed her drink back to her.

"Wow!" she didn't even care that she sounded impressed, "You must have amazing reflexes."

He shrugged again and Lois shook her head. Clark Kent was so weird.

THE END