

Brown Eyes

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Summary: Set in the episode "I'm Looking Through You," Superman doesn't brush Lois off at the auction. How might that conversation have changed things for Lois Lane?

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Lois held her breath, peeking over the crowd as Superman made his way to the stage. She felt a twinge of insecurity as she searched his face for some sort of recognition or acknowledgment. It had been weeks since she had been scooped by Clark Kent of all people on the Superman exclusive. In the wake of it all, she'd found herself questioning not only her ability to track down a story but her own personal feelings when it came to Superman.

It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out Lois' motivation for demanding to be front and center on every Superman story was personal. She had confessed to her sister and offhandedly to a few colleagues on accident the connection she felt to the superhero. There was something there. Something she'd never felt before and yet try as she might she couldn't seem to gauge if the feeling was a one-sided crush, infatuation or if there truly was something to it.

As Superman walked by, she prepared herself for another brush-off. It had happened too many times to count in recent weeks. Standing in front of him in a crowd and not even an acknowledgment of her presence.

Only this time, he wasn't so quick to make his way to the stage. He stopped in front of her and nodded. "Lois." A flutter ran through her as she smiled back nervously. Before she could respond, he moved past and made his way to the stage where the host of the charity auction welcomed him.

The hostess turned to the crowd. "And now, something really special. A Super Date. A Sunday picnic in the clouds. So, ladies, what will you give me for the Man of Steel?"

The crowd turned into what felt like a feeding frenzy as numbers were called out around her. Lois looked up and spotted the nervous—no, uncomfortable—expression that appeared to be on Superman's face. Her ambitions to finally guarantee herself a one-on-one interview with him to make up for the exclusive she'd lost out on began to waver. Unlike Lex Luthor, who seemed to welcome the bids with open arms, Superman seemed self-conscious with the attention.

"One thousand!"

A voice called out from the crowd, pushing her way to the front.

"Two thousand!" Cat shouted, tightening her grip on her purse.

A petrified expression crossed Superman's face, and Lois jumped in. "Twenty-five hundred!"

"Five thousand!" Another woman called out.

"Six!" Cat snipped smugly.

"All right, you've made your point, Cat." Lois scolded her colleague. "Now...butt out."

"What's the matter, Lois? Too rich for your blood?" Cat snickered.

"Eight thousand!" Another woman called out.

"Nine!" Cat called out.

Lois sighed in defeat, looking around. There was no way she could afford that. She glanced toward Superman as if to apologize to him for leaving him in Cat Grant's clutches when a new bid

entered the race.

"Fifty thousand dollars."

Lois turned to see where the bid had come from. In the back corner was an elegantly dressed woman that couldn't have been worth less than a cool fifty million from the long string of diamonds she had draped around her neck.

"Fifty thousand! Going once, going twice... sold!"

Lois let out a long breath, watching as the debutante bidder met Superman offstage. A rush of jealousy ran through her just as Superman looked her way, offering her a weak smile. She felt a flutter within her as she stared back at him, somewhat curious what was meant behind that smile as the hostess called the next eligible bachelor for the celebrity auction.

"Rats," Cat grumbled to herself as she moved off.

Lois moved to the bar and ordered herself a glass of wine, taking a seat when she felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned around and saw Superman standing before her. Her heart began to hammer in her chest as she tried to think of how to start the conversation she'd imagined for the last few weeks. "Um, Superman, hi." She pointed to the crowd behind him. "Quite the draw tonight."

"Well, let's hope so," he responded with a smile. At her questioning gaze, he added, "It is for charity, after all."

"Right." Lois let out a nervous laugh.

"Ms. Lane?"

Lois turned and saw the wine she'd ordered sitting on the bar. "Right, thanks." She quickly laid well more than the cost of the wine on the bar in hopes the bartender would get the hint and make himself scarce. She took the glass and took a sip, looking nervously over at Superman. "Do you, um, drink?"

"Occasionally," he admitted with a shrug. "But alcohol has no effect on me, so it's not exactly the same experience."

"I suppose that kills any questions about being a hard liquor drinker." Lois grinned.

He chuckled and shook his head. A quiet pause fell between them, and he cleared his throat. "Lois, you don't have to *bid* for my attention."

She felt a flutter in her abdomen, uncertain how to respond to his statement. "I, uh, didn't think you noticed."

She felt her heart leap into her throat when he reached over to cup her cheek with his hand. "You'll always be special to me, Lois."

"I will?"

Of course. You're the first woman... He quickly drew his hand back and caught himself. "I, uh...reporter to interview me."

She felt the corners of her lips twitch as she stared back at him, noting the uncertainty on his face. It wasn't just in her head. It wasn't just her. He felt it too. And for whatever reason, he was holding back.

"Well, I guess then till the next story." She held her glass up to toast.

"Have a good night, Lois," he said before moving off.

Lois watched him leave, disappearing toward the window he'd appeared in hours before. Try as she might, she couldn't wipe the smile from her face.

A familiar voice called out to her, and she turned to the side, searching for the source. "Lex." She let out a sigh when she saw the billionaire standing before her.

"A pleasure to see you again, Lois." Lex held up a glass of what looked to be expensive champagne in his gold-lined champagne glass.

Lois nodded. "And you, Lex." Recalling her recent cancellation on lunch, she blanched slightly. "I'm sorry I had to cancel our lunch. It's just that Superman is such a big draw..."

"Yes." He looked around the crowded room. "And apparently not only for you." He pointed to the debutante who was sitting in the corner of the room like the cat that ate the canary. "I would

like to reschedule.”

Lois shook her head. “I’m sorry, Lex, I don’t know when I’ll be available. There are other things that demand my attention at the moment.”

“Ever the life of the hard-working journalist,” Lex prodded.

“Something like that.” Lois shrugged her shoulders, offering him a weak smile. “Have a good night.”

THE END