

At the Beginning With You (A Series)

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Lois and Clark have some pretty painful conversations during the episode “Barbarians at the Planet.” It seems like all they can do is hurt each other, and you can only wonder what’s going on in their heads as they’re taking turns breaking each others’ hearts. And what are they planning to do with all these feelings and all this hurt? A multiauthored story by Sara Kraft and lovetvfan.

Story Size: 6,017 words (30Kb as text)

Authors’ Note: It all started one day when lovetvfan needed a break from her current, novel-length WIP. So she was looking for a short distraction. Meanwhile, over on the L&C Fanfic MBs, QueenoftheCapes had just created and posted a newfangled Title Generator (<https://www.lcficmbs.com/ubb/ubbthreads.php/topics/291078/title-generator-challenge#Post291078>). Well, lovetvfan clicked and clicked again...until something clicked. This title. And then she told KSaraSara and showed her the first few heartbreaking lines. Neither of them remember how the exact conversation went down, but it was decided that lovetvfan would write the angst and then KSaraSara would fix it in the companion piece. Somehow, the plan changed to include a triptych of vignettes: angst (lovetvfan), angst (KSaraSara), resolution (lovetvfan & KSaraSara).

Thanks to GooBoo for a quick and thorough GE job!

Please enjoy our short, angsty journey, and let us know what you think!

Story 1: Why I Will Hurt You (Lois)

I lied to you today. Right to your face.

You told me you loved me, and I looked into those wonderfully open brown eyes and told you I only think of you as a friend.

That I could never love you.

You didn’t even try to disguise the hurt. It was written across every single inch of your face.

You’re a terrible poker player, but then...I knew that.

Your feelings have never been as secret as you think they’ve been. I’ve just gotten good at pretending I haven’t

noticed the gentle glances, the lingering way you say my name, or the way you remember to bring me coffee every morning without fail.

I pretended I secretly didn’t love the way you would find excuses to touch me or the way you’d get jealous over my ridiculous crush on a man who literally came from the sky.

You might as well give me the Oscar right now because I am the world’s best actress.

But it’s all for your own good. Even though it might hurt. I’ve let this go on far too long. Pretended that things could be different...allowed myself to dream.

But it’s hurting you and so it has to stop.

Somehow, I have to make you see. All I will ever do is hurt you. If I let my guard down, eventually you will pay the price. And I care about you far too much. For my own good too. You see, I’ve allowed myself to fall as well.

And so I look at you as you tell me you love me, and I tell you I can never feel the same.

I’d like to thank the Academy for this award.

The look on your face almost breaks my resolve. Almost. But I know I have to stay the course. I’m not good at relationships. Eventually they all leave. I drive them away.

I drive them away by being too much...too tough, too strong, too driven, too...me. I watched the same thing happen to my mother, so I know it’s genetic. The curse of the Lane women? Lucy has never had a stable relationship either.

The difference is that she keeps trying. She has this eternal optimism that reminds me of you. She believes the next one might be the one this time.

I used to believe that.

And yes, there is someone else. Okay two, someone else’s. But it’s not what you think. I’ve lied to you there too.

Led you to believe that I genuinely might have feelings for a man whose coldness and power makes him just as closed off as I am.

I don’t feel for him the same way I do for you. I can’t. And yet, I am considering binding myself to him in a way that might be permanent. Because I don’t see any other way to keep you close to me.

I don’t even feel for the other man – the one who fell out of the sky – the same way I feel for you. Although when it comes to him, I at least get a little closer. He has all your best qualities. It’s a compliment really, though I doubt you’d see it that way.

I know, I know. Too many men. See? I’m bad news.

I just hope that when the dust settles you can forgive me. Forgive me for what I had to do and for what I am about to do.

I have asked so much of you. More than a best friend has any right to.

I told you I couldn't love you, and then I asked you to bring him to me...the other man. The one I've fawned over, compared you to and measured you against. The one who reminds me of you in all the best ways. The one who is just as out of reach to me as I am to you.

I know it hurts you, but you do it anyway. For me. Because I asked.

I think if I asked for the moon, you'd find a way to get it for me.

And that terrifies me.

Because I want so badly to ask.

Instead, I ask him. Or rather, I tell him. I say to him all the things I want to say to you. All the things I can't say to you.

And he rejects me the same way. He tells me he can't love me. Which I already knew, but needed to hear.

Poetic justice, right?

It hurts more than I thought it would, all things considered. But maybe that's because he's just a little bit angry with me, though I don't understand why.

Maybe he's not like you after all. Maybe nobody is.

You're a tough act to follow.

Not even Gods measure up.

So now what do I do? Who do I talk to? It used to be you. Late nights at the *Planet* with you bringing the most delicious take out from mysterious restaurants known only to you. I don't even mind you editing my copy anymore.

Okay, well I mind a little.

But it won't ever happen again because it's all gone. The *Planet*, the take out, Perry, Jimmy...my whole world.

And...you?

Will you ever forgive me? I can't forget that look on your face. That look that says I hurt you. If it helps, it hurt me too. Nobody gets out of this unscathed.

But I can fix it. I know you don't believe me right now, but I can. I will.

I have to.

You won't like it at first. I'm not even sure I do. It involves the other man – the one you warned me about. You said he's dangerous. A criminal. Evil.

I don't know what to believe. Maybe you said it because I hurt you.

Do you know how angry you get when you speak of him? How dark your eyes get? I'm not used to seeing such darkness from you. You're always so gentle.

But this is what happens when I let people get too close. This is my fault.

But given time, I'm sure you will come around. We can rebuild. You can come to work with me again, and it could be like it was.

Friends. Best friends.

It's all we can ever be.

And so I make my decision. To keep you, I have to hurt you one more time. I have to say yes to him – the one you warned me about. The one who makes your eyes go dark.

Because without him, I will lose you. We will drift apart and be nothing more than former colleagues. You'll go on to a new job with a new best friend. Maybe this best friend will be able to love you the way I so desperately want to.

And you'll forget me. I'll be the co-worker who hurt you once and whose name you now struggle to remember.

And I should want those things for you because then you would be happy.

But I don't want that. I want you by my side. No matter what. No matter how much it hurts.

I hate the fact that I can be so selfish. But you know that and you love me anyway.

Because without you, I am lost. I need you to guide me home. I need you to smile at me and laugh at my jokes. I need you to beat me at scrabble and to challenge me when I get too stubborn to see reason. I need you to keep me safe. You've always been both my sword and my shield. And I can't let you go.

So this is why I will hurt you. Because I need you.

Because...I love you.

And it hurts.

Story 2: Why I Will Hurt You (Clark)

I told you the truth today.

I probably shouldn't have. I know I shouldn't have. Because you broke my heart.

Maybe I should have seen it coming. Maybe I did.

And I just didn't want to believe you would do it. *Could* do it.

From day one, it has been a possibility. You've held my heart captive since then. Did you know that? That you've held that power in your hands since the beginning?

It only got worse after that, after I got to know you. Love at first sight became forever yours. And so quickly, too.

Do you know how much that hurts? Love unrequited.

At first, it only hurts a little...when the hope is still there. When I haven't said the words aloud yet. When I can still imagine that one day there could be a happily ever after.

It was never a foregone conclusion, though I always liked to imagine that it was.

It hurts more to see you with someone else. To watch him do what I've only dreamed of. And it hurts even more that he's evil. He's my enemy.

And he got to ask you first. He took that from me. He took *you* from me.

Or, at least I hope he didn't. There's still a chance. Maybe it'll work. It feels like my only chance. That maybe...one day...

But part of me is angry with you, furious that you're so stubbornly blind to who he is.

To who I am.

You say I'm your best friend. Partners. You say it like it's a lifetime commitment, like you couldn't imagine life without me.

I told my parents. I told them I love you and that you're *my* lifetime commitment, that my heart isn't my own any longer and hasn't been for a long time. They knew already. Of course they knew.

Because I'm no good at hiding my feelings for you. Never have been.

So, really, you had to have known.

And you did. You said as much, though you hedged like your life depended on it.

But you can't have it both ways. You can keep my heart — it's yours, forever, and I don't have a choice in the matter. But you can't keep me, too. Not as your friend. Not as your partner. Not if you're with him. I can't do it anymore. I'm not that strong.

Just like I wasn't strong enough to keep the truth to myself. Even as I told myself that it was for your own good. Even though I knew it might hurt you. I told myself I'd let this go on far too long. Pretended that things could be different...allowed myself to dream.

So I told you. Selfishly. Told you the truth of my feelings, committed the sin of speaking them out loud even though I knew, deep down, I knew what you'd say. Even though I prayed you wouldn't.

Worse, I knew it would hurt you, to have to turn me down. To tell me to my face that you don't love me. And maybe it was a dare. Maybe I was still angry with you, and I was daring you to break my heart because I didn't think you could.

But you did.

You looked right at me and told me that you could never feel the same. You broke my heart.

Your heart, really. Forever yours because you stole it. Stole it, though I would have given it willingly a million times over.

I still would. Because I'm hopeless. Powerless when it comes to you.

I would do anything for you. You know that too. And you've never asked more of me than I'm willing to give.

I'd get you the moon if you asked for it.

But today you asked for too much. More than I was willing to give.

I gave it to you anyway. Because I can't say no to you. I never could.

So I went. And you broke my heart again.

I changed my clothes. Just my clothes, a different suit. And I went and let you tell me all the things I wanted you to say to me. But not now, not like this.

You told me you loved me, and I looked into those wonderfully beautiful brown eyes and told you there were things about me that you may never know.

That I didn't believe you.

You didn't even try to disguise the hurt. It was written across every single inch of your face.

Your feelings for me — dressed in the wrong suit — have never been as secret as you like to pretend they are. And maybe that's my fault too. I never pretended I didn't like the way you would find excuses to touch me, to see me, the object of your ridiculous crush.

I let my guard down, and I paid the price. I love you, care about you far too much for my own good.

And so I look at you as you tell me you love me and I tell you I don't believe you.

Hearing the words I so desperately wanted from you just hours ago and the look on your face almost breaks my resolve. Almost. But I know I have to stay the course. There's no future, no relationship with a crush. No matter what you tell yourself. Or me.

Not when you told me you couldn't love me and then asked me to bring him to you...the other man in the other suit. The one you've fawned over, compared me and measured me against. The one who is out of reach to you because he's just me and you don't want me.

And so I reject you the same way. Tell you I can't believe you.

Will you ever forgive me? I can't forget that look on your face. That look that says I hurt you. If it helps, it hurt me too. Nobody gets out of this unscathed.

Poetic justice, right?

It hurts more than I thought it would, all things considered. But maybe because I'm angry with you too. Anger that's a ridiculously poor cover for all the hurt you've caused me.

Anger that makes me say cruel things about casually violating your privacy. I would never do that, but I say it anyway. Because you knew I was coming, and you still chose a sexy satin nightgown. As if that would cinch the deal.

Anger that makes me tell you to get in bed with the devil because you think I'm being petty and resentful. Petty, sure. Because as angry and hurt as I am, I don't want you to get anywhere near him, let alone into bed with him.

I think that might kill me.

So now what do I do? You think it's all gone. The *Planet*, Perry, Jimmy...me. You say it all meant more to you than anything. But we're still here. You're the one that's leaving.

The *Planet* is gone, but I can fix it. I know you don't believe me right now, but I can. I will.

I have to.

I have to save you even though you're killing me.

You won't like it at first. Because you think I should help you to be happy. That's what you said, that if I really cared about you, I would let you — help you to be happy.

And you're right. You're so right. You love being right. Why can't you see this? I will help you be happy, but not in the way you think.

I know you're afraid, but do you have to be so blind? So stubborn.

You should be afraid of him. Not me. He's dangerous. A criminal. Evil. But you won't believe it.

You say you don't love him, but you haven't answered him yet...

I torture myself by watching you because I think part of me wouldn't be able to believe it if I didn't see it with my own eyes. His ring. Your finger. The kiss.

I wanted so desperately for it to be me. My ring. Your finger. Our kiss.

I ought to pack up and leave town because I can't watch. I can't watch you marry that monster. The one you can't possibly love.

And so I make my decision. To keep you, I have to hurt you one more time. I have to prove to you that you were fooled. I have to show you that you chose wrong, that you made a massive mistake. I have to make you doubt your skills and yourself.

I have to make you the woman who almost married the monster because she was too scared to see the truth.

You might hate me for it. I'm scared you will. I will hate me for it. But having you safe is worth it.

But given time, I'm sure you will come around. We can rebuild. The *Planet*. Our friendship. We can go to work again and it will be like it was.

Friends. Best friends.

And maybe I can still imagine that one day there could be a happily ever after.

Because without you, I will lose my heart. You stole it, after all.

I want you to be happy. Like you said.

And maybe friends is all we can ever be. I don't want that, but I want you by my side. No matter what. No matter how much it hurts.

Because without you, I am lost. I need you to guide me home. I need you to smile at me and laugh at my jokes. I need you to believe in me — in either suit — and

challenge me when I get too stubborn to see reason. I need you to keep my heart safe. You've always had it. Ever since the beginning. And I can't let you go.

Because I love you.

And it hurts.

Story 3: Why I Ought to Trust You

Part 1: Lois

I almost lost you the other day.

I came so close.

I almost married him. Lex Luthor. The man I thought could fix everything. Could fix us.

Almost.

I stood there, in my beautiful white wedding dress — the kind of dress I had always imagined wearing, just like in a fairy tale. Only this one had become a nightmare. I guess most fairy tales are, aren't they?

And this one was. Standing in that massive church with all those people waiting to hear me say "I do".

Only I couldn't. I couldn't do it. I looked at him, and all I could see was you.

Your face when I told you I was engaged.

Your anger when I wouldn't listen when you were warning me about him.

Your eyes when you told me you loved me.

You were right about him, of course.

You were right about everything.

I ought to have trusted you.

He was everything you said he was. A criminal. A killer. A monster.

I almost married a monster. That's how it goes in fairy tales isn't it? The monster kidnaps the princess and the prince comes to save her.

Only this princess can save herself. And I did. But at what cost?

I thought I was doing the right thing.

And I almost drove you away completely.

I don't even know how this happened.

How I ended up so far away from where I wanted to be. From you.

I thought that I could make things like they were between the two of us.

Best friends.

Partners.

But that can't happen, can it? Things can never be like they were again. And I'm not sure I want them to be.

I'm not sure I want to go back to pretending. And I don't think you could. I know now that my plan to keep you close only drove you further away.

Because I didn't trust you.

You told me you loved me and I didn't trust you.

I believed you, of course. One look in your eyes and there could be no doubt.

But I didn't trust you to mean it. At least, not in the way it really matters. To be by my side every day. To hold me, listen to me, fight with me and make up with me. The every day stuff. The stuff of life. I thought you'd run, but all you've ever wanted was to stay. I didn't trust you to stay.

To have and to hold.

I ought to have trusted you. I shouldn't have given up on you.

Because you never gave up on me.

Perry told me after the wedding. He told me the way you fought for me. Even after you walked away. Even after there was nothing left to fight for. You never gave up.

The prince tried to save the princess after all.

But is it too late? When you walked away, did you mean it? Or is there a chance?

I broke your heart. And your trust. I was supposed to be your partner and your best friend and when you needed me the most, I wouldn't listen.

I hurt you, just like I knew I would.

And now the *Planet* is back and I have everything I had before. Everything that ever meant a damn to me.

Except you.

I can't expect you to put yourself out there again. Not after I hurt you so very much.

So if we stand a chance at all. I have to be the one to take the risk. To trust.

I have to trust you meant it when you said you wanted to love me.

In sickness and in health.

I have to tell you how I feel and hope you'll show more mercy to me than I did to you. More trust.

And when I see you standing there smiling at me, I think it might not be so hard to tell you. To try. That's what you did after all.

And then you speak. You're looking at the *Planet* sign but I know you're speaking to me. Or maybe I just hope.

"I've never seen anything so beautiful in my entire life."

There's a softness in your voice – a tone you use only with me. For me. I realise you've been telling me you love me ever since we met. Begging me to trust you.

I realise that I can't do anything else. I can't go back to just being your friend. Not after hearing you say you love me over and over again.

I need to trust you and so I tell you.

"You never gave up. On the *Planet*, on you friends." I take a deep breath and meet your eyes. The ones I couldn't look at before. "On me."

Something in your expression tells me you understand. The wariness you've been carrying around with you fades

and I see you. I see you start to trust me again too and I'm hopeful.

"I couldn't," you tell me and I know now you're right. You may have walked away but you never gave up. It's not in you to retreat. "You've just named almost everything in the world that's precious to me."

I can't speak. Can't breathe. For a moment all I can do is look at you. At the easiness with which you tell me I'm precious. At the nakedness of the love I see in your eyes. I want to kiss you. I'm overwhelmed with the need to.

But I have to tell you first. You have to know. So we can rebuild. So the prince and princess can save each other.

"I don't think I've ever met anyone quite like you."

And immediately after I say it, I know how inadequate those words sound. How clumsy compared to your words of love. Of trust.

"Lois..." you start to speak again and I know that I need to tell you now. There will be no tomorrow and yesterday was too late. I need you to know I trust you. That this is forever for me.

Till death do us part.

But for real this time.

So I place my hand on your chest and I feel the way your heart quickens ever so slightly. Have I always had this effect? I used to find every excuse to touch you.

"Let me go first," I plead. I never plead and something in your eyes tells you to relent...to let me have my way one more time.

You nod and look at me hopefully. Trusting me. And I find myself trusting you too. The way I should have all along. I take a breath.

"I love you, Clark." I swallow the tears that threaten. "I love you."

Can this fairy tale have a happy ending? Or a new beginning?

Part 2: Clark

I almost lost you to him the other day.

I came so close.

You almost married him and I wasn't there to save you. I guess you didn't need saving after all. At least that's what everyone said, that you'd told him you couldn't before the cavalry arrived.

I should be grateful. Relieved beyond belief. And I am.

But I'm also tired. So tired. And not because I almost died.

I'm not sure what to do with you anymore. I know how that sounds.

But you still have my heart. And it doesn't seem like you know what to do with it.

I can't even be entirely sure that you know you have it. Even though I told you. And you said you knew, you guessed you knew.

So what do I do with you, the keeper of my broken heart?

Maybe I ought to trust you. Maybe I ought to trust that you wouldn't do anything to harm it further. But I don't think I can.

I thought I was doing the right thing when I told you the truth. I thought that maybe the offer of my heart would be enough. You said you needed me...partners...friends...but nothing more. I guess you didn't need me that much.

I wasn't an attractive enough offer without the other suit and the flashy powers.

Maybe I ought to trust that your feelings run deeper than that, that you're not that shallow.

I don't even know how this happened.

How I ended up so far away from where I wanted to be. From you.

I could have said yes if I'd wanted to. That, yes, there was hope for us. That I was so completely in love with you too. But I said no.

Because I didn't trust you.

You told me you loved me and I didn't trust you.

I believed you...that *you* thought you loved me. One look in your eyes was almost enough to make me question my resolve.

But I didn't trust you to mean it. At least, not in the way it really matters. Because how could you love the man in the suit like an ordinary man? Did you expect that he'd be by your side every day. To hold you, listen to you, fight with you and make up with you? The everyday stuff? The stuff of life?

I tried to offer you that hours earlier and you didn't want it. Didn't want me. The ordinary man underneath the suit.

You would have been so disappointed to find out. And I wouldn't have been able to handle a third heartbreak.

So what do I do with you now?

I need to just make things like they were between the two of us.

Best friends.

Partners.

Things can never be like they were again, at least not for me. No matter how much I want them to be.

But if I take it back...then maybe...maybe I could go back to pretending. That there's nothing more between us than just friends. You could. Easily, I'm sure. Since I'm not even sure you know you have my heart. I know now that my plan to keep you close only drove you further away.

I never gave up on you. Trying to save you. But in the end, I wasn't there, and you saved yourself.

Good for you. I think you needed it to be you who saved you.

You never needed me the way I need you. And I love you for it. I do.

Your independence is one of your best qualities. And your strength. Your resilience.

I'm glad to see you have them back. I wish you'd found them sooner. Before everyone had to get hurt. Before we had to break each others' hearts.

And now the *Planet* is back and I have everything I had before. Everything that ever meant a damn to me.

Even you. And I have hope that maybe it can be back like it was before. Partners. Friends. Best friends.

We can get back there. I ought to trust you that much, especially when I see you standing there smiling at me.

You're so beautiful and my broken heart still loves you. It always will.

I want to tell you how beautiful you are right here, right now in this moment when it feels like everything is back to normal and I can pretend again that I haven't said the words aloud yet. When I can still imagine that one day there could be a happily ever after.

I can't help myself, but I can't look at you. I look at the *Planet* sign and pray that you can't tell I'm speaking to you.

"I've never seen anything so beautiful in my entire life."

I realize that I can't do anything else. I can't go back to the way things were if I don't take it back. It's the only way I can think of to save what's left of my broken heart. The only way I can keep you in my life, because without you I am lost. I need you.

"You never gave up. On the *Planet*, on you friends," you tell me. You meet my eyes and I'm lost in them. "On me," you add.

"I couldn't," I tell you. "You've just named almost everything in the world that's precious to me." It slips out. But I have to tell you.

And I worry as I get lost in your eyes. My heart is in my throat and I need to look away but I can't. I know I've been left bare and I'm back there that day in the park. Before I told you the truth and before you broke my heart.

And I want to keep it there. I want to go back to that. I want to undo it so that I don't have to feel the hurt as much.

I ought to trust that look in your eyes right now, the something in your expression that's telling me you understand. Somehow. Even though you can't possibly. Since I'm not even sure you know you have my still-broken heart.

“I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone quite like you,”
you tell me.

And you have no idea. No clue how right you are. And I know that I need to tell you now, to take it back now. Before I get lost in your eyes again and it’s too late to take it back.

I can’t speak. Can’t breathe. For a moment all I can do is look at you. At the nakedness of the love I see in your eyes. I dare to hope it’s real, I ought to trust you. I want to kiss you. I’m overwhelmed with the need to.

But I have to tell you first. You have to know. So we can rebuild. So the prince and princess can save each other.

I need you to know. I need you to believe me when I tell you I would have done anything to keep you from marrying Luthor. And I need you to believe the lie I’m about to tell you so that we can go back to the way things were.

So I can keep you with me and we won’t have to hurt each other any more. I want what you want. Friends. Partners. Forever.

“Lois...” I start to speak, but then you place your hand on my chest and steal my breath. Is this how you stole my heart?

“Let me go first,” you plead. You never plead and something in your eyes tells me you need this. That I need to relent...to let you have your way one more time. Because I could never tell you no anyway.

I nod and look at you hopefully.

“I love you, Clark,” you say, stealing my breath and my heart again. Somehow. Even though you’ve already stolen it. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” The words spill out. Even though it’s not at all what I meant to say. I can’t help it.

I stare at you and wait. Frozen and praying that this is different. It has to be different. Please let it be different. Because I’m wearing the right suit and you said I love you. Twice.

I see the tears well up in your eyes. I can hear your heart like a trip hammer in your chest. “Y-you do?” she stutters, like I didn’t just say it. Like she wants desperately to trust me but needs me to meet her halfway.

“I would do anything for you.” I can’t stop the words from coming out now. “You know that. I’d get you the moon if you asked for it.”

“I want it,” she blurted.

“The moon?” I ask because I need time to process. This is all so quick and I know I ought to trust her but I think I need to hear it again.

“You. I want you.”

I ought to trust you but I have to ask. “Partners?”

“Yes.”

“Friends?” Is it everything? I need to know.

“Yes.”

“Best friends?” I ought to trust you but I need to hear you say it.

“Yes.”

I can’t breathe again, and I’m sure you’ve got my heart. You’ve always had my heart. And I’m not sure you know you have it.

“Me?”

“Always.”

You said always. And everything in your body language and voice tells me that you mean it.

That you love me too. That you have my heart and you know you have it.

And I know I was right to trust you. Because you kept it safe and repaired the damage.

You trusted me. You, the keeper of my heart.

And now I need to trust you one more time.

Because I can’t love you as half a man.

You have my whole heart and so you need to know all of me.

I take a deep breath.

“There’s something I need to tell you. Can we talk somewhere?”

“Always,” you say. And there it is again. A promise. A vow.

You say it and I believe you. You are where I begin and end.

Always.

THE END