

Lois Lane Meets Clark Kent

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Lois Lane has reached a roadblock in her pursuit of a story about gunrunners based in the Congo. While deciding her next move, she has a chance encounter with a world famous photographer — Clark Kent. Part 1 of the “Lois Lane Meets...” series.

Disclaimer: This is a fanfic based on the television show, Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman. I have no claim on the pre-existing characters whatsoever, nor am I profiting by their use. The new story elements are mine. No infringement is intended by this work.

This is for Beverly.

Brazzaville, Congo
Valentine's Day, 1993

Lois had sworn that she would never come to this place. Her presence here tonight represented a concession of her lack of progress on this investigation. This particular establishment had been the first place she'd been told about as soon as people realized she was from the United States. Who would have thought that there would be a place called “The American Cafe” in Brazzaville?

For the ten days of her trip, she'd kept as low a profile as possible. She'd tracked the gun running operation first to the Congo and then to the Brazzaville docks. But now several days had passed without even a hint of a breakthrough. She knew that if she was going to make some progress on this story, she needed to find a completely different approach. Her presence here tonight was the first step in breaking out of the rut of her stagnated investigation. Instead of doing everything possible to keep a low profile, she now planned to fly above the radar. It might not get her the story she wanted, but she had to try something.

She had to admit that this was a nice place. It was upscale and the prices made it clear that the intended clientele were foreign tourists. She'd been told that this was the place for an American to meet someone else from home. Sure enough, most of the people here looked Caucasian and it seemed that everyone was speaking English.

Lois sat alone at a small, two-person table near a wall. Even though she was here to think and relax, it never hurt to be cautious. She'd selected this table so that she could see the main entryway. This spot also had the added benefit that no one could come up behind her.

“Good evening, Miss. May I join you?”

She'd been expecting someone to approach her ever since she'd sat down. After all, she was a woman alone in a bar on Valentine's Day. She looked the guy over quickly. He looked pleasant enough, in an ornamental sort of way. But she wasn't here to find a playmate for the evening. “No, I'm waiting for someone,” she said directly.

“Of course,” he said smoothly. “Pardon me,” and he left in search of another friend for the evening.

As she watched him go, she almost regretted giving him the

brush-off. Over the years, she'd learned that one of the best ways to read a man was to see how he handled being told to keep moving. The casual, pleasant acceptance that he'd shown spoke of a man who had more confidence and depth than many. And, as she watched him walk away, she noticed that he had a great butt. Oh well, if she did end up wanting that kind of companionship, she could always come back some other night.

She dragged her eyes off that all-too-attractive tush retreating toward the other end of the bar and looked back in the direction of the entryway just in time to get a totally unexpected surprise. Unless she had completely lost her ability to recognize people, that had to be Clark Kent who just came through the front door. This was an unexpected turn of events. She still wasn't looking for male company tonight, but how could she pass up the chance to talk with the famous Mr. Kent?

Kent stopped just inside the doorway and surveyed the place. His eyes swept the room twice without apparently seeing anything that caught his eye. He looked like he was about to turn and leave when Lois came to a decision. She swallowed her pride and waved to try to get his attention.

Her motion caught his eye, and his gaze settled on her. He paused for a second and then started slowly toward her. It seemed better to approach him as a colleague and not as a bimbo looking for a date, so as he neared her table, she stood. When he reached the table he asked simply, “Good evening, Miss. Do we know each other?” It was clear from his tone that he knew they didn't.

“We haven't met,” Lois admitted. “My name is Lois Lane—”
“Of the Daily Planet?” he cut her off, his voice suddenly filled with excitement.

“You've heard of me?” Lois asked, surprised.

“I'm a huge fan,” he said enthusiastically. “I'd hoped to meet you at that conference in Kansas City last year. Unfortunately I was delayed and didn't arrive until the last day.”

“And I left a day early,” she finished. “Please tell me that you're Clark Kent.”

He smiled at that. “I am,” he confirmed. “I didn't realize that my face was that well known.”

Lois felt herself start to blush. “You weren't the only person disappointed in Kansas City. One of the reasons I left early was... well, because you weren't there. I'd hoped to meet you as well,” she admitted. That led to an awkward silence that lasted several seconds. “Will you join me?” she said, indicating the vacant chair. “That is, unless you're here to meet someone.”

“I'm not meeting anyone this evening,” he clarified, “and I'd love to make up for Kansas City.”

As Lois moved to sit back down, he moved quickly to help her with her chair. What kind of man did that anymore?

“I only came in here tonight looking for Bill Snyder,” he explained, as he sat in the other chair.

“The London Times bureau chief?” Lois asked.

“You know him?” Kent asked.

“No. But I've heard of him. Are you working on a project for the Times?”

“No,” he said. “I just arrived in town and I know that this is one of his favorite places to enjoy a night out. I'm only in Brazzaville for the evening, and I thought I'd try to say hello. Bill and I are old friends.”

The waiter came by and Kent ordered some wine. As the waiter retreated, Lois got the chance to ask the question that she'd promised herself to ask if she ever met the famous photographer. “Mr. Kent, I'm sure you get this all the time, but I have to ask. How do you get those incredible photographs?”

That triggered a smile. And he had an incredible smile. “Please, call me Clark. As for the how... Well, Ms. Lane, how do you get the inside information that has won you two consecutive Kerth awards?”

“Lois, please,” she requested. “And I get the stories by

working harder than anyone else.”

“What an amazing technique,” he said in mock surprise. “That’s the same one that I use for my pictures.”

She couldn’t help but laugh. “But my investigations, for the most part, take only a lot of hard work and a willingness to take some risks. Your nature shots are impossible,” she insisted.

“They clearly aren’t impossible,” he laughed.

Normally when someone replied to her with a laugh, it set her on edge. But Clark Kent was different. She felt more comfortable with him than with most of her friends. How was that possible? “Clark, I love your pictures. But... well, I’ve asked other highly accomplished photographers about your shots, and the answer is always the same. They insist that either you’re a high-wire artist or you have access to some kind of high-tech balloon system.”

He laughed again. “I’ve heard speculation like that before. But I’m afraid that my techniques must remain secret.”

“I understand,” she said, “but I had to ask.” She considered the problem that drove her here this evening and realized that she had an even more important question that she wanted to ask the talented Mr. Kent. “You’re one of the most accomplished nature photographers in the world. But over the last year you’ve started publishing a different kind of work. Much more serious. In some instances even tragic. Why have you branched out from nature photography? From what I’ve heard, it can’t be about money.”

His expression turned serious. “No. I’ve done well with those nature pictures.” He paused for a moment to gather his thoughts. “I’ve traveled all over the world for my pictures, and I couldn’t miss seeing the suffering. How can I bring the beauty in the world to people and not feel obligated to show them the suffering that all too often is right beside it? It doesn’t feel like enough, but I have to do something.” He was quiet for a moment, clearly reflecting on some of the things he’d seen. “But you know that. I know enough about you to know that you’re a crusader. I may show people what’s wrong in the world, but you take steps to right the wrongs. It’s why I admire you so much.”

Lois felt a flush wash over her. There was something about this man... something unsettling. This was not what she’d expected when she’d seen him at the door. “Thank you,” she stuttered after too long a pause. “I had no idea that I had such a famous fan.”

“And I had no idea that Lois Lane was—” he started in an almost dreamy tone, but then he abruptly cut himself off.

“That I was what?” she asked.

He took a long time answering. It was clear that he was considering his reply carefully. “That you would be the most beautiful woman I’ve ever met.”

Her mouth fell open. But it wasn’t from surprise at what sounded like an obvious pick-up line. It was because at the moment she was thinking that Clark Kent was by far the most attractive man she’d ever seen.

An instant later he jumped up from his chair. “I’m sorry Ms. Lane. I shouldn’t have said that. I know how it must have sounded and I didn’t mean—”

She reached out and grasped his hand before he could flee. “No, don’t—” was all she was able to get out. The instant her skin touched his she felt... something. It was like a shock of static electricity but much, much more. At her touch he froze and they both spent several long seconds staring at their hands. “Please don’t go,” she finally got out. “I... I know that wasn’t just a line.” And the strange part was that somehow she did.

His eyes rose from their clasped hands to meet hers and another wave hit her. It was like she was looking into his soul. She saw fear... and hope... and that same something else that she’d felt before. The something else that couldn’t happen in the real world.

He moved to sit back down. His eyes never left hers and their hands... their hands adjusted their positions, but neither let go. A

moment later Clark — she could never think of him as Kent again — shook himself. “I meant...”

“I know what you meant,” she replied softly. Lois didn’t know how this was possible, but sitting here holding Clark Kent’s hand, she was in a different world than just a few short minutes ago.

“Clark... tonight...” Lois made her living with words, but now the words weren’t there. She wanted to say how much she needed him to stay. Part of her wanted nothing more than to say, “Hold me.” But mostly she was just confused. “Are you sure you have to go tomorrow?” was the only question she managed to ask.

He just gazed at her for a long time. His eyes were so deep. She wanted to drown in those eyes. “If you want me to stay, then I’m not going anywhere,” he finally said, barely above a whisper.

She felt herself smile in response. “Yes,” she said simply. The idea of spending time — a lot of time — with Clark was unbelievably appealing.

He didn’t say anything, but his thumb continued to stroke the back of her hand. The man... these feelings... her world was suddenly bright. “You know,” she said, “...as good as your pictures are, they would be even more effective with the right words accompanying them.”

He was quiet for another few seconds. In another situation Lois would have been afraid that she’d said the wrong thing. But his eyes told her everything she needed to know. Whatever the crazy thing was that had just hit her, it had hit him just as hard. He wanted to be with her as much as she wanted to be with him. It was completely crazy, but she was absolutely certain. She was in love with a man that she didn’t even know. She was in love with Clark Kent. And he was in love with her.

“Do you think there might be a place for a photographer in Metropolis?” he asked simply.

She’d been accused time and again of taking unnecessary, stupid risks. Of jumping into the water without first testing the depth. She instinctively knew that this might be the greatest risk she’d ever taken. But she also knew — more powerfully than she’d ever known anything before — that Clark Kent was worth any risk.

“I’m sure of it,” she answered confidently.

THE END

Lois Lane will return in *Lois Lane Meets The Phantom*.