

That Extra Hour: a fanfic challenge

By Mozartmaid <mozartmaid@gmail.com>

Rated G

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Summary: This fic was a response to ccmalo's challenge to write a fic about what Lois and Clark do during the extra hour when we set our clocks back.

This fic is set just after "Individual Responsibility."

Lois was running late. All day it felt like time was working against her. She hadn't been at the Planet all day, running around town chasing a political story. She thought someone had given her the wrong time schedule, for she kept missing meetings. It had been infinitely frustrating, but she didn't want Perry to know that she hadn't landed a single interview with the new senator. She had only called the Planet once, to talk to Clark and confirm that he would indeed meet her at her apartment at seven for their date.

Yesterday, he had promised not to run out on her again, especially tonight. She would hold him to it, too. That little habit of his was driving her crazy! Clark seemed perfect in every way except for that one thing and it always made her feel just a bit unwanted. His running off made all her insecurities rear their ugly heads, telling her she was too high-maintenance, wasn't lovable, wasn't worth being around. But if Clark could just stick around for this one date... if they could just sit and talk like she had been longing to do with him, then maybe things could move ahead in other ways as well.

Lois got home at 5:30, plenty of time to shower and change. She would take her time, maybe even do her nails. If Clark was really ready to stop running from her, than he deserved to see her at her best. She'd even put on that Chanel perfume behind her ears and her knee, though God only knew why people did that. It did make her shiver deliciously to think of it though... would he kiss her in those places if given the chance? She looked up at the mirror and could see her cheeks flush. Lois took a steadying breath. They had only kissed a few times, but man those times... well, Lois couldn't wait for more.

6:39. She finished her make-up, and was putting the last touches on her hair. She would wear it slightly wavy tonight, and soft around her face. Clark hadn't seen her like that since Christmas, as she usually chose to wear her hair straight for work, thinking it made her look more business-like. But tonight she wouldn't just be Lois Lane, she would be Clark's date.

6:59. <<Ok... he better be right on time,>> thought Lois, remembering the big deal she had made about him being with her every minute of tonight's date. "7:01... and 7:02... and 7:03..." she had said, inching ever closer to him. <<He had seemed to mean it this time, he really did...>>

7:05. Lois sat on her sofa, ready to go, and stared at the door. She had looked at the clock at 7:01 and had held her breath. He wasn't there. He was late. <<He's just a few minutes late! It doesn't mean anything...>> she had tried to tell herself, but feared the worst. That maybe, this time, he had decided that she really wasn't worth the effort.

7:17. Lois got up from the sofa and began to pace. Maybe something happened. Maybe he got tied up at the Planet. Maybe Perry had put him on the senator story since she had been unable to score that interview today... Lois sighed. <<Should I call the Planet?>> She stared at the phone, debating.

7:25. "Jimmy? Is Clark there?" she asked, hoping her raw emotions weren't showing in her voice.

"Uh, no. He left about two hours ago."

"Thanks," she said, hanging up the phone.

<<I won't cry. I refuse to cry...>>

7:33. Lois gave in to the tears. She wouldn't let herself call his apartment, not wanting to be humiliated by letting him give her an excuse yet again. Besides, what could he possibly say at this point to make her feel better? Now, a half an hour after the agreed on time, she couldn't help but feel stood up. And she wouldn't call him to give him the satisfaction of seeing how much he had upset her.

7:39. Lois was angry. "How dare he do this to me!" she cried, noting how all her mascara was coming off into the tissue she had grabbed to dry her tears. She tried wiping the mess under her eyes, but was certain she was just making it worse.

7:46. Lois turned on the TV to distract herself. She was through with Clark, that's all there was to it. She couldn't take his excuses anymore, and this humiliation was the final straw! Nothing he could say could redeem him for this! She sat down on her sofa with a huff.

"Superman saved an airliner just moments ago at O'Hare airport in Chicago..." went the newscaster.

"I bet Superman wouldn't stand me up... if he ever agreed to go out with me," she said dejectedly, staring at the red and blue blur on the screen captured by news cameras. "A date with Superman... now that would be something," Lois sighed, indulging herself for just a moment in her old fantasy, since her current one was definitely MIA.

7:54. Lois turned off the television, resigned. She took off her earrings, slipped off her pumps. Her schlumpy robe and rocky road ice cream were calling her name. Mournfully, she slipped out of her dress, pulling the robe on as if it could comfort her from all of the hurt and pain that Clark kept putting her through.

7:59. Lois sat on her sofa, curled up in her robe with her ice cream container and a spoon. Maybe she'd watch some reruns of 'The Ivory Tower' and try not to think about her ruined love life.

8:00 Lois' doorbell rang.

Lois tossed her ice cream on the table, wondering who would dare to ring her doorbell when she was feeling so humiliated and so rejected---

"Clark?" she asked, noting he was dressed to die for in a charcoal suit and was holding a dozen red roses. "You're a little late for that," she said sarcastically.

"What do you mean? I'm right on time. If anyone is

late, it looks like you are," he said with an uncomfortable laugh, gesturing to her robe.

Lois crossed her arms defensively. "You said you'd be here at seven, Clark! That was an hour ago! I don't want to hear another stupid excuse that you had to go pay a bill or return a video or---"

"Lois," he said, trying to stem the tide by gently reaching for her shoulder. "It *is* seven o'clock. Well, seven o' one now."

She stared at him a moment, confused, as if he had grown two heads. She had been about to light into him again or fall into a puddle of tears, she hadn't decided which.

Clark reached for the TV remote and turned to LNN news. "See, Lois? It's just after seven... Did you forget to change your clock last night?" he asked gently.

She stared at him dumbfounded a moment. And then looked down, shyly, and then back up at Clark. His lips curled into a charming half laugh. It was infectious and soon Lois was laughing too.

"Oh, Clark, I'm so sorry!" she said. Then she caught a glance of her tear-streaked face in the mirror, suddenly totally embarrassed. "I thought that you---I mean, I thought--"

Clark walked over to her and gently cupped her chin. He grabbed a tissue from her table and lovingly wiped the tears from her eyes. "Nope. I told you I'd be here at seven. And here I am. At seven... And seven o' one. And seven o' two.." he said softly, bringing her closer to him.

She felt her heart begin to race as he leaned down to kiss her.

"And I'll be here at seven o' three..." he said between kisses "...and seven o' four..."

Maybe time was on their side, after all.

THE END