

The S Stands for Scandal

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Summary: One photograph can be the start of a PR nightmare.

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Disclaimer: I own nothing. I make nothing. All characters, plot points, and recognizable dialogue belong to DC comics, Warner Bros., December 3rd Productions and anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise.

Author's Note: This fic was inspired by the challenge set forth on the Lois and Clark FanFic Message Boards by Queen of the Capes. The challenge stated that someone had to acquire an undignified photograph of Superman.

"I can't believe it!" Lois exclaimed to Jimmy in a disgusted tone. "No, scratch that. I *don't* believe it!"

Jimmy choked back a laugh as a grin escaped him. "Oh, come on, Lois! You can't be serious! You don't think it's *at all* possible? I mean, look at the evidence."

Lois eyed him with a dangerous furrowing of her brows. "Evidence?" she snorted. "*Evidence*? You can't tell me you *actually* believe *The Dirt Digger*!" she snapped accusingly.

Jimmy shook his head. "I know they aren't usually the most trustworthy source..."

Lois cut him off as she snatched the gossip rag out of his hands and squeezed it as though she wanted to murder the inked pages. Then she slammed it down on her desk. "You *know* him, Jimmy! He would never in a million years..." She let her voice trail off in frustration.

"I don't know, Lois. I mean, how much do we *really* know about the guy?" Jimmy countered uneasily, stuffing his hands in his pockets and taking a backstep, as if he were afraid of what she might do in retaliation for his words. "The guy is wanted by every woman in the world...and a decent portion of the male population too, from what I've heard."

"That doesn't mean he'd do something like *this*!" Lois practically yelled.

Several of their coworkers shot her a dirty look as she interrupted conversations and phone calls. At least she had the decency to look slightly abashed. And when she next spoke, her volume was considerably lower.

"He's a decent guy, Jimmy. He would never do something like *that* in public," she said, continuing her staunch defense of whoever it was.

Clark tried to zoom in on the paper to see what had ruffled his best friend's feathers, but Lois took a step forward, blocking his view from where he stood overlooking the bullpen from the break area. He hesitated for another moment before finally deciding to enter the fray, his curiosity piqued. His going was slow as he threaded his way through his colleagues, his coffee in one hand and a glazed donut in the other.

"Maybe," Jimmy allowed, shrugging. "All I'm saying is that he'd have to have a will of steel to turn down an offer like that." He spread his arms out to the side, as if showing off something invisible. Then he folded them both in to point at his own chest. "I'm not saying I've done it myself. But I wouldn't exactly turn it down either. I don't know a single guy who would."

Lois rolled her eyes. "I could have gone my entire life

without knowing that, Jimmy," she deadpanned.

"I'm just saying," Jimmy replied, holding his hands up, palms out before him in a gesture of pacification.

"Well, just because *some* guys are pigs doesn't mean Superman is."

Superman? Clark frowned, his heart sinking.

He subtly cleared his throat as he came up behind Lois. "Morning. What's going on?" he asked, severing the super hearing that had allowed him to listen in on their conversation.

"How well do you know Superman?" Lois responded, wheeling around and narrowing her eyes.

Clark nearly choked on his own spit. "What?"

"Superman. Do you think he's capable of doing something like this?" she asked, sweeping her hand in the direction of her desk.

As she stepped aside, Clark finally got a glimpse of the paper in question and immediately felt his face flush with volcanic heat. He could only hope his cheeks hadn't gone scarlet in embarrassment. For there on the front page of *The Dirt Digger* was a picture of Superman from just the day before. Clark immediately recognized it as having been from Superman's visit to Centennial Park, where the Metropolis Fire Department had been running a friendly day-long competition meant to test the firemen's skills. He'd arrived just after the firefighters had rescued dummies from the fourth floor of a wooden building facade. The dummies had been moved to one side, near where he'd stood talking with some of the firefighters.

The *Dirt Digger*, of course, had seized their opportunity to take things out of context. Clark felt himself swaying a little on his feet as his embarrassment and anger flared. He nearly grabbed the paper to tear it into shreds.

THE S STANDS FOR SCANDAL! the headline blared in bold black block letters, just above a nearly full-page picture of Superman standing in the middle distance with his hands on his hips, a smile on his face, facing the left border of the snapshot. He really looked as though he were enjoying himself. Which was unfortunate, because he was standing just behind a shrub that covered him from the waist down...while distinctly feminine dummy legs, complete with bright red high-heeled shoes, jutted out at a very compromising angle.

"Leo Nunk is a dead man," he swore, fuming at the X-rated image. "This means war."

THE END