

# Unexpected Side Effects

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Summary: Superman would never accept Luthor's invitation to the wedding, or would he?

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Lois' thoughts kept straying toward Clark as she walked down the aisle. Her heart was beating like mad, her throat constricting painfully as she joined Lex Luthor at the altar. Her eyes widened as she realized who was standing behind him.

"The archbishop?" she mouthed.

Her pulse started to hammer even worse.

Lex smiled at her. "The pope had a prior engagement."

The pope? Lois felt slightly dizzy and took a deep breath, trying to calm herself.

She let her gaze drift across the audience. Her stomach tightened as she realized that none of her friends had come to her wedding. An inaudible sigh escaped her lips, and she turned her attention back toward her husband-to-be.

Lex looked so happy, smug even. He grinned widely as he gave the archbishop a quick nod, indicating that he should begin.

The bishop replied with a smile and cleared his throat before he addressed the audience. "Dearly beloved, we are here today in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and woman in holy matrimony."

He paused for a moment. A solemn silence settled across the room, making Lois even more aware of her rapidly thumping heart. She saw the archbishop take a deep breath, readying himself to continue, when the doors of the room suddenly flew open with a bang.

Lois blinked as she recognized the man in red and blue stumbling into the room. Stumbling? She wanted to rub her eyes as she watched the Man of Steel swaying precariously on his way toward the altar.

"Superman..." she gasped.

Lex seemed just as irritated. "Superman...how...nice of you to...uh...join us."

Superman gave them a lopsided grin. "Well, you asked me to support ya marriage with Lois. Ya invitation was ra...rather hard to re...resist. So, I figured, I'd come."

Lois' breath caught. Was Superman actually slurring his words? She exchanged a glance with Lex, who seemed

just stunned speechless. What had happened to the Man of Steel?

Right at that moment, Lex straightened his stance, fighting to retain his composure. "But I thought you were too busy —"

"Wri...writhing on the floor in pain?" Superman cut in. He let out a chuckle, and his expression turned smug. "Nope. 'Fraid not. But ya havta admit that was...one helluva performance I put up. Ya totally bought it, didn't ya?"

Though he sounded awfully amused, his words sent a shiver down Lois' spine. She looked back and forth between the two men, not sure she understood what Superman was talking about.

With a goofy grin, the Man of Steel slapped Lex on his shoulder, causing him to lose his balance. Then Superman turned around, staggered a few steps toward the first line of seats, sorted his cape, and sat down in mid-air.

"You wanted my support for this marriage, so I su... suggest ya get on with it." He waved his hand at the archbishop, gesturing for him to continue.

Lex rubbed his shoulder, his jaw firmly set. "Superman, I have to ask you to leave now." He wrinkled his nose in disgust. "You're drunk."

Superman wriggled his brows. "Am I? I don't remember drinking anything. But come to think of it — slurred speech, lowered inhibitions, trouble keeping my balance, and a strange fuzzy feeling in my head — I guess it's safe to say that I'm complete and utterly smashed, wasted. That stuff you exposed me to did quite a number on me, I give you that." He craned his neck as if pondering something for a moment, then he giggled. "But it's really fitting the occasion, don't ya think? The woman I love is getting married to my arch enemy, and you want me to watch. Some things you can only endure with a strong booze."

Lois' heart skipped a beat. "You love me?" she whispered. "But you rejected me."

Superman shook his head. "Because you rejected me first. What I can't understand is how you could seriously consider marrying that monster." He focused on Lex with a stern gaze. "When you exchange those wedding vows, don't forget to tell her how she's much too independent for your taste and that you're going to change that."

His jaw worked and his expression blistered with anger while he eyed Lex. It softened when his attention turned back to Lois. "He's a jerk. You know that don't you? He tried to kill me — just wasn't very successful at it." He giggled again. "Instead, he managed to make me feel more relaxed than I have in weeks. So, go on marrying him, or don't. At the moment, I'm not sure I really care anymore."

His hurt expression belied his words. Superman did care. And his words from earlier reverberated through her mind.

*<Only because you rejected me first.>*

What did he mean by that? She hadn't rejected him, had she? But the pain in his gaze resembled the expression she'd seen on Clark's face. So much so, that — before her mind's eye — the faces of the two men seemed to meld into one. She gasped.

*<If you had no powers, if you were an ordinary man, leading an ordinary life, I'd love you just the same. Can't you believe that?>*

*<I wish I could, Lois. But, under the circumstances, I don't see how I can.>*

Lois closed her eyes for a moment. Could it be true? That she'd indeed rejected Superman when she'd rejected her best friend? The man she was beginning to realize meant so much more to her? She shook her head, trying to clear it. That was something she couldn't think about now.

When Lois opened her eyes again, Superman had floated down and set his feet back on the floor. He closed the distance between them.

His gaze rested on Lois, tender this time. "I know that sometimes, I'm a jerk, too," he said quietly. "You should know that I would never x-ray your clothing. That was a mean thing to say, and I'm deeply sorry about it." His expression became goofy again as he took another look at Lex. "Come to think about x-raying someone's clothing..." He paused, letting his gaze drift across the man. "Yup, it's right what people are saying. He's definitely a lot less intimidating once you see him in his underwear." Superman lowered his voice. "Did you know that he's got his name stitched into his boxers? One would think that someone as rich as him isn't likely to confuse his underwear with someone else's, wouldn't you agree?"

Lois looked back and forth between the Man of Steel and Lex Luthor, who was seething with anger. Before either man had a chance to say anything else, the doors of the room flew open once again.

A group of men entered, including Perry, Jimmy, Jack, and — Lois did a double take — Henderson?

"Stop this wedding," Perry yelled. "Lois, you can't marry this man."

Lois took a step back from Luthor. "Don't worry." Suddenly, she couldn't help but chuckle herself. "Superman already did a thorough job of stopping this wedding." She pulled her engagement ring from her finger and dropped it onto the floor in front of Lex. "I don't know what you did to him, but judging by the state he's in, you're every bit the monster he says you are."

She reached for Superman's arm to pull him with her. He was still giggling, pulling a silly face and sticking out

his tongue before he turned his back on Lex and followed Lois.

She eyed him warily. "Come on, big guy, you look like you could use a cold shower."

He nodded emphatically and giggled again. "No doubt about that."

"You sure are a talkative drunk," Lois whispered. "Are you always like that?"

Superman shook his head. "I wouldn't know." He cleared his throat. "Lois, do you think I'll have a hangover when the symptoms wear off?"

She shrugged. "The way you're acting now, I wouldn't be surprised."

He hung his head. "Darn, I was just beginning to enjoy myself."

THE END

Read the sequel: "[Unexpected Consequences](#)."