

# The Showgirl's Tale

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Summary: For "The Canterbury Tales of Metropolis" challenge: Witnessing an event during "I've Got a Crush on You" changed this performer's life.

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God, I hope I get it.

stand impatiently with my hands braced against my back as I glance at the phone for the umpteenth time today, willing it to ring. I feel pretty good about my chances — I made it all the way through two rounds of callbacks, and I caught the director checking out my rack. One hundred percent real, by the way. No silicone necessary.

It's just so frustrating, waiting here for my big break. I mean, I'm grateful, of course, that my friend is letting me crash on her couch — New York's an expensive city, and it's not like I had a lot of money on hand when I fled Metropolis. Ms. Taylor never even gave me my last check. Still, it would be nice to have my own place.

Yeah, I get it. I quit out of the blue. But, come on, who wouldn't? Why would anyone stick around the Metro Club when the Toasters could come back any day to torch the place to the ground? I mean, by all rights, it should have happened that night. Except...

Except...

I shake my head at the memory. It's still too hard to believe what I saw.

It happened so suddenly. I was singing on stage in my yellow shirt — the one with the black polka dots — and the tight black mini-skirt that practically guaranteed good tips. Then guys with flame throwers burst into the club and set it on fire. I panicked! I hid behind the bale of hay that was sitting on stage — Lord knows why I thought that would protect me. That new girl, Lola Dane, was right behind me. When I turned around, though, I lost track of her, so I left the stage and hid behind the curtain.

That's when I really started to get scared, because I was trapped — the exit to the club was blocked by the fire. Yeah, yeah, now I remember that there was a stage door in the back, but excuse my brain for not being able to think straight in the middle of all that chaos.

I remember peeking out from the curtain, and I swear I saw that new bartender leap over the flames to rescue Ms. Taylor. Crazy, right? Who would do something like that? Normal people run away from fire, not towards it.

Except he's not normal, is he?

The phone rings; I snatch it up hopefully, and then my smile dims. Telemarketer. Ugh! I slam the phone down. I really need this job. Please, God, I need this job. I've got to get this job.

Ms. Taylor almost died that night — we all did. So I didn't think she'd have a problem with me quitting. I couldn't believe it when she threatened to sue me for breaking my contract.

Seriously? She's got enough problems. She can't sue me if her club gets shut down and she's rotting in jail, right?

Well, just in case, I didn't wait around for a lawsuit to drop — I left Metropolis and came here to New York to fulfill my lifelong dream of starring on Broadway. It's not like they'll be able to track me down — they think my name is Toots. As if. Just

because pretending to be a bimbo meant earning larger tips doesn't mean I actually am one. I have a brain. I can put two and two together.

Which is why I know his secret. Because as I was hiding behind the curtain at the edge of the stage, with the flames licking higher and higher, I felt a rush of cold wind blow through the Metro Club, dousing the fire. Impossible, I know, but I swear it's true. And when I looked to see how that miracle had occurred, I saw Charlie King talking to Lola Dane.

He was totally calm, as if getting roasted like a marshmallow was no big deal. And that's when it clicked. Charlie King is Superman.

I'm not crazy. Think about it. Everyone has bills to pay. It's not like he charges for his services. So he probably just picks up odd jobs here and there in places where people don't ask a lot of questions. Makes sense, right?

I'm not going to tell anyone. Why would I? I wouldn't want people butting into my business. It's like being a star — just because I wear tights for a living and shine in the spotlight doesn't mean I don't want a little privacy at home. I'm sure it's the same for him.

The phone rings again, and my heartbeat races. I pick up the receiver and barely contain a squeal of delight. I got the show! Toots is in the past — I'm officially Val Clarke now. Broadway, here I come!

I set the receiver back in its cradle and warm up my voice. I'm a professional, and I'll be damned if I don't know my lines on day one of rehearsals. I start to sing my big number:

*But after a while I caught on  
I mean, I saw what they were hiring  
I also swiped my dance card once  
After an audition  
And on a scale of one to ten  
They gave me  
For dance, ten, for looks, three  
Well!*

THE END

Author's Note: I obviously don't own any of the characters or lyrics to "A Chorus Line," nor do I own Superman, for that matter. But I suspect you knew that already. :) When I was rewatching "I've Got a Crush on You," I immediately recognized Audrey Landers from the film version of "A Chorus Line," and this story just wrote itself. :)