

What Perry Knows

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Rated G

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Summary: Perry knows a secret, but what will he do about it?

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Author's note: This is based on the episode "Ides of Metropolis". I've always thought that Perry knew more than he was letting on. Thanks go to KenJ and Trina for beta reading and to IolantheAlias for editing it for the archives.

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Perry White prided himself on knowing things. Things that other people would prefer to keep hidden. He could tell when they were hiding something — it was one of the skills that had got him to where he was today. After all, he hadn't become the editor in chief of a major Metropolitan newspaper because he could yodel.

Oh sure, most of what people hid was important only to them. But occasionally, the secret was much bigger.

He watched them as he walked back to his office from the coffee machine. Right now, Lois and Clark were hiding one of those bigger secrets. Normally he wouldn't mind. If it was newsworthy, those two would let him know, sooner or later. But this secret had the potential to blow up in their faces.

He had to warn them that he knew what they were up to. Hiding a convicted murderer was dangerous at best.

A thought occurred to Perry. A few months ago, he'd figured out Clark's secret- arguably the world's biggest secret, and one that could destroy Clark's life if it became generally known.

Clark Kent was Superman.

Perry was sure of it. Maybe, if he handled this carefully, he could warn Clark that he knew about his alter ego — without tipping off Lois in the process.

He paused just inside his office and stuck his head around the door.

"Lois? Clark? A moment of your time?"

Perry gestured for Clark to close the door behind them. This wasn't a conversation he wanted the rest of the newsroom to overhear. He noticed that Clark took up a subtly protective stance behind Lois. So, he was worried too. It made sense that this was something Lois had dragged him into.

Picking his words carefully, Perry began, "Is there something the two of you want to tell me?"

His star reporters exchanged uneasy glances. "No, not really, Chief." Lois replied.

"Huh. Well... good." Perry paused for a moment. "You sure now? Nothing you want to get off your chest, uh, chests?"

"We'd like to tell you, Chief, but we can't. It's better this way."

"Better off not knowing." Clark added.

"Well, I think it's a little late for that. I know." Perry let his gaze linger on Clark for a beat longer than strictly necessary, attempting to warn him that he knew more than just where Eugene Laderman was hiding.

"You know?" Lois asked.

"What exactly do you know?" There was a note of panic in Clark's voice.

Perry felt a little sorry for him. He must live in dread that someone would find out the truth about Clark Kent.

"You know... about... him. Where he is." Now there was a definite look of terror in Clark's eyes. Perry would have to reassure him as best he could that he had no intention of publishing his secret.

"Oh. You do know." Clark managed.

Oblivious to the byplay between Perry and Clark, Lois continued, "How do you know?"

"It's better you don't know," Perry told them. "Course, I don't know officially. But, let's face it. If a man in my position didn't know, unofficially, then, well, he wouldn't be a man in my position."

"So, now that you know, unofficially, are you going to tell anyone else that you, you know, know?" The question came from Lois, but Perry could tell Clark was anxious to hear the answer.

"No. I just wanted you to know."

"Thank you, sir. I feel much better knowing that you know." The relief on Clark's face was unmistakable.

"Me, too." Lois added.

"There is something I'd like you know, though."

"What's that?" Lois braced like she was expecting a reprimand.

"The minute you step outside that door, I no longer know. And I don't want to know anything else worth... knowing... in the future." Perry informed them. They'd scraped close enough on this story to getting themselves and the paper into a lot of hot water. Some things he really was better off not knowing.

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Late that night, Perry sat at his desk, grumbling to himself. There'd been a last minute snafu, and now he had to redo the front page for the morning edition. He was the last one left on the newsroom floor and the print room was waiting on his changes.

"Chief?"

The quiet voice from the doorway startled the editor.

"Kent! You scared me half to death. I thought I was the last one here."

"You were, Chief. I wanted a chance to talk to you." He gestured towards the open door. "May I?"

"Go ahead," Perry replied.

Clark shut the door and pulled the blinds before turning back to the editor's desk.

"How long have you known?" he asked ruefully.

Perry leaned back in his chair, pleased to have his hunch confirmed. "A couple of months," he admitted.

"Oh. How-"

"How did I figure it out? Clark, I've been a newspaperman a long time. Heck, I was dazzled by Superman, we all were. But once I started to think a bit clearer, things didn't add up. How did he know which one was Lois's desk, that first day? What were you doing in that closet? And then uh, I started to notice other things. Why does Superman have a Midwestern accent? Why is it that sometimes, no one knows where you are? But it was the heat wave that confirmed it. I know why you left, but leaving town at the same time Superman was being run out? It was the last piece of the puzzle."

"So what are you going to do now?" Clark asked.

"Kent, I make it a rule not to interfere in my reporters' personal lives. As long as you don't make me do something about your... disappearances... then I know nothing."

The younger man let out a sigh. Perry could see the tension leave his muscular frame. Then he offered his hand across the desk.

"Thanks, Chief. "

“For what? This conversation never happened.”

Clark smiled. “Right, Chief.”

He turned to leave.

A question he wanted answered occurred to Perry.

“Clark? Ah... Why the tights?”

Clark gave him a sheepish grin. “My mom made them.”

Then as quietly as he’d appeared, he was gone

“His mom made them.” Perry repeated, amused.

His deep chuckle echoed across the empty newsroom.

THE END