

# The Ring

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Summary: I am sure we all pondered the question: where did Clark purchase Lois's engagement ring? Was he nervous? Happy? Did the store's owner realize who he was? The series never answers any of these questions so I thought this story might clear up the matter. A story set between season two and three.

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## Part One

The nervous young man walked up and down the street past Lazar's Jewelry store a number of times, unaware that keen blue eyes observed his pacing.

The jeweler, Nicholas Lazer, a tall, dignified gray-haired man in his mid-sixties, chuckled to himself at the performance. He knew the behavior all too well. The young man's features announced, is this the store where I buy the ring that transforms my life forever?

He waited. Knowledgeable. Patient. He was content that if the young man did not purchase the ring here he would find the ring somewhere else. Nevertheless, this was the actions and look of a man deeply in love... searching for the perfect ring for the woman of his dreams.

Outside a nervous Clark Kent passed the store again. In his wallet, resided a sizeable chunk of his life's savings. The ring did not have to be large and gaudy. However, he wanted to get her *the* ring with a perfect stone. It had to be representative of his feelings for her.

So here he was on a bright autumn mid-morning. He continued walking back and forth back and forth.

Finally, his nerves got the better of him, and he walked or rather ran as fast as he could without resorting to super speed, back to the Daily Planet.

He went through a whole day at work watching the woman he loved either babbling about something, fighting with Jimmy, or cajoling Perry into giving her a particular juicy assignment.

He looked over at an empty desk. Cat was gone. She and her new husband George had flown to Seattle yesterday to begin a new phase of their lives. Their wedding and reception had been the smashing success she had painstakingly planned it to be, marking an end to this part of her life.

Two days previously, the former gossip columnist had floated into the Daily Planet one last time to say farewell to the bullpen, especially to cousin Jimmy. And surprisingly to Lois. She had given a special good-bye hug to Perry. After all, the man had walked her down the aisle. She seemed at ease, not at all the crazy vamp he had meet four years before.

She looked and acted like Catherine Grant-Amundsen, wife of Prof. George Amundsen, part-time art student at Oregon State University and the newest staff writer for the Seattle Sentinel. Clark could not help but think the bullpen might be a slightly quieter place without her piercing wolf whistles and garish outfits.

Lois' voice broke his train of thought. "Hey Clark, wanna get together at my apartment for pizza and a movie later? I rented Lethal Weapon One."

"Uh, No Lois, I have something to do tonight." He answered, hoping she did not pick-up on the trace of nervousness in his voice.

Her exotic brown eyes gave him an appraising look. "Oh, 'something' to do?" She mimed a swooping motion with her arm.

He meekly nodded his head. "Yeah, something like that. I promise we can watch that movie tomorrow night."

"OK fly ... farmboy."

"Great. Thanks Lois."

She picked up her briefcase and purse, saucily pecked him on the cheek, and walked up the ramp.

Clark looked after her. He wanted so much to be with her. The last six months had been fantastic, wonderful and all because of that crazy assignment: Egg Salad Sandwich. <All this happiness when we got a tip from Bobby Big Mouth because Ralph stifled him with a rotten egg salad sandwich.> He thought, a smile on his lips. Someday he would have to tell the snitch about his role as 'matchmaker'.

He was ready to make the next step. Yes, they had only been dating a scant six months. But walking her home, watching movies, and talking until dawn was no longer enough. Life had so much more to offer, and he desperately wanted to share it with her.

There were other things: no matter how much Clark tried, he always felt he did not quite fit in on planet Earth. Most of the pieces were there of course; loving parents, a dream job, great friends, but now came the truly thorny part. Find the woman on the planet to hold and to trust, someone who could share his life and his dreams utterly. Lois was the one for him.

## Part Two

So that evening, summoning up his courage, he walked past Lazer's jewelers... again. The older man looked out the large display window from his location behind the counter and smiled to himself. The young man had returned. There was something oddly familiar about him, but Nicholas Lazer could not quite put his finger on it. The young man realized Nicholas was watching him, and timidly, he entered the store.

"You have been walking back and forth out there for awhile. Is there anything I can help you with?" Nicholas asked in a gentle voice.

The other man nervously touched his glasses and began to speak. His voice broke, and then he spoke again. "I ... I'm looking for an engagement ring."

Nicholas chuckled, having gone through this ritual many times. "Why yes, of course. So tell me, what strikes the young lady's fancy?"

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Clark groaned inwardly, he should have brought his parents so they could help him decide. Martha Kent was so much like Lois, as an artist and a true free spirit, eagerly ready to explore new places and people. He reflected thoughtfully. <Mom might have a better idea of what would look best on Lois' hand.>

"We have an excellent selection," Mr. Lazer spoke, breaking into Clark's thoughts.

"I have three thousand dollars," Clark blurted out.

"We can talk money later." The older gentleman said with a twinkle in his eye. "What would the lady be interested in: gemstones or a diamond?"

"Oh, a diamond, definitely a diamond."

"Accent stones?"

"No thank you, she doesn't wear a lot of jewelry."

Mr. Lazer produced a number of trays so Clark could look at a myriad of rings. He described Lois' activities in minute detail, hoping the jeweler could locate the right piece. Rings of different shapes, sizes, styles, and stone quality were presented and rejected. It was all very overwhelming, and after thirty minutes of examining several equally stunning rings, his hope of finding just the right one was waning. Nicholas' thirty years in the business helped him to realize what stone would look best on a busy career woman's hand.

"I might have just the thing for your future fiancée, sir. Take a look at this one in the last case."

He reached in and removed a one-carat solitaire diamond in a platinum setting. It twinkled, glistened, and tugged at Clark's heartstrings. He could see the simple ring adorning her finger next to a plain wedding band for decades to come. That one graceful piece of jewelry said ...

"Lois," Clark breathed. "That's it. That's the one. She'll really like it."

Nicholas sat back and his ears perked up. Now he remembered where he had seen the young man and his paramour. "Excuse me, is the lady's name Lois Lane?"

"Yes. Do you know her?"

"No. I do not, but I read articles by 'The Hottest Team in Town' all the time. It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance Mr. Kent."

"Thank you."

Nicholas rubbed his chin and looked off into the distance. "A few years back a robbery took place in this very store by some android fellow. If memory serves me correctly, the case was cracked due to some pretty fancy detective work from Miss. Lane ... and yourself of course. Unfortunately, her sister was involved somehow. I think she knew the guy?"

A shadow passed over his face, remembering the acute pain that particular episode caused in all their lives. Clark merely nodded. "That was Lucy, her sister."

By the tone of Clark's voice, the jeweler immediately sensed the subject was an unpleasant one. Nicholas adroitly began to talk on the true matter at hand, namely the ring.

"Miss Lane and yourself do a great deal to help with the community, exposing corruption in corporations and rooting out the criminal element. I cannot possibly charge full price for this ring. It normally goes for twenty-five hundred dollars, but I can sell it to you for fifteen hundred. Such an exquisitely perfect stone shall complement Miss Lane's beauty and intelligence."

The young man held the delicate piece of jewelry between thumb and forefinger, he was dreaming again. How might his lovely partner react to seeing it for the first time?

"So, when are you going to ask her?"

"Ask her?" Clark was surprised at how quickly the older gentleman had switched gears.

"To marry you, of course Mr. Kent. When are you going to ask Miss Lane to marry you?"

"I ... I don't know." Suddenly Clark was overwhelmed with the impact of his decision; it was one thing to dream about asking a woman to become your wife. It was quite another to actually do it! The thoughts made his heart skip a beat and absentmindedly he smoothed his tie.

The jeweler laughed, a pleasant sound, full of warmth and wisdom. "It's all right, I have seen many prospective grooms. Pick the proper place and time to make both of you happy, and the memories will take care of themselves. So, do you think Superman will be serving as your Best man?"

"No." Clark answered just a little too quickly. "I mean ... he does not attend public functions of that nature."

"Good choice, no reason to draw attention away from the couple. I'll leave you to examine the ring while I put these other trays back. Take your time."

The young man looked at the ring; its band was strong and durable, able to withstand years of wear. The multifaceted stone glistened from the artificial lights above; the facets were as complex as the woman who would wear the ring. He wondered, might it shimmer even better in moonlight on her finger?

"Mr. Lazer? This ring will suit Lois just fine."

After a discreet exchange of information and cash, Mr. Lazer prepared the ring for its new owner. After being lovingly polished, the diamond ring found itself securely tucked into a red velvet box with gold trim.

"Thank you Mr. Lazer for all your help."

"It was a pleasure Mr. Kent. Take care. Please come back and see us in five years."

Clark turned and looked at him, a quizzical expression on his face.

Mr. Lazer blue eyes twinkled. "For the future Mrs. Lane-Kent's anniversary ring naturally."

When the full import of the jeweler's words hit him, Clark lips spread into a heartbreaking grin, and he profusely thanked the older man again. Then he stepped into the crisp air of an early autumn evening. Walking down the street, with the diamond safely tucked in his breast pocket, he began to think about where and when to give Lois the ring. Should he walk over to her apartment and give it to her now? Maybe during dinner at her Uncle Mike's restaurant? Perhaps over coffee and donuts at the Java Perk? Maybe on their next stakeout? Now that he had the ring, how *did* he propose?

Part Three

The attractive couple had been walking all over Metropolis. They had just finished strolling through Centennial Park, admiring the vibrant autumn foliage. Now they arrived in front of the Lexor Hotel. Clark had it in his mind to propose while drinking tea and eating scones in the luxurious tearoom.

"Farmboy, I'm getting tired, my feet are killing me! I need to sit down in the lobby for a minute! We have visited just about every spot in the city where we broke a major story!"

"Yeah," her partner answered. "Time has really done some changes to a lot of those locations, especially Samuel Platt's 'home'."

"I agree, that disgusting old rat infested warehouse was reclaimed and made into loft apartments."

"So, why are we stopping here at the Lexor?" Lois asked, her curiosity piqued.

"We never did visit the tearoom. Let's sit down and warm up for awhile. Besides, it will be a great way to laugh at all the funny things that happened during our 'honeymoon'."

The beautiful brown-haired woman rolled her eyes at the memory. "How could I forget? That bellhop couldn't have been more greedy and obnoxious if he tried! Oh, remember the thoughtless maid who walked in on us while we were filming Ian Harrington?" Her face colored ever so slightly revisiting memory. "Oh Clark, that was our 'first' kiss!"

"Yeah, actually ... it was our 'second' kiss." He looked down at her and smiled, his handsome face igniting a bright light in her heart. "Remember the one just before Trask threw you out of the plane?"

Lois returned the gaze, her eyes glittering with amusement. “You kept track of our kisses?”

“Of course.” His deep voice had abruptly cracked with emotion. “I kept track of everything that ever happened between us. What we have is special, and each moment should be savored.”

Right there on the busy street, Clark cupped her sweet face in his hands and kissed her tenderly. Temporarily forgotten were the people swarming around them as they lingered in a warm, loving embrace. Time had slowed and stilled. Clark heard a voice in his head say, <This is it! This is the moment! Ask Lois Lane to marry you!>

Abruptly a vague familiar voice broke into his thoughts. “Ah, Mr. and Mrs. Kent! Welcome back to the Lexor! Are you here to celebrate an anniversary? The Honeymoon suite just happens to be available!”

Lois, groaning internally, having recognized the obsequious young man as their former bellhop immediately said, “Never mind Clark, maybe we should go back to my place or yours. It will be easier... and cheaper to warm up there!”

The bellhop looked from one of them to the other and squeaked, “You’re not married?”

Lois walked away, not interested in hearing anything the bellhop had to say. Clark shook his head and ran after her. He was disappointed as well, a perfect opportunity to propose thoroughly gone.

<The ring! The ring! Its burning a hole in my pocket!> He thought anxiously.

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It took another twenty minutes of brisk walking in the crisp early evening air to reach the section of Metropolis Clark called home. When her partner had first moved into his building, it was not one of the brightest spots in the city. One thing had always stuck Lois as rather peculiar, but slowly over the past four years, the neighborhood gradually but steadily become more upscale. During the time of the Nightfall asteroid, laundry hung between Clark’s building and its neighbor. Nowadays the fussy new property owner would *never* permit such a thing to happen. In fact, the space between the buildings became the target of a professional landscaping crew. They immediately cleaned out all the garbage and debris then turned the space into a fragrant flower and herb garden.

As the disreputable pool halls, bars, and tasteless pizza parlors gave way to bookstores, coffee shops, and chic boutiques, the old tenants had vacated the area in favor of cheaper rent elsewhere. She remembered staff reporter Diane Pallister commenting on the evolution in the Daily Planet’s Weekend section.

“The neighborhood, once a melting pot of malcontents and thieves is now enjoying a renaissance as artists, writers and young professionals make the area home.”

At the time, Lois did not connect Clark’s moving into Clinton Street, as the start of the change. She had merely figured he was lucky enough to find a great apartment at just the right time. How did she know that Superman would clean up his own neighborhood first?

With upscale communities came upscale rents. She knew Clark’s lease would be up in three months. The current rent was \$900.00 per month. The other apartments with tenants who had come only three years after him were paying three times that amount. As one of the Daily Planet’s top reporters,

he made a decent salary but enough to cover such a rent hike? Sooner or later it was going to be a cause of concern for her best friend.

They strolled easily through the quiet streets, several people walked by, entering some of the local restaurants for dinner. The autumn air tinged with a pleasant snap to it. The couple felt content and easy in each other’s company. Almost reluctantly, they reached the outside steps of his apartment. The entire area seemed bathed in a gentle nimbus of moonlight. Clark halted at the bottom step - now was the moment - and beckoned Lois to sit down on the top step.

“Are you sure? It’s kind of chilly,” Lois remarked, hesitating to sit.

“Yes, I’m sure, we only need to be out here for a few minutes the night is so pretty. I wanted to talk about us. Here take my jacket,” he whispered quietly. With those chocolate brown eyes begging her to comply, he wrapped the leather jacket over her slender frame.

“Okay, what’s on your mind Farmboy?” She giggled, sat down, and snuggled up close to him.

“Well, I know we’ve only been dating six months, but I have to tell you this has been the happiest time of my life. Our life as friends, work partners, and a couple means more than I can express.”

“My feelings are the same Clark. I love you so much. My life before you was shallow and empty. It is a time I never want to return. You are my best friend and the man I care about more than anyone in the world.”

“Life goes by so fast, it can all change in just a second. What we have built together so far is to be appreciated and cherish you. I love you so very much.”

Clark reached into his pocket and from its depths came a red and gold velvet box. He waited a beat then opened the box to reveal a gleaming ring in the spill of moonlight.

Her delicate fingers touched quivering lips and tried to speak, but no words came out.

“Lois Lane, will you be my wife?” Clark whispered his deep voice thick with emotion.

Again, words failed her. A great lump formed in her throat, and she worked vigorously to swallow. Still nothing. Finally, Lois Lane, famed investigative reporter of the Daily Planet and babble artist extraordinaire could only manage to shake her head enthusiastically.

Clark asked again, his own throat choked up. “Is that a yes?”

“Yes.” She whispered hoarsely.

No more words need be spoken, the two friends folded clumsily into each other arms, crying and laughing with equal parts intensity and immense joy.

“Oh wait, I... let me put the ring on your finger,” Clark’s voice was still shaking.

In an instant, the ring was on her finger and seemed to shine with greater power. It was the end of them living separate lives and the beginning of a new and wonderful life. A path they would travel on together... forever.

THE END