

Coffee With Clark

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Rated: PG

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Summary: What if Lois had second thoughts about slamming the door in Clark's face... right after she'd done it instead of the following night? Is there any way to un-slam a door? A "Lucky Leon" episode fix-it scene!

Story Size: 2,714 words (15Kb as text)

Author's Note: I might come back and write a longer note later, but I spent most of my free time last night and today (including "free" time I straight up stole by saying my errands took longer and I wrote in the parking lot just so I could be away from the constant interruptions at home...LOL!) writing this story! Thank you to SuperBek and lovetvfan for cheerleading and BRing! And thank you to SuperBek for a quick and thorough GE job!

This was it, the moment of truth. The defining moment. The crossroads. Whatever it was, her heart was racing, pounding so hard she was sure Clark could hear it as they walked up the stairs of her apartment building. It was that scene in the movie where the man walks his date to her door and she either politely says goodnight and never calls him again because the date bombed or...they kiss goodnight. And maybe linger. And get flirty. And the woman wonders whether or not it would be too forward to invite him in for coffee. Because it's never just coffee, is it? It's code for...more than kissing.

And she desperately wanted...coffee with Clark.

They'd made it to the fifth floor and halfway down the hall. She glanced nervously back at him as they rounded the corner toward her door, and she dug her keys out of her purse.

God, she was nervous. She shouldn't be this nervous. This was Clark. Clark! And things had gone...great. Really great. And it hadn't escaped her notice that his eyes had been flitting down to her lips all night. She'd been doing the same, catching herself more than once staring at his mouth. All night, thinking of how badly she wanted to feel those lips against hers.

Lois was pretty sure she'd stopped breathing the entire time it took to unlock her door and open it. "Well..." she said, letting out a breath as she took a step inside and turned to face Clark, who was standing there so overwhelmingly good-looking in his charcoal suit with his 1000-watt smile on his freshly shaved face, staring at her

with somehow just the right measure of eagerness tempered with nervous energy.

"Yeah..." he breathed.

"Okay...look, um..." she started, ducking her head as she felt the heat creep up into her cheeks, her pulse still racing. "Clark, I had a really nice time."

"So did I," he said, his voice just a touch deeper than it usually was.

"No, I mean a *really* nice time." She let out a shy, breathy laugh, feeling the jittering, tingling excitement of...being able to say that and mean it.

He chuckled and smiled along with her, the husky rumble of his laugh making her duck her head once again.

"Probably one of the best times I've ever had... It wasn't the funniest or the wildest..."

"Don't knock yourself out, Lois..." he joked, giving her a warm smile.

"...it just seemed to...work." She breathed the last word, and his gaze caught hers, the intensity of it stealing her breath.

For a moment, time stood still, and she got lost in those deep, warm eyes of his as he stared so intently at her. She searched and searched, not sure what she was looking for, and all she could find was something she wasn't ready to name, mixed with an edge of desire and uncertainty...

His eyes dipped down to her lips before looking back at her again. Oh, he wanted to kiss her. Was surely expecting a kiss. And god, she wanted to kiss him too.

"It was really nice..." She nodded, trying to convince herself that she could. That she would. But there...in his eyes...suddenly, she found she wanted a whole lot more than kissing. Flashing through her mind not for the first time that night were the images of the inevitable future that must follow after a perfect date with your best friend in the whole world.

And it. Was. Terrifying.

She felt the itch of anticipated movement, her hand reaching behind her for the door and her body shifting before she could even think about telling them not to. And then the words spilled out of her mouth. "That's why I can never see you again."

The sound of the slamming door echoed in her ears, along with the pounding of her pulse. "Oh god, why did I do that?" she whispered to herself, clapping her hand over her mouth as if that could un-slam the door.

"Lois?" She heard his confusion, his voice quiet and distant through the door.

And why wouldn't he be confused? She'd just told him it was the best date she'd ever had. Not even that, the best *time* she'd ever had. Ever.

Oh god, what had she done? She stood there — frozen — against her will because she wanted more than anything

to open the door and run after him down the hall, to tell him she hadn't really meant it. But her hands, her body wouldn't move, even though they'd damn well moved of their own volition just a minute ago. Or had it been two minutes by now?

What if he'd left already? Assumed that she'd thought the date had bombed, that she honestly never wanted to see him again? Oh god...

Finally, she managed to wrench free of her fear and indecision, the fear of losing him greater, and she grabbed the doorknob and flung the door open, ready to cry out down the hall after him.

But he wasn't headed down the hallway. He was still there. Standing in front of her door, the look on his face a blend of concern and vulnerability.

"How...why...why are you still here?"

He ran a hand roughly through his hair, something he always did when he was flustered...frustrated. And her gaze drifted up to that stubborn stray curl that always seemed to fall just over his eyes. It'd been gelled up perfectly for their date and now...he somehow looked even more...Clark. Her fingers itched with the urge to brush it back.

"I...I couldn't leave," he said, almost like he was asking her a question...asking permission to still be outside her door. To wait patiently. Always so patiently. How was he so patient with her?

"I didn't mean it," she said, her voice so low she wasn't sure he could hear it.

"Which part?" His strained voice was filled with so much hope and apprehension, awaiting her response as if more than just her answer hung in the balance.

"I-I don't know why I slammed the door, why I said that."

He visibly relaxed at her words but stayed silent.

"Can you...do you..." She was having trouble stringing more than two words together, but she let the door fall all the way open behind her and she managed to get one more word out. "Coffee?"

He was smiling, his warm and friendly and now slightly flirty Clark smile, and had just taken a step towards her and then another when she realized what she'd said.

Her eyes went wide. "Coffee! I meant coffee! Not...*coffee*..." Oh god, her heartbeat was back in her ears and her cheeks were warm, surely beet red.

He paused mid-stride and his whole face...everything softened and became more approachable, and he gave her another smile, tilting his head just so, his eyes full of tenderness. "It's okay, Lois. I know what you meant," he said. "I'd love some coffee."

The last part came across as almost a question — was she still offering? Because of course Clark would give her an out. He was impossibly patient with her.

She nodded gratefully, her vision blurring just a bit as she stepped aside to let him in. He walked past her and toward the kitchen as she closed the door and took her time locking each of the deadbolts, breathing in deeply to try and calm herself and resting her forehead against the door for a moment.

This was Clark. Everything would be okay. It had to be. Just the fact that he was here now in her apartment after she'd literally slammed the door in his face...Somehow, things didn't seem quite as terrifying as they had minutes ago.

She took another deep breath and pushed back from the door. She wiped any trace of tears that might have fallen from her eyes, careful not to smudge her mascara, before heading to the kitchen.

Clark was already getting the coffee started even though it was her apartment and she'd been the one to offer. He'd taken off his suit coat and rolled his long sleeves up to the elbow and was humming softly as he opened the can of coffee and measured out the grounds, set everything in the machine, and poured the water.

It didn't really take her by surprise, seeing him work so comfortably in her kitchen, but she suddenly saw things in a new light. Saw how incredibly well he just fit right into her life — was already *in* her life.

His humming faded out as he flicked the switch on the coffee machine to start it and turned around to lean against the counter, crossing his arms in front of him and looking up at her. "Hey," he said, his voice soft but seeming to carry this new, husky quality to it that set her pulse racing all over again.

"Hey." Her reply was tentative and she hoped her voice hadn't trembled as much as it'd sounded like it. She set her purse down on the side table behind the couch and debated whether or not to take off her shoes. Clark looked so comfortable, so casual, and she felt...almost overdressed.

Which was ridiculous, because Clark was still wearing the same crisp white shirt and tie and the same dark charcoal slacks. It was just...his hair...his forearms...his smile...the way he was wearing everything suddenly seemed so... Okay, casual was the wrong word. Confident. Sexy. Oh god, why was he standing like that in her kitchen looking so sexy? He'd never looked sexy in her kitchen before.

She blew out a sharp breath. "I, uh, assume you..." She gestured toward the coffee maker.

"Made decaf? Yeah." He smiled and straightened again, pushing off the counter gently. "I should probably

grab the cups and stuff,” he said, hooking a thumb behind him toward the cabinet.

“Ah, good. Yeah.” When he turned his back, she took another deep breath, as quietly as she could manage.

Tonight’s award for eloquence and poise goes to Lois Lane. It was a miracle she’d managed to make it through the evening. She took off the sheer shoulder wrap and moved further into the kitchen so she could drape it over the back of a chair. It slid right off, silently pooling on the floor.

What was it about the end of the date that had her so rattled? Or was it the possibility, the inevitability of a kiss that was setting her on edge? Was she afraid that kissing him — really kissing him, not just for a ruse or subterfuge — would change everything? As if the kiss was somehow more of a boundary than going on an actual date? In a way, it was...

Kissing at the door would have marked the end of the evening, the end of the date. Then she would have spent all night reliving how utterly wonderful and amazing this date had been, how wonderful and amazing Clark had been. And then morning would come, and then what? She’d go to work and run straight to Perry’s office, telling him she needed a new partner?

She was panicked at the thought that everything had gone so perfectly, and she had no idea what to do next. She’d had first dates. Second dates. Even some third dates. But none of them had ever been any good. None of them had ever been this incredible. None of them had ever really, truly made her want to go on a second date. And she, more than anything, desperately wanted to go on a second date with Clark. And a third. And a fourth. And...

Clark seemed to be taking his time readying the mugs and the creamer and the sugar, as though he knew she needed a little space to regain her composure. Moving toward the island, she watched him for a moment, the muscles playing beneath his shirt as he worked, and she felt a flush of warmth run through her.

“I’m sorry,” she said suddenly, her hands gripping the edge of the counter.

The spoon he’d been holding dropped against the side of the mug, and he spun around to face her, shaking his head and looking at her as if she had nothing at all to be sorry for. He held her gaze for a moment, that warmth and tenderness from before back in his eyes and making her breath catch as he walked around the island and came to stand right next to her.

Every nerve was alit, jittering just under the surface, full of uncertainty and anticipation. Her breathing was shallow as she watched his hand come up, almost in slow motion, to cup her cheek, urging her to turn and face him.

All she could think about was how warm his hand felt against her skin and how close he was.

“It’s okay,” he said, his voice low and soft as his thumb smoothed across her cheek. “You were scared.”

“I’m still scared,” she whispered, her voice, her whole body trembling. His eyes were so steady, so sure. How could he be so sure? “Everything’s going to change.”

He shook his head again ever so slightly, running the pad of this thumb against her skin once more. “Not everything.”

Her brow furrowed. How could everything not change?

“Partners,” he started, that trace of huskiness back in his voice. “Best friends.”

She felt her heart squeeze then flutter wildly in her chest. Everything about this was different.

“And the way I feel about you...” He paused and swallowed, and she caught just a hint of apprehension in his eyes, a naked vulnerability that somehow made her feel just a bit less scared. “That will never change. Has never changed.”

“Clark...”

Her heart raced as he leaned in, his lips closer and closer until she felt the soft warmth of them against her own. Such a brief moment, his lips pressing gently and tasting, before he pulled back just a touch and she let out a short sigh.

But she was drawn back to him instantly, falling into his kiss even before she felt the gentle pull of his hand guiding her mouth back to his. Her nerves sparked with something more than excitement — there was something thrilling, intoxicating, magical about the way she felt as his mouth slanted against hers, caress after caress of his lips and hints of his tongue tangling with her own.

When they finally parted, it seemed like it’d been forever but not near long enough. As they each worked to catch their breath, she couldn’t help but get lost in his eyes, the fear she’d been feeling getting mixed up and almost lost amid the exhilaration and desire coursing through her.

His hand slid down from her cheek, his palm running along her neck before settling on her shoulder. And his thumb, apparently unable or unwilling to be stilled, caressed her lightly over her collarbone.

“Are you ready for coffee?” he asked, his voice thick and throaty.

She nodded and smiled, her heart singing in exaltation. And she thought, maybe...maybe he was right that so much of it would be the same. The same but just...better. She let her hand rest on his chest for a moment, feeling the racing of his heart beneath it, and then she gave him a pat and moved to go sit at her kitchen table so she could have coffee with Clark.

THE END