

Just Say My Name, Lois

By Deadly Chakram <dwelf82@yahoo.com>

Rated: PG

Submitted: October 2011

Summary: After ditching Lois four times in one afternoon, it's time for Clark to tell her his secret. Companion piece to "Just Say My Name, Clark." Name challenge story.

Disclaimer: I neither own, nor make, anything. All recognizable characters, plot points, and lines of dialogue belong to DC Comics, Warner Brothers, December 3rd Productions, and anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise. It just gives me immense pleasure to play with the characters like my very own, personal toys.

Author's Note: This ficlet is the result of the Name Challenge issued by VirginiaR on the Lois and Clark FanFic Message boards (August 2011). The rules were simple: to create a scene in which Lois and Clark have a conversation, but Lois is only allowed to say Clark's name. As an added challenge, the scene had to be a reveal scene. This is what my twisted little muse came up with in response.

Lots of liberties were taken with the events of the show, but hey, that's what fan fiction is for!

Lois Lane dug her spoon into the fresh, brand new, untouched carton of Double Chocolate Explosion ice cream with a vengeance. She scooped up a spoonful and placed the cold, rich treat in her mouth. She closed her eyes, taking a second to properly savor the flavor as she let the ice cream melt and run down her throat. Tears pricked her eyes and she rubbed them violently with the back of her hand.

Things had not gone well today. First, Clark had ditched her four times in as many hours, each time with a limper excuse than the previous one. The first time, he'd promised to bring back lunch for them and had forgotten, the next time he'd had a pressing need to buy an eyeglass repair kit to repair a loose arm on his frames, the next time he'd needed to go to the bank, and finally, he'd left her a sticky note on her computer screen, informing her that he'd "be right back." She hadn't seen him again all afternoon.

Then Dan Scardino had showed up uninvited to her apartment. He'd offered to take her to dinner and a movie. Lois hadn't been in the best of moods, and had been looking forward to some quality time alone with her Double Chocolate Explosion ice cream and whatever mind-numbing television show she could find. She'd politely declined his invitation, but he'd kept insisting. Finally, Lois had invited him into her apartment and had broken things off with him. She supposed that she should have broken things off with Dan much earlier on. Though she liked the attention that he lavished upon her, her heart belonged to Clark. She still wasn't one hundred percent sure that Dan had understood her. The man seemed to have selective hearing when it came to things that he didn't want to face.

She curled her legs beneath her and flipped through the channels on her television for the fifth time that hour. Not finding anything worth watching, she turned the appliance off and helped herself to another large spoonful of the ice cream. She dearly wished that she wasn't so furious with Clark. She would have shed her pajamas in an instant and showed up at his apartment with a couple of movies and some take out. She was all but guaranteed to have a great time with Clark. He was, after all, her best friend, and the man that she had fallen in love with. And she thought that he loved her. But recently, his disappearing acts were not only getting more frequent, but had left her feeling depressed and unwanted as well.

A knock at her door roused her from her thoughts. She put down the ice cream and padded softly to the door. She unlocked the five bolts that secured it and pulled it open just enough to peek out into the hallway. A very contrite Clark stood behind the door, a brown paper bag in one hand.

"Clark?" she asked, not bothering to keep the anger out of her voice.

"Hi, Lois." Clark offered her a half smile, his free hand jammed deep into the pocket of his jeans, just so he had a place to put it. "Can I come in?"

Lois didn't move for a long moment, her body barring the small opening into her apartment. Finally, she sighed and stepped away from the door, opening it wide to allow him access.

"Thanks," Clark said, ducking into her apartment.

He stood uncertainly in her living room. Lois grabbed up her ice cream, swept into the kitchen to put it in the freezer, and then disappeared into her bedroom. A few moments later, she returned, trying a robe around her to hide her pajamas. She certainly wasn't going to dress up for Clark. Not after that louse had ditched her four times in one day. She'd hear out whatever he had to say for himself, and then she'd tell him to leave.

"Clark?" she called, as she reemerged from her bedroom. She couldn't see him in the living room.

"In the kitchen," he called.

Lois heard the whirr of her coffee maker kicking into action. The strong aroma of the drink began to fill the small apartment. She walked over to the doorway and leaned against the wall, watching Clark silently.

"I thought that maybe this required some coffee," Clark said, his voice still apologetic. He moved with easy familiarity around her small kitchen, gathering mugs, spoons, sugar, and milk.

"Clark," Lois said, but he cut her off.

"No," Clark said, setting out two mugs and preparing them in their own preferred ways. "I know I owe you a huge apology and an explanation for today." He stirred her drink and handed her the mug. "I brought you some chocolate croissants as a peace offering." He gestured to the bag on the counter.

"Clark," Lois said, her voice full of warning.

"I know I can't buy your forgiveness," he amended quickly, picking up his own mug and ushering her to the couch.

She settled down on the middle cushion and Clark retreated to the arm chair. The coffee table sat between them, a gap that might as well have been as wide as the Grand Canyon. Clark sipped his coffee for a moment, gathering his thoughts. Then he put his mug down on the table. He sat forward in his chair resting his forearms on his knees. He looked earnestly into Lois' eyes.

Lois sat watching him, her emotions warring within her. To give herself a reason to pull out of his gaze, she took a long, slow sip from her mug. She closed her eyes for a brief second as the hot liquid warmed her body. She hated to admit it, but Clark made the best cup of coffee out of everyone she knew. He knew her preferences down to a T. What was the old saying? Love was the most important ingredient? And despite his disappearances, she couldn't deny that she could see the love shimmering in his eyes whenever he saw her. She put her mug down and returned to his gaze.

"I'm so sorry about the way that things happened today," he said at last. "I never meant to leave you hanging. Things just... got a little out of hand today. By the time I got back to the bullpen, you'd already left. I would have come straight over, but Perry needed me to make some changes on the Superman story that I came across this afternoon. By the time I left the Planet, I'd lost some of my nerve. I went back to my place but I couldn't sit still. I didn't want to call you. I was afraid that you'd hang up on me. So... here I am."

"Clark," Lois said, sighing.

"I know that you probably think of me as lower than pond scum right now. But you have to believe that I don't like rushing out on you."

Lois set her jaw and said nothing. Her blazing eyes said it all. Clark sighed and stood. He padded to the window that he always entered in when he was in his super disguise. He stood for a long moment, leaning on the sill and gazing out at the city that he proudly called his home. The city that, unbeknownst to Lois, he had decided that he would leave if Lois chose to reject him.

"Clark?" Lois asked, a tinge of concern infusing her voice, despite her best efforts to keep her emotions at bay.

Clark turned slowly to face her. Tight lines of worry creased his brow, yet there was a determination in his face that hadn't been there a minute earlier. His hands were tightly clenched and his jaw muscle ticked. Lois tried to decide what was bothering her partner.

"Lois, I never meant to hurt you. I really thought that I could do this. Could do the things that I need to do without causing you pain. But I've failed. Miserably, I might add. I can't keep this up anymore. It's too difficult. The lies. The hiding. The broken promises."

"Clark..."

Clark shook his head, but did not stop his train of thought.

"I've been jealous, angry, and hurt lately. It kills me inside to see you with Scardino. It's led me to act like a jerk around him and around you. I can't seem to help it. And it scares me, to see that side of myself surface, when I never knew that it existed in the first place. But I don't blame you for seeking comfort in him. I haven't been a very good boyfriend, or friend, or even partner lately. And I regret that with every ounce of my being."

"Clark..."

"I can't stop you from seeing Scardino if you want to. I won't even try to stop you. It's your right to go out with whoever you want. But I need to tell you a couple of things before you make your decision. And I have to ask you one thing. Then, whatever you decide, I'll respect that. Fair deal?"

Lois nodded warily. Just what was Clark getting at? Was he finally going to tell her what was really going on with his random disappearances? Did she even want to know at this point? Would his explanations make everything right between them again? Or would they disappoint and make Lois feel even worse about herself and her apparently poor taste in men? She decided not to tell him just yet that she'd already decided who and what she wanted. There would be time enough to tell Clark that she'd chosen him after he revealed whatever it was that he was going to reveal.

Clark smiled weakly. "Okay then. First, my favor. Lois, I want you to know that I trust you with my life. But I still need to ask that you keep what I am about to tell you a secret. Because my life does depend on it remaining a secret."

Lois nodded gravely, unable to find words.

"Thank you," Clark said sincerely. He took a deep breath, like a diver about to take the plunge, then began to pace. "Lois, I haven't been completely honest with you these past couple of years. There is a part of me, a very big part of me, that I haven't shared with you. And it is that hidden aspect of my life that has been forcing me to duck out on you, almost since the day that we met. It has driven me nearly crazy to keep this secret, but I've been afraid, Lois. Terrified, actually."

"Clark," Lois said, a tenderness creeping into her voice as she realized just how much Clark was struggling with whatever he had to tell her. It was all that she could do to stop herself from rushing into his arms to reassure him that everything would be okay.

Clark took another deep breath, stopped his pacing, and dragged a hand through his hair. "Lois, I fell in love with you about two seconds after I first met you, when you stormed into Perry's office during my interview. As we've grown closer, it's been torture to keep this secret from you. I have tried so many times to try and find the right words to tell you. But time after time, I've chickened out. Lois, I want... no, I need... you to know this. When I duck out on you, it isn't because I want to. It isn't because I'm not interested in what you have to say. It isn't because I'm afraid of committing to a relationship with you. I leave because I have to. Because there are people who need me. People who might otherwise die. You see, Lois, I am Superman."

Clark gently pulled his glasses from his face as he spoke, and undid the buttons on his shirt. He pulled the fabric away to reveal the S shield beneath the faded blue plaid. Lois' eyes were wide and staring. Her mouth worked but no sound issued forth. She shakily pushed herself up off the couch and stepped over to Clark.

"Clark?" she asked, wonderment in her voice.

Her hands went to his chest, feeling the familiar, smooth texture of the blue spandex. Her fingers traced the S glyph once. She could feel the hard muscles beneath the thin fabric, solid and real. She pulled her eyes from his chest and peered into his face. The face that was so comforting and familiar to her whether or not he was wearing his glasses. Glasses that he didn't need, she now realized. Both hands tenderly caressed his face.

"It's me," Clark assured her. The timbre of his voice held a note of apprehension to it.

Lois recognized Clark's uncertainty. He was afraid... of her? Of her reaction to this bombshell of a revelation? Both?

She offered him a shy smile. That seemed to alleviate some of his tension. He smiled back, a timid curving of his lips.

"Mad?" he asked.

Lois shook her head. No, she wasn't mad. She was a little hurt that he hadn't told her sooner. And maybe mad would come later. Right now though, she was more relieved than anything else. Clark hadn't been running away from her. He was simply doing his other job.

"Clark," she sighed, wrapping her arms about his neck.

He responded instantly, encircling her about her waist and pulling her to his chest.

"I love you, Lois."

Lois responded by stretching on her toes and capturing his mouth in a passionate kiss. Yes, she had chosen the right man. No one else could compare with her Clark.

THE END