

Devil In Disguise

By [Carrie Rene](#) <crene1977@gmail.com>

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Summary: What if Mindy Church threw a Halloween party and it took place in a known haunted resort?

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Note: Okay, I was not pleased with the lack of Intergang storylines in Season Three. So I love the Fall Season with football, cooler weather, apple, pumpkin everything, and spooky things. This is my chance to mix my love for Lois & Clark with the Fall/spooky season. This will be set after Just Say Noah, so our couple is back together.

Chapter One

“Very superstitious, wash your face and hands

Rid me of the problem, do all that you can

Keep me in a daydream, keep me goin’ strong

You don’t wanna save me, sad is my song”

Superstition by Stevie Wonder

* * *

The cool crisp morning was just what Lois needed as she walked into the Daily Planet. She stopped at her favorite coffee vendor and the vendor already had apple cider at his station. She was initially tempted by some hot apple cider but decided caffeine was still needed. The smells of fall and the colors of the trees were exactly what Lois needed these days.

She felt pleased that even her love life was coming together. The smile on her face as she stepped into the elevator revealed how excited she was for the new day.

As she stepped off of the elevator on the floor of the Daily Planet, she realized how early it still was. There were only a handful of people in the bullpen and as she looked across the newsroom she saw her boss already going at it. Perry was one of the first to arrive in the mornings and usually the last to leave at night. No one had worked as hard as her Editor, and at times, his family life paid the price.

After a few minutes of her starting her computer up, Perry stepped out of his office.

“Lois, I have some news about Mindy Church I thought you might like to know,” Perry stated with a document in his hand, walking towards her desk. “She decided to buy the Raven Resort.”

“What, is Cost Mart not a big enough hideaway for Intergang,” Lois wondered, her eyebrows rising up, as she took the paper from Perry.

“Bill once told me it was his dream to rebuild that resort and put a golf course up there. It is where he met Bill Junior’s mother,” Perry informed Lois as he gazed off into nowhere. “Alice and June would have lunch up there while Bill and I would be off on one of our fishing trips.”

“That resort has sat empty for at least seven years,” Lois remarked, reading the information on her screen. “Who in their right mind would buy an abandoned resort?”

“Especially a haunted one,” Jimmy butted in as he came around the corner.

Lois looked over at Jimmy, her head tilted to the left a bit. She was so confused.

“It is a known fact that there have been three murders in that resort over the last twenty years,” Jimmy announced as he raised his shoulders and chin. “There was the up-and-coming actress in Room 217 back in 1976. Then the murder-suicide in Room 401 with the wife that killed her cheating husband and then shot herself. That one happened in early 1987, I believe.”

“Jimmy, that resort had been built in 1910, of course, there would be murders and such, but that doesn’t mean it’s haunted,” Lois retorted. “What do you think, Perry?”

“All I know is Alice and June wouldn’t go to the fourth floor because of what they had heard from the staff. Alice and I did stay there once for our anniversary and I heard footsteps outside our room all night,” Perry admitted, shivering at the thought of going back there.

“Could you imagine the ghost tours,” Jimmy shrieked at the thought. “I can’t wait.”

“Wait for what,” Clark replied as he walked up to Lois’ desk with two cups in his hands.

Lois looked over as Clark put one of the disposable coffee cups on her desk. She held up the cup in her hand to show him that she had her caffeine fix already.

“Well, then I’m glad I got you cider instead,” Clark responded with a smile.

She put her coffee down and reached for the apple cider. She inhaled the scent of fall, put her head back, and sighed, then took a sip of the hot apple cider.

Clark watched her as a small smile crept across his lips. He shook his head in wonder at the woman that held his heart.

“Lois, are you going to go see Mindy Church this afternoon?” Perry interrupted the two lovebirds. “If we don’t find out why she bought the Raven, we won’t be able to know what she plans to do with it.”

“Mindy bought the Raven?” Clark asked, raising his left eyebrow. “Why on earth would she buy that rundown place?”

“Jimmy says it’s haunted,” Lois stated as she took another sip of the cider.

“There are no such things as ghosts, Jimmy,” Clark retorted as he leaned against Lois’ desk.

Jimmy looked around at Lois, Clark, and Perry and knew he had to say what everyone was thinking.

“Well, no one thought there were aliens until Superman showed up,” Jimmy pointed out before he walked away.

Lois and Clark looked at each other and each nodded their heads. Jimmy was right.

“That boy surprises me each day,” Perry said as he looked at Jimmy who was now talking to the new researcher.

Perry walked back toward his office. Clark moved to the other side of Lois’ desk and sat down. He reached for her hand as she put down the cider.

“I missed you this morning,” he whispered as he kissed the back of her hand.

“I know I told you I would pick you up, but I thought I would get started early. Plus I heard there was a mudslide last night, I figured you wanted to sleep in a bit,” Lois responded, blushing at the feeling he gave her.

“I got back around three-thirty, and I really don’t need much sleep,” Clark responded as he kissed her hand again.

Her pulse was racing and she was hyper-aware of how close his body was to hers. They had made plans the night before to go to breakfast together. But after the newscast late last night, she thought better of it. Now she felt bad for coming into work early and not going to his place.

Her phone rang and she didn’t want to let go of his hand or break their bond. It rang two more times before she let go of his hand and answered the phone. He stood and went

over to his desk and turned on his computer. He needed to check his emails and such before Perry called the morning meeting.

Lois looked over at Clark and was distracted for a moment by the feelings he gave her. She had even daydreamed about what it would be like to wake up next to him in the morning.

“Lois, Lois, you there,” the male voice said over the phone receiver.

Lois shook her head and looked away from Clark. She had gotten distracted by Clark many times over the past week ever since they had made up on the Smiley Institute. She needed to focus on the story at hand.

“Yeah, Bobby, I’m sorry,” Lois responded as she grabbed a pen.

After a few minutes, Lois was off the phone and the bullpen started filling up for the morning. Lois stood up and walked over to Clark’s desk. She had news for Clark and this was big.

“What did Bobby have to say?” Clark asked as he finished typing his reply to one of his emails.

He looked over at Lois as she sat at the edge of her desk. She was wearing a knee-length tan suede skirt and a black short sleeve sweater. His heartbeat rose slightly as her skirt rose up to her mid-thigh.

“He said Mindy is in a bidding war with construction companies on who can get the resort completed before Halloween,” Lois reported as she looked over at Clark.

“That’s in four weeks. I heard that place stayed vacant for over five years. How in the world is that supposed to be up to code that fast?” Clark questioned as he put his hand on Lois’ knee.

“The more important question is why Halloween,” Lois responded with a smile at the feel of his hand on her once again.

“I think a visit to Mindy—” Clark began before he stopped and turned to a sound only he could hear.

Lois knew that look. She had seen that look on him time and again. Over the past two months though, Lois knew what it meant.

“What is it?” Lois questioned, putting her hand on his shoulder.

“Five car pile up on the Clinton Bridge,” he answered, moving his hand from her knee and adjusting his tie.

“Go, I’ll set up a meeting with Mindy,” Lois stated before giving Clark a quick kiss on the lips.

She stood up from his desk and walked over to hers. When she sat down, looking back at Clark's desk, he was already gone. At times, she wondered if he did everything that fast. A smile and a feeling of warmth suddenly made her think she needed to be anywhere but the newsroom if she kept thinking about her partner like this.

"Work," Lois mumbled, shaking her head, "concentrate on work."

She reached over for the phone and dialed nine, then the number of Cost Mart Headquarters. Lois needed to start thinking like a reporter and not like a woman in love with a very sexy dark-haired specimen of a man.

First, Lois needed to figure out what Mindy's plans were for the Raven Resort and then what was the fascination with having the remodel completed by Halloween.

Chapter Two

"When you're strange

Faces come out of the rain

When you're strange

No one remembers your name"

The Doors - People Are Strange

* * *

The rest of the morning at the Daily Planet had been uneventful. Superman had been at the Clinton Bridge for a couple of hours. During the morning staff meeting, Lois didn't even need to lie this time to explain where Clark had been. She just told Perry that Clark had heard about the pile-up at the bridge and he went to check out the story. It helped now to have another one in on Clark's secret; to cover for all of his disappearances.

Lois had told Perry that she would be working on the Intergang story with Clark. At twelve-thirty, Clark drove the Jeep as Lois fixed her make-up in the visor mirror. They had to meet Mindy at one.

"Why does meeting with Mindy make me nervous?" Lois asked, as she closed the visor.

"Probably because she thinks she is a beautiful woman that can use her charms on men," Clark pointed out while glancing at Lois. "Not that I think she is beautiful. She has nothing on you."

"Good comeback," Lois retorted, shaking her head and putting her lipstick back in her purse.

"It's the truth. I just wish we could find out more about her history. Jimmy hasn't found anything on her back-

ground since she started at the hospital over eight months ago," Clark explained as he parked the car.

"So the thinking is she started the job to cuddle up to Bill Senior?" Lois wondered as she tilted her head sideways and raised an eyebrow.

"We might need to get her fingerprints and send them off to the NRA or the FBI," Clark recommended. "But why would she want to run Intergang?"

"What woman doesn't want to be in power? I mean women have been neglected for ages. We have to work twice as hard for half the money," Lois explained as her muscles tightened and her jaw set.

"I didn't know that's how you felt," Clark commented as he looked over at Lois. "I mean I remember you and my mom talking about women's rights before when we were working on the Dragon's Heart bracelets."

"Oh, you mean when that Men's Club wouldn't let me go in," Lois stated, fuming.

"Lois, I know you are just as strong and fearless as a lot of men. The difference between you and Mindy is she uses her femininity to get revenge. You don't."

"If you keep this up, I'll use my femininity on you later," she laughed as she exited the car.

Clark sat in the driver's seat for a moment realizing that he hit the lottery when Lois stomped into Perry's office over two years ago. His powers were nothing compared to the powers Lois had over him.

He quickly got out of the vehicle and caught up to Lois without using his super speed. They had to meet at a new trendy restaurant in downtown Metropolis. After they walked into the restaurant they had to wait a few minutes to be greeted by the hostess. It was very busy on a weekday afternoon.

"Do you have a reservation?" the blond young twenty something hostess asked.

"We're here to meet Mindy Church," Lois stated as the blond flipped her hair back.

"Oh, Ms. Church, yes, she arrived about five minutes ago. Such a nice lady," the hostess said, "follow me."

Lois and Clark followed the hostess across the restaurant to a table near the front, but on the other side of the entrance. Mindy's table had the best view outside of Centennial Park in front of the two large picture windows.

"Ms. Lane, Mr. Kent, it's so great to see the two of you again," Mindy said as she looked up at the couple. Her voice was still as high-pitched as before. She was dressed in a low-cut electric blue dress.

Mindy didn't stand up to greet them, but the waiter came by instantly with water for the two of them and asked for their drink order.

"Are the two of you on better terms since the last time I met with you?" Mindy wondered as she took a sip of her drink.

Clark could smell that Mindy's drink was alcohol, probably some type of Pinot Noir. This woman spent money on only the finest things, Clark realized. So why did she decide to buy a run-down resort? After their drink order had arrived, it was time for business.

"Thank you for meeting with us today," Lois stated as she took her notebook out of her purse.

"Stop, please, can we please enjoy a very exquisite lunch first," Mindy replied as her meal arrived. Another waiter came with two more plates, one for Clark and one for Lois.

"We didn't order this," Lois responded to the waiter.

"I decided to order for you," Mindy commented as she took a spoonful of her stew. "I ordered seafood stew for all three of us. This chilly weather has me remembering the time I spent in New Orleans during the winter of ninety-two. Has either of you ever been to New Orleans during Mardi Gras? Fantastic times."

"Did you think, maybe I was allergic to seafood," Lois remarked, irritated. She didn't like it when men ordered her meal for her. Why would she let some blond-wannabe do the same thing?

"Oh, Miss Lane, I know more about you than you think," Mindy responded, taking a sip of her wine.

"That's funny because we barely know anything about you," Lois stated as she stirred the stew around with her spoon.

"No," Clark responded as he looked over at Lois. "We haven't been to New Orleans during the winter." It was the first time Mindy had ever mentioned life before Metropolis. Now they could start somewhere on finding out Mindy's background.

"We have a job to do, Mindy," Lois said as she dipped the bread into the stew. Lois was going to try the stew, but tried very little of it first. "Why did you buy the Raven Resort?"

"Oh, that's easy, I heard it was once a bustling business in this town and I want to make it grand again," Mindy explained before taking a bite of her stew.

"So the fact that it's where Bill Senior met his first wife has nothing to do with it," Lois intervened.

"Of course, it has nothing to do with it. I looked at the history of the property. It's fascinating to me. I figured why

not share that history with everyone else in Metropolis and build upon it," Mindy shared as she drank the rest of her wine down and held up her glass for more.

"That place has a history of death and despair," Clark retorted, looking over to Mindy and then to Lois.

"Even better to come back with a vengeance," Mindy replied.

A couple of minutes went by with silence while the three of them ate their stew. Then, Lois pushed her bowl away and Clark did the same. This meal with Mindy was getting nowhere.

"What is the rush to get the building remodeled by Halloween," Lois questioned before taking a drink of water.

"Halloween is a night full of the unknown, where you can be whoever you want. So I plan on throwing the biggest reopening of the Raven Resort by throwing a costume ball where you get access to the entire property until the morning," Mindy announced with a bit of glee in her voice.

"Sort of like a lockdown," Clark questioned before also taking a sip of water.

"The doors won't be locked, the guests are free to leave anytime," Mindy explained in detail. "I'm letting the guests stay at the Raven for free for its grand reopening with a night full of dancing, cocktails, and delicious cuisine. Who wouldn't want a night full of that?"

"Who is invited to this night to remember if the building is completed by then?" Lois wondered.

"Well, the Daily Planet reporters who always seem to question my motives," Mindy retorted then snickered a bit. "Also the mayor, Chief of Police, the president of Metropolis Bank & Trust, anyone, really."

"Anyone who has a significant role in Metropolis, you're saying," Lois pointed out.

"Well, no, not just the ones with power and influence. I plan on inviting the Metropolis Tigers, and anyone who wants to come. We will have plenty of room, I'm sure. There were one hundred and forty rooms in the original plan," Mindy explained after she pushed the bowl of stew away.

Lois looked over at Clark and noticed Mindy didn't touch the bread or eat half of the stew. Was the woman worried about her figure? Or was it something else?

"Thank you for the meal, Mindy," Clark stated as he finished his water. "We need to get back to the Planet."

"Thank you for meeting with me," Mindy replied with a devious smile. "I do hope the two of you make it to the ball that night. It would be great to see what the two of you would dress up as."

Lois stood up while Mindy said that. Lois shook her head and wondered why Mindy would be interested to see what they would dress up as. Would Clark and Lois go as a couple? Would they dress accordingly? Was Mindy trying to get into their head?

About ten minutes later, Clark started the Jeep with Lois once again in the passenger seat.

“Clark, do you think she has an agenda to be inviting us to that costume party?” Lois asked, rubbing her chin.

“As in?”

“As in wondering what we would dress up as? Or wondering if we would go as a couple or as individuals,” Lois questioned as she kept talking with her hands.

“I don’t think Mindy cares about anything but herself,” Clark responded as he pulled out into the street.

“So now we know she was in New Orleans in the winter of ‘93. Do you think she worked there or was there longer,” Lois wondered as she grabbed her notebook from her bag. She flipped open the notebook and started writing questions about Mindy. “Maybe Jimmy can start his research in New Orleans now. We need to get a copy of her marriage license to Bill Senior and see what information is on it.”

A few hours later, Clark was in his kitchen making dinner when Lois walked into his apartment. She put the stack of research Jimmy had found on the coffee table. After work, Lois had gone home to change and check her mail. Now she walked up to Clark and wrapped her arms around his waist while he stood at the stove.

“Smells delicious,” she stated as he stirred the alfredo sauce.

“So do you,” he responded while he patted her hands with the one not stirring the sauce.

Lois pulled away from him and grabbed a bottle of wine from the wine rack on Clark’s wall. She put the wine on the table then got out two plates and silverware. She set the table for just the two of them like she had done so many nights before.

As she sat down on one side of the table, something came to her mind.

“Why does it seem like we always have dinner at your place?” Lois asked as Clark drained the water from the fettuccine noodles. Suddenly he knew where this line of questioning was going, so he put the noodles back on the stove and turned it off.

“Lois, I don’t know how to tell you this,” he said, sitting in the chair next to her. He pulled the chair closer to her and reached for her hands looking into her eyes. “I know I keep

suggesting we come over here. There are three reasons why I keep suggesting my place,” Clark answered with sincerity. “First, when an emergency comes up and I have to fly off; it’s easier to leave from my balcony.”

Lois shook her head in agreement. Yes, indeed, she didn’t have an easier access point for him to fly off without someone noticing.

Clark noticed Lois shake her head in agreement about his balcony being easier to fly off from.

“Next, it’s easier for me to make a home cooked meal here. You don’t even have a colander.”

“A what,” Lois wondered, not knowing a colander from a mandoline.

“The strainer,” Clark answered as he pointed to the sink where the noodles had been moments ago.

“Okay, you have a valid point on reason number one and two.”

“And number three,” he started as he ran his hand through his hair. “Lois, I don’t know how to tell you this. But I really hate your couch.”

“What?” she wondered, flabbergasted at his admission.

“A few weeks ago we were watching a movie together at your place. When the movie got boring we started doing something else,” he admitted as his cheeks started turning a bit red.

Lois tilted her head slightly trying to recall what he was talking about; then it dawned on her.

“Oh,” Lois sighed as her face also turned a bit red. “Was it the night you went home really frustrated?”

“Lois, I didn’t go home. I flew to the North Pole and took a swim in the ocean,” he replied, pulling back from her.

“I love you,” she laughed as she covered his cheek with her palm. “But what does my couch have to do with you taking a cold dip in the ocean?”

“One reason I stopped was your couch. It’s very difficult to make out with you on that couch. I figured if we were here, it would be more comfortable for both of us. I mean the other night you fell asleep on me and I loved that feeling,” he explained, rubbing his hands up and down her arms. “We can’t do that on your couch.”

“Oh, so either I get rid of the couch or we come to your place every night. Clark, what if it’s too late for me to go home. I know I can take care of myself, but your neighborhood isn’t the best at two in the morning.”

“When it’s late and you don’t feel like going home—don’t,” he suggested as his eyes enlarged. “Stay here.”

Lois felt a bit uneasy at his suggestion. She pulled away from him and the table and started pacing.

“You have stayed here before,” Clark replied, noticing how uneasy she was.

“Yeah, but I haven’t done that since we started dating. There is a reason for that,” Lois responded, standing still and pointing over at him.

“I’m irresistible,” he laughed with a straight face.

“We haven’t really talked about taking that next step,” Lois said as she went to the couch and sat down.

“I figured we were just ignoring it like the marriage thing,” Clark replied as he shrugged his shoulders.

“How can we even think about having sex if we can’t talk about it?” Lois wondered looking up at him.

“I—” Clark stammered hesitantly, “the thing is, Lois, I’ve never gone that far.”

Lois turned her head slightly trying to figure out how a man as sexy as Clark had never been with a woman. Yet he knew exactly how to kiss her and how to touch her to feel loved and cherished.

“You know you could say something,” Clark said as he walked closer to her.

“How do you do it?” she questioned as she stood up. “You are amazing, you know that.”

“How? Lois, I’m different than every other man,” he began to say, “I have never crossed that line because of those differences. You are the only other person besides my parents that know I’m not from here.”

“I get it. It’s very noble of you,” Lois replied, reaching for him. “I guess we just take it one day at a time then. When the time is right we will take that step together.”

“And believe me, Lois, I’m ready, but I also don’t want to pressure you in any way,” he stated, taking her hand. “I know your experiences haven’t been great either. So anytime you say ‘Stop’ I will.”

Lois reached up and kissed him. The kiss started out slowly, confirming they were on the same page. Then it became more intense as he deepened the kiss and her hands tickled the back of his neck. She was so in love with him. How did she get so lucky?

After a couple of minutes, they pulled apart out of breath. He pulled her into a hug and kissed the top of her head.

“I love you,” he said, “but we better eat dinner before I ask you to skip directly to dessert.”

“And you know how much I love dessert,” she teased as she squeezed his butt for emphasis.

They were on the same page and loved every minute of it.

Chapter Three

“Don’t stop thinking of me

Don’t make me feel this way

Come on over here and love me

You know what I want you to say”

Elvis Presley - Don’t Be Cruel

* * *

It had been four days. Four days since Lois and Clark met with Mindy Church. Four days since Lois and Clark started trying to uncover what Mindy’s game was about buying the Raven Resort. Now the fifth day was beginning just like the second and third days.

Clark opened his eyes at the feel of a beautiful woman on top of him. His hand moved slightly up and down her back, enjoying the feel of her smooth skin under his fingertips. This morning was different than the previous days had been, as this time his hand was underneath her shirt and his shirt was off. They were on his couch like the other nights. They really ought to have moved to his bed, but they’d both been worried they would get carried away, and the couch made a bit of a mental boundary. Still, it was a wonderful way to wake up.

“Umm,” she mumbled as he kissed the top of her head. “What time is it?”

“Late. We have less than an hour before we have to be at the Planet,” Clark answered as he started drawing circles on her back with his index finger. She snuggled into him even more.

“We really should get up,” she responded as she began making a similar pattern on his chest.

“Can we stay like this forever,” Clark pleaded in a soft voice before taking a deep breath, the feel of her fingers against his bare skin driving him to distraction.

“I don’t think Perry would understand,” Lois smiled slightly, moving and feeling exactly how interested Clark was about prolonging their current position.

“We have three options,” Clark mumbled as he felt his muscles twitch as Lois continued to touch him.

“Just three?”

“We could stay here for the rest of the day and continue where we left off last night,” Clark said, his voice husky as his hand moved to settle on her hip. “Or you could move off of me and let me take a very cold quick shower and get ready for work.”

“Or,” Lois whispered, her hand moving farther down his chest to his navel.

“Or—” Clark mumbled. “We could move to the bedroom.”

It took Lois only seconds, knowing they really only had one option because they’d both agreed to wait, Lois moved off of Clark and sat up.

“I’ll be ready in a minute,” Clark stated before flying off towards his bedroom.

While he was gone, Lois got off the couch, grabbed her things together, and put on her shoes. She finished putting on her last shoe when he appeared, freshly showered, clean suit, and ready for work.

“Why does it take you less than five minutes to get ready? And it takes me—well, a lot longer,” Lois stated with a huff.

“It’s called having superpowers, honey,” Clark chuckled before kissing her quickly on the lips. “We don’t have much time, we better go.”

She gazed at him and put her arms out with her palms up. She gave up. He had her there. The superpowers beat her every time.

After fifteen minutes in morning traffic, Lois rushed into her apartment while Clark followed behind her.

“Give me fifteen minutes,” Lois shouted as she ran toward her bedroom. Clark knew it would take Lois longer than fifteen minutes. He decided Lois was going to need coffee, so he quickly spun into the suit and out the window.

When Lois returned from the bedroom showered and dressed for work, twenty-five minutes later, Clark was casually sitting on the loveseat drinking his coffee.

Lois looked down at the second cup and the bag of pastries on the coffee table.

“Thank you,” she stated as she grabbed her leather bag for work and her coffee. “We are going to be late even if we hit every green light.”

“It’s my fault this time,” Clark apologized, “and I think I have a better idea. I’ll fly you to work, then come back for your Jeep. Then Perry will only chew out one of us.”

Lois stood there and tilted her head for a second. Maybe his idea would work. But last night was not his fault. She had started kissing him.

“The longer I stand here and remember whose fault it is or who started it last night—just makes me want to head back to your couch. I say we just face the calvary together,” she said, reaching out for his hand.

His smile said everything she needed to know as he took her hand. They were in this together.

Finally, after thirty minutes of heavy traffic, Clark and Lois stepped out of the elevator late holding hands. If anyone didn’t realize they were back together—they did now. The morning meeting had already started and Clark and Lois looked at each other and bit the bullet. Lois put her bag down and grabbed her notepad while Clark did the same. They opened the conference room door and walked in.

“So nice of the two of you to join us this morning,” Perry stated, watching the hottest team in town sit down at the table. “Please, tell me, you were out on a lead or something.”

“Or something,” Lois muttered, covering her mouth.

“Actually, we were out late last night investigating Mindy Church,” Clark interrupted. “Sorry, Chief. We found out that she lived in New Orleans for a few months and before that Mobile, Alabama.”

“It was late,” Lois responded, looking over at Clark. “We found out her dad was a mechanic and did a lot of work for some gangsters back in the day.”

“When her father died, Mindy tried to take over,” Clark acknowledged seconds later.

“She had no luck until she decided to move to New Orleans,” Lois added.

Jimmy and Perry watched as Lois and Clark went back and forth on what they learned about Mindy as if they had rehearsed it.

“Where she started to move farther up the chain until she crossed a man by the name of Morgan Edge,” Clark stated quickly. “Edge is known to be as ruthless as Bill Church Junior.”

“Okay, well, good work,” Perry said before moving on. He didn’t believe for a moment that was all they did last night. They looked too cheerful just to find out about Morgan Edge. Perry had heard that name before and needed to make some calls later to find out more.

“What else are you working on?” Perry wondered as he looked from Lois to Clark.

Lois knew that they couldn’t just be working on one story. No, they had to work on several stories since they were only working on research for Mindy. No article had been written as of yet.

She tilted her head slightly and grabbed her notepad. She was ready for this.

“Superman stopped a car chase last night. The black Ford Mustang was going over eighty-five miles per hour at the highest. Three police vehicles crashed and two civilians were injured before Superman stopped the suspect. The article is in your inbox,” Lois explained as she read her notes.

“Also the Metropolis Museum of Art will be having their annual fundraiser tomorrow night,” Clark stated as he relaxed.

Perry knew his most valuable partners were on the ball. Yet, he still had to make sure he kept them in line and stopped their romance from interrupting his newsroom.

“Good, keep at it. Okay, people, let’s get moving,” Perry ordered before everyone got up from their chairs and left the conference room.

Lois went to her desk and Clark to his to start the day. Jimmy strolled over to Lois’ desk and looked at Clark then at Lois.

“Second day in a row,” Jimmy announced, raising his eyebrow. “I gave that research to you about Mindy around four. How did you find out about who Mindy worked for?”

“We had a few other sources to contact,” Lois told Jimmy as she booted up her computer.

“We have that meeting with Halstead Construction later this morning,” Clark mentioned, moving over to Lois’ desk. “Halstead won the bid on the Raven Resort. We are going to meet with the head engineer.”

“How do the two of you do this?” Jimmy wondered as he stood between the two.

“Do what?” Lois and Clark asked simultaneously.

“That,” Jimmy announced, “you finish each other’s sentences and know what the other is going to say without hesitation.”

“Jimmy, when you find the right partner it just comes naturally,” Clark stated, putting his hand on Lois’ shoulder with glee in his eyes.

“That and we just work well together,” Lois responded, putting her hand over Clark’s.

“That’s perfect. The two of you should dress up for that Halloween Ball as a pair. I mean there are great couples you could dress as—Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, Ken and Barbie,” Jimmy suggested with a smile.

“Seriously, Jimmy. There is no way I would ever dress up as Barbie,” Lois vetoed instantly.

“At least you are invited. I would love to check that place out and see if it’s really haunted,” Jimmy responded with a huff. Jimmy didn’t get invited to all of the Daily Planet

events like the top reporters. Yet some events Jimmy really wanted to attend. He stormed off to start research for Diane.

Clark sat at Lois’ desk. He tapped his finger on Lois’ desk while she read her emails.

“What are you thinking?” Lois wondered with a softened voice.

“What did you think about the movie last night?” Clark asked, lowering his head briefly.

“Clark, I’ve seen Star Wars plenty of times. I think that is one reason we got distracted so easily,” Lois smiled with a bit of mischief in her voice.

“I mean what if we dressed up as Han Solo and Princess Leia? It’s better than the typical costumes we will likely see there,” Clark explained as he took Lois’ hand into his.

“I’m not doing the outfit from the last film,” Lois refused as she shook her head.

“No, of course not. You can use that one for me later,” Clark grinned, kissing her hand. “But I do believe it would be cool to dress up as a hero who is misunderstood.”

“And the fact no one knows much about him and he is in outer space probably makes him perfect for you,” Lois questioned without hesitation.

“Well, yeah, that too. Plus Han and Leia make a great team, like us. Just think about it, okay? On another note, I think a trip to New Orleans might be needed to find out more about Mindy.”

“True,” Lois responded. “How about you go there and I interview the engineer?”

“Are you sure?” Clark asked as he let go of her hand and sat back. “We could always go tomorrow.”

“Well farm boy, I was thinking tomorrow we will go furniture shopping. Plus I might need some help moving the furniture,” Lois suggested while she replied to an email.

Clark knew Lois was getting the short end of the stick when they slept at his apartment. He was loving every moment of being with her at night. They would go through the research for a couple of hours, while he would make a quick dinner or order in. Then they would start the movie, and next thing the movie would be forgotten. It was usually quite innocent at first with sweet, slow kisses. Yet last night it went farther than either of them had anticipated. At one point she had pulled his shirt off and her hands began to roam his chiseled chest. His hands had also wandered over new territory and her lips were not the only place he had kissed. They couldn’t get enough of each other. Yet they knew if they had moved off the couch into his bedroom that

it would lead to them taking an even bigger step in their relationship.

The phone rang at Lois' desk, bringing both of them back to the present time. The smile and rosy cheeks had made Clark realize that Lois had also been thinking about last night's activities. He stood up to go back to his desk when he stopped and got that far-off look.

Lois noticed the way he had abruptly stopped. Clark had turned to look at her and she nodded her head in agreement. She knew that his alter-ego was needed somewhere important.

Lois finished her phone call, then turned toward the television behind her. She heard the newscaster announce that Superman had arrived on the scene of the earthquake in Mexico. It would be a couple of hours until Clark would return to Metropolis. Lois got started on her day.

She had more research that Jimmy had given her about the Raven Resort that she hadn't had time to go through. Lois grabbed the stack of files from her bag and flipped through the papers. She started writing down the important details of the resort that would be needed for her story. Now that Mindy Church had bought the resort and the construction would be starting tomorrow, a story would need to be written on the true history of the resort.

A man in his thirties named Robert Graham had moved to Metropolis from Chicago in 1908. He had worked with his uncle, Ernest R. Graham years earlier, helping him with some of the most prominent buildings in Chicago. Robert had moved to Metropolis with his wife, Eliza, who was expecting their first child. He wanted to build a resort up in the hills of Metropolis. He had heard of a fascinating resort in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Now Robert wanted to build something as grand on his own without the influence of his family. As the resort became a reality several deaths had occurred during the construction.

Robert had named the resort after all of the ravens that he would see during construction. His wife had found the ravens quite exquisite with their shiny black color yet in the sunshine, the bird had hints of purple, bronze, and green. Plus Eliza heard that ravens mated for life. She found them fascinating for some odd reason. He named it the Raven Resort in dedication to his wife. Six months after opening the resort in June of 1910, his dear wife had fallen ill with tuberculosis and died. Robert was left to raise their daughter and run the resort on his own.

After writing the article on the history of the Raven Resort in its infancy, Lois realized it had been a couple of hours. She had eaten the pastry that Clark had bought her already and was beginning to get a bit hungry again.

Plus she would be meeting with Connor Cortlandt, the head engineer for Halstead Construction, in forty-five minutes.

As Lois stepped out into the cool fall air from the Daily Planet, she looked up to see Clark walking up to her.

"I should ask where you have been, but I think I can already guess," Lois stated as she put her hand on his upper chest.

"Were you heading out to meet Cortlandt?" Clark wondered, putting his hand over Lois'.

"I was going to grab a bite to eat first," Lois answered, fixated on his lips and the feel of his hand on hers.

He watched her lips part slightly and he could feel her heart rate rise. Both of them felt the electricity between them, Clark stepped away from her knowing that this was not the place nor the time to ravish her like he wanted to.

"How about we head to the deli around the corner," he recommended, walking in step with her. They began to walk down the street together.

A few minutes had passed in silence, Lois could feel the tension start to roll off of Clark. When they sat down at a table in the deli with their order, Lois leaned over to him.

"Are you okay?" she asked with sincerity.

"Forty deaths and almost a hundred injured. A lot of homes and businesses were destroyed. I flew home to shower afterward. On my way back, I flew over Raven Resort. I noticed a few vehicles over by the carriage house along with some equipment and around a dozen people. One of the men is a known associate of Mindy's," Clark explained as he reached over for Lois' hand. "I'm okay though."

"Good," she replied with a smile. "I worry about the things you see and hear."

"Just being near you strengthens me. I come back knowing you are here for me no matter what," Clark admitted as his muscles relaxed and a warmth came through him.

"I always will," she responded as she rubbed her finger over the side of his hand between the thumb and index finger.

Ever since he had become Superman, Lois was the anchor that led him home. She didn't know that even in the beginning she was his light. Lois calmed his nerves as no one else could.

Chapter Four

Winter nights we sang in tune

Played inside the months of moon

“Never think of never.let this spell last forever”

Heart - Magic Man

* * *

Two weeks had gone by since Lois had taken Clark furniture shopping. He sat on her new sofa that was beige in color and seventy-two inches wide. The loveseat was fifty-eight inches wide. The new furniture had a sturdy wood frame and the beige upholstery blended perfectly with Lois' apartment. The curved arms and buttonless tufts along the back cushions made it comfortable. Clark helped her pick out the furniture that weekend afternoon after they had come back from New Orleans.

They had accomplished so much that weekend. Clark had flown Lois to New Orleans and they landed on Urquhart Street near Montegut Street. They had visited a couple of bars in the French Quarter. One man had recognized a photo of Mindy Church they were showing around. The man's name was Ernie Snyder. He recognized the photo as his high school girlfriend, Melinda Grace Bartlett. Ernie and Melinda had moved to New Orleans from Mobile over six years ago. He said the only difference was the Melinda he knew was a brunette with shoulder-length hair.

Ernie had met Melinda as a freshman in high school in Mobile, Alabama. Her father ran a repair shop near the Rattlesnake Bayou. Benjamin 'Bubba' Bartlett had a habit of working for the criminal side of the city. Bubba got very sick when Melinda was a senior in high school. She tried to take over the repair shop after graduation. But Bubba's employees wouldn't work for a female. It didn't matter that she grew up around the repair shop and knew the difference between tire pressure and tire balancing. She was a female and should not be trusted.

Melinda 'Mindy' was angry that she was pushed aside for a man. From then on, she did whatever possible to get ahead in a man's world. She used every asset she could and manipulated men into doing her dirty work. At the age of twenty, she followed Ernie to New Orleans where he was going to work for his uncle. His uncle did business with the newest crime boss in the city. Mindy used Ernie to meet the crime boss. Morgan Edge was this crime boss, he was a media mogul who owned Galaxy Broadcasting System. Mindy dumped Ernie and tried to get on the good side of Edge. Mindy tried to scam Edge out of millions until he uncovered her plan and she disappeared from New Orleans.

Mindy changed her look from a brunette to a blond and moved to Metropolis. She started wearing skimpier clothing and used a high-pitched voice to win over Bill Church Senior. Now she was running Intergang as the first female crime boss. She wasn't going to let anyone stop her.

Now Lois and Clark were at Lois' apartment waiting for the pizza to arrive. He sat on her new sofa with his arm out while she went into her bedroom to change.

"I'm glad we came over here tonight," Clark said loudly enough for her to hear him. "My parents won't be back until later tonight."

Lois came out of the bedroom in pajama shorts and a tank top. The new sofa and loveseat fit perfectly in her apartment and they were right across from each other like her old ones had been.

"I can't believe your dad went to the art gallery with your mom," Lois stated as she sat next to him.

"She has been wanting to see that exhibit for months. When I noticed the exhibit was coming to Metropolis I had to get tickets for her. I just didn't think my dad would be interested in going with her," he replied putting his arms out.

"I do think our plans of going to your apartment one night and mine the next will help me get more sleep," she sighed, putting her hand on his thigh.

"I'm sorry I didn't get back until late last night," he apologized, reaching over to her and cupping her cheek.

"Clark, maybe we should slow it down a bit," Lois requested before he kissed her.

Clark sat back, his body tensing up and his eyes wrinkling. He didn't know what happened. "Did I do something to make you angry?" Clark wondered as his mouth felt dry.

She didn't know what to say. Her muscles tensed and her stomach tightened.

"We have been spending so much time together. I'm worried that you're getting sick of me. I mean, I don't have the best track record with relationships nor did I have the best role models," Lois mumbled, not being able to look him in the eye. "I keep teasing you every night then pushing you away."

He shook his head and smiled slightly. He thought it was something more. For a moment there, he thought she wanted to break up with him.

"Lois, honey, I don't think you are teasing me. Yes, some nights when I leave you, I take a dip in the Arctic. But I told you I wouldn't pressure you, and I'm not. I've waited forever for you and I'll wait until we are," he explained as he took her hands into his, "both ready. And I would never be tired of you. We are in this together—no matter what."

She sighed with relief. He had been disappearing on her more and not always coming back until hours later. For a moment, she thought he was having second thoughts.

“It’s just you disappear for hours on me. I never know if you are coming back at night or what I’m supposed to do,” Lois admitted, wiping her hands on her shorts. “Last night, you left about ten and didn’t get back until after one.”

“I told you before,” he explained as he pulled her closer, “I will always come back. If you don’t want to wait for me at my place, leave me a note that you went home or just crawl into my bed. If I come back and you are asleep in the bed then I can go sleep on the couch. It’s not a big deal.”

“Is this what it will be like when we get married then?” Lois wondered as she leaned into him. “You are gone at all hours and I sit and worry about you.”

“At the time I fly off, you might not know where I am going because I don’t always know until the very last minute. But you have to know that I will always come back to you and if you want to know where I was I will tell you.”

Lois sat there contemplating what he was telling her. She felt his hands in hers, his strength and his heart.

“I’m scared, Clark,” Lois admitted as she put her head on his shoulder. “Scared that you will get tired of me. Scared that I will mess this up and that I am not enough for you.”

He wrapped his arms around her and kissed the top of her head. They had talked about this in the past. She was insecure about the relationship and her past.

“Being with you is stronger than me alone, remember. You give me so much strength. When I come back at night, I look forward to just being with you like this. You make me feel like I belong. I know that feels like I put you up on a pedestal, but it’s your strength that keeps me going,” Clark confessed as he stroked her arms.

“Thank you,” she responded, sitting up and looking into his eyes. She cupped his cheek with her hand as he leaned into it. He kissed her palm then reached over and kissed her lightly on the lips. The kiss started light but then it turned into more as her hands wrapped around his neck. His hands wrapped around her waist as she leaned into him. Both of them moved slightly with her now lying on top of him between his legs. His hands found his way underneath her tank top feeling the smooth satin skin.

She moaned when he started kissing her neck and she moved her neck so he could get better access to that exact spot. His kisses led along the jawline where her ear met the jaw, the place between the lobe and the skin. At times his tongue would trace her ear and even slightly nibble on the earlobe.

Suddenly a knock on the door interrupted them. Lois pulled back, took a deep breath, and straightened her top. She looked down at Clark who obviously couldn’t answer

the door. She smiled at his predicament as he shook his head at what she did to him.

“I’ll answer the door. How about you get the plates out,” Lois suggested before grabbing some money out of her purse. Clark stood and walked into the kitchen. He needed to calm himself down.

A couple of minutes later Lois came into the kitchen with Clark leaning over the island. The plates and cups were out for them to eat the three-meat pizza that Lois loved.

“I talked to the engineer this afternoon. He stated they are on track to finish right before Halloween,” Lois stated while she sat down on one side of the sofa. Clark sat next to her with all of their research on the Raven Resort on the coffee table. “We still haven’t figured out why Mindy bought the resort?”

“Do you think she bought it for Bill Senior?” Clark wondered before taking a bite of his pizza.

“I don’t see why she would buy it when it meant so much to Senior and his first wife,” Lois replied after taking a sip of her soda that came with their pizza.

“Do you think, maybe, a visit with Senior would help us?”

“I don’t think he would talk to us about Mindy especially after she set him up,” Lois stated, leaning back on the new furniture. Clark had been right when he picked this furniture out for her apartment. It matched perfectly with the ambience of the room and was comfortable enough to relax on. They had even made out on it that first night after the furniture was delivered.

“What if Perry went to talk to him,” Clark suggested before taking another bite of the pizza. “Maybe he could visit and get more information on the resort and what it meant to the first Mrs. Church?”

“Especially if Alice and his first wife were friends. Clark, I think that’s a great idea,” Lois acknowledged with a smile.

The couple finished their pizza and tackled the research on the resort. The stories Jimmy had told them weeks ago were true.

“You know beside the two murders Jimmy told us about there were more deaths there. It seems like some sort of accidental death or murder has occurred once every decade,” Lois stated two hours later as they sat there with papers everywhere.

“In 1963, a young teenager disappeared on the grounds. He was there with his family. His parents said he was going down to the pool, but when they went to look for him a couple hours later, he was nowhere to be found. He

was never found,” Clark conveyed from the article he was reading.

“Another death in 1956 where a woman had committed suicide in Room 217,” Lois announced as she began searching for another paper. “Clark, wasn’t Room 217 the same room the actress was murdered in?”

“Yeah, it was. It looks like Room 217 had another incident in 1936. So every twenty years a female dies in Room 217. Lois, this doesn’t make sense. No one has ever been convicted of any of those crimes in that room,” Clark declared, sitting back.

“So as long as I stay away from that room, I think we will be okay,” she said, leaning over to him.

“First of all, I was hoping we wouldn’t be in separate rooms if we decided to stay overnight,” Clark replied as he put his arm around her. “I know we haven’t discussed it, but I don’t want you to be alone there.”

“Is that the only reason you want to share a room,” Lois muttered with a sultry voice.

“Of course not,” Clark said, pulling her closer.

“Clark, maybe you should go,” Lois responded as she put her hand up to his chest. Clark’s chin dropped and the color drained from his face. Lois cupped his cheek with her palm. “Your parents should be back from the exhibit. They came all the way to Metropolis and I’m sure they would like to spend some time with you.”

“Well, okay, but tomorrow night I was hoping you would come over for dinner,” Clark asked, leaning into her hand. “Mom and I were going to make lobster bisque with sourdough bread. She brought the starter with her, and she has been feeding it for the past nine days.”

Lois looked at him with a side glance.

“What are you talking about,” Lois questioned, “I mean I would love to come to dinner, but I don’t get the feeding of the starter part.”

“Sourdough bread. It’s how you make it. You have to have a starter and you have to keep feeding it with flour and water for ten days. Mom had a friend share some of their starter with her, so she could make some. So she thought lobster bisque would be great to try and make with it,” he explained in detail.

“Okay, well, I’m glad your family can cook because I can barely make oatmeal,” Lois chuckled, reaching over to kiss Clark lightly. “But if the two of you are making dinner, should I bring dessert?”

“No, just bring yourself. Knowing my mother she will likely make something while we are at the Planet,” Clark

said, pulling her closer. “They were hoping you would agree to come over for dinner.”

“I adore your parents,” she admitted, pulling back. “I mean you have yet to meet my mother and I am hoping I can keep that from happening for a while.”

“Lois, I have to meet her eventually,” he stated, his hand running through his hair.

“Sure, maybe after our tenth wedding anniversary,” Lois voiced as she rubbed her brow, the tension started in her neck and began to give her a headache.

“You said married. Does that mean we are beginning to think about it more?”

“I never stop thinking about it. I mean earlier you told me that you are not getting tired of me,” Lois reminded him. “You remind me that we have this figured out. I get nervous and you calm me down. You stop when I ask you to and you have been giving me time to get used to you not always being around. Yes, I’ve been thinking about it. My family though is the one thing holding me back.”

“I know and we will get through the meeting of your mother together like we have everything else,” Clark declared, taking her hands in his. “Before I start kissing you again, I better get going.”

After a few kisses and sweet words of love, he left her apartment. It was the first night in weeks that they had parted before midnight. Lois cleaned up the apartment, took a long hot bath, then crawled into bed. It felt strange to her, having a night where she didn’t fall into bed half asleep or tangled with Clark on one of their couches fast asleep. She missed him already. How was that possible? Lois was with Clark most of the day at work, then they spent time together afterward. Is this what love really was? Missing that person when you were not with them and wanting to be with them always. It was time. She was absolutely in love with Clark Kent, and maybe it was time to tell him that she would marry him.

Chapter Five

When I’m in the shower I’m afraid to wash my hair

‘Cause when I open my eyes I might find someone standing there

People say I’m crazy just a little touched

But maybe showers remind me of “Psycho” too much

That’s why

Rockwell - Somebody’s Watching Me

* * *

"I can't believe you talked me into this," Lois stated as she walked into the Raven Resort. She was in full costume with a curly blond wig, a skin-tight off-the-shoulder black shirt and high-waisted disco pants with red heels, red lipstick, and hoop earrings.

"I figured we could blend in more if we were in black," Clark replied looking over the newly renovated resort. Clark was wearing a black t-shirt and black jeans. He knew if he didn't wear his glasses and his hair was slicked back, he would look more like Superman than he cared to admit. So he kept his glasses on and didn't slick his hair back. But there was no doubt who Clark and Lois were dressed up unless you lived under a rock during the late 1970s. Danny Zuko and Sandy Olsson screamed 'cool' in the musical and movie 'Grease'. Danny and Sandy didn't make sense in the beginning, by the end though, they made perfect sense together. Just like Lois and Clark.

"Sure, it had nothing to do with me in this get-up," Lois replied as they walked closer to the check-in area.

"Lois, I have seen you in a lot less," he whispered, leaning over to her with a grin on his face and his eyebrows up.

She shook her head at his attempt to make her feel better. Lois didn't know why they had agreed to dress up as a couple, wait, that's wrong, she definitely knew why. She was in love with this man, who was totally head over heels for her. She wanted other women to know that as well because Clark Kent was a catch. Sexy, romantic, kind, and he could fly!

They stepped up to the reception area where the staff was dressed up as zombies.

"Clark Kent and Lois Lane," Clark announced to the female staff member. Her name tag said Ginger, and her red hair was matted and looked like it hadn't been washed in weeks. The torn outfit and make-up made her look like she wanted to eat his brains instead of giving him a key to his room.

"Oh yes, Mrs. Church told us to give you the royal treatment. The two of you will be in Room 401. You can bring your luggage straight to me and the bellhop will get it settled in your room for you. The ballroom is in the left corridor then the second door to your right. Have a devilish time," Ginger announced, handing the room key to Clark.

Clark and Lois looked at each other, then she put her hand through his arm and turned left to the ballroom. As they started halfway down the hall, Clark stopped and realized they needed their bag from the Jeep.

"Stay here, I'm going to go get our bags," Clark told her before kissing her quickly on the lips. When he left she looked around the crowd of people that were dressed

up. There were tons of different costumes from Freddy Kruegers to Fred Flintstones to Devils to Dorothys and Jasmynes to Jesters. It was difficult to notice under the costume who was who, but Lois could have sworn she saw the mayor and his wife.

"Lois, is that you, darlin'," a familiar male voice wondered. Looking to her right, she knew instantly who was under that white sparkling pantsuit and black wig.

"Perry, how did I know you would dress up as the King?"

"Was there another choice," he laughed, giving her a hug. "Where is Clark?"

"Getting our bags," Lois replied as she leaned back against the wall. "This is quite the crowd."

"Oh yes, there are more powerful people here than Elvis's opening night in Vegas in '69," Perry announced as he tilted his hips.

"Chief, great costume," Clark stated as he walked up beside him putting his hand on the King's shoulder.

"Clark or should I say Danny," Perry replied, turning to Clark. "You know I saw the original on Broadway back in June of 1972. Alice was all about seeing it and loved the character of Danny so much that she tried to get me to slick my hair back a couple of times."

"Where is Alice, Chief?" Clark wondered, looking around for a Priscilla to match his Elvis.

"She wasn't feeling very well tonight," Perry declared, looking down to the ground. "I should have brought Jimmy. I know he wanted to get a look at this place."

Perry looked around in awe at the restored building. The new ivory paint and new hardwood floors made the granite hues of the reception area pop. The furniture was in bold colors with turquoise chairs and an avocado loveseat in the lobby. Paintings were scattered throughout the hallway of different haunted locations in the world such as Dracula's castle, London's Highgate cemetery, LaLaurie Mansion in New Orleans, and Edinburgh Castle in Scotland.

"Actually, I saw Jimmy outside with a young woman. He must have talked someone into bringing him," Clark responded as he looked toward the entrance.

"I'll find the kid while you two start mingling and find out what Mindy Church has planned for us," Perry ordered before he walked off toward the front door.

"Shall we?" Lois wondered, putting her hand on Clark's chest. "The faster we get this over with, the faster I can get out of this crazy outfit."

Clark's eyebrow tilted when she finished the comment about getting out of the outfit. She did look very sexy

in black, especially the disco pants that fit her in all the right places. He remembered that they were sharing a room tonight and couldn't even think about what was going to happen after this party was over. Was there one bed in their room or two?

"Come on, Romeo," Lois said with a smile, pulling him toward the ballroom.

When they entered the room the song 'Thriller' by Michael Jackson was playing. Lois and Clark stepped further in to get a better view. The large ballroom was darkened with a disco ball and lights from strobes of different colors floating around the room. There was a large crowd watching dancers do the Thriller dance. Even some of the attendees were dancing the famous dance created by Michael Jackson in the music video from the early 80s.

After the song ended many clapped, then the lights flashed to the doors on the other side of the room. A drum-roll sounded, then the door opened to four large muscular men walking in with white painted skulls on their faces, black muscle shirts and black jeans. The men stepped aside two on each side and a woman in a red came into the room. She had long red hair and a strapless sequin red gown with a slit on one side that went up to her mid-thigh. She also had purple gloves that went three-fourths up her arm with red lipstick and purple eyeshadow.

Lois looked closer and realized the woman in red was none other than Mindy Church.

"Jessica Rabbit, really," Lois snarled shaking her head in disgust. "She isn't even a real character."

"I'm not bad, I'm just drawn that way," Clark mumbled, remembering the famous line Jessica Rabbit says in the movie 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit'. "I think she is trying to tell us something, Lois."

Clark leaned into Lois' ear as he stood behind her. Many of the guests went up to Mindy and thanked her for the wonderful time they were having. Lois shook her head and shrugged her shoulders before taking a step closer to Mindy.

Mindy strutted up to Lois and Clark with the four musclemen leading the way. The men stepped to the side as she reached Lois and Clark.

"Well, Miss Lane, don't you look alluring in your little get-up. And Mr. Kent, you look very seductive in all black," Mindy expressed as she tried to reach out to touch Clark's bicep. Lois stepped in front of Clark—blocking Mindy.

"Are you trying to tell us something with this ensemble?" Lois questioned, looking at the woman who had such a high-pitched voice.

"Miss Lane, I'm just playing a part," Mindy answered before turning away.

Lois reached out for Mindy's arm simultaneously as one of the men grabbed Lois' wrist. Clark stepped closer to Lois putting his hand on the bodyguard's shoulder.

"You don't want to do that," Clark told the bodyguard, squeezing the man's shoulder slightly. The bodyguard winced with pain and let go of Lois' wrist.

"By the way, Mindy, Ernie says hello," Lois called out. Mindy stopped instantly and turned around to look at Lois. She opened her mouth to say something and instead pressed her lips together and turned away.

The bodyguards and Mindy walked away leaving Lois and Clark standing there. Clark pulled Lois' hand up to look at her wrist. He wasn't sure if the bodyguard had hurt her or not.

"I'm okay, Clark," Lois admitted, letting him look her over. "I've been manhandled harder than that at the grocery store."

Clark let go of her wrist and looked through the crowd of people to find the bodyguard. He didn't like it when anyone put a hand on Lois even when she initiated the interaction.

"That doesn't make me feel any better," Clark told her. "We should start investigating this place."

Clark led Lois out of the ballroom. In the doorway, they noticed a tall man with white wild hair, a gray suit, and holding a pipe.

"Lois. Clark. Great to see the two of you," the man said. Lois looked closer and realized the man was none other than Dr. Bernard Klein.

"Dr. Klein, what are you doing here?" Lois wondered as she looked at Albert Einstein in front of her.

"I was invited, of course. Who wouldn't want a night off to celebrate All Hallows' Eve? Did you know tonight is the blend of two cultures; the

Celtic celebration of Samhain with the Christian church's All Saints' Day. I figured why not dress up as one of the greatest physicists of all time? His contribution to the science community is one of most fascinating items in today's world."

"I hope you have a great time tonight," Clark stated before Dr. Klein turned into the ballroom.

Lois and Clark started down the corridor to the front of the building. They were only a few feet down the hallway when the lights went out. Clark instantly reached for Lois when they heard the ballroom doors slam shut.

“Clark, what happened?” Lois asked, trying to get her bearings. She felt Clark’s hand take hers.

“I’m not sure,” Clark acknowledged, tightening his grip on Lois’ hand. “Let’s go to the reception.”

Before they could take a step any further they heard several screams in the ballroom. Lois stepped toward the ballroom and didn’t get very far since Clark didn’t move.

“Clark, we have to get into the ballroom,” Lois demanded with her voice rising in pitch.

“Lois, I also heard Jimmy scream outside,” Clark said his voice cracking. “I don’t know what to do.”

Lois pulled him toward the doors of the ballroom.

“Try to look inside the ballroom,” Lois suggested, taking a shallow breath. “See if we can get in there then we will go outside.”

Clark tilted his glasses down to look through the wall into the ballroom. He shook his head in disbelief when he realized no one was in the room.

“Lois, I don’t know what happened,” Clark said suspiciously, “the room is empty.”

He stepped toward the doors and tried the doors that were locked. He pulled a bit harder and the door broke off the hinges. Lois trailed behind

Clark as he stepped into the room. The darkness filled the room and Clark closed his eyes for ten seconds then opened them and his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. The ballroom was empty except for the tables and chairs scattered around. It was like everyone had just disappeared.

“What happened to everyone?” Lois questioned as she became lightheaded. “A hundred people can’t just disappear.”

“We need to get to Jimmy. He shouted for help,” he replied upon hearing Jimmy’s cries for help again.

“Let’s go, but we have to figure out what Mindy did with everyone,” Lois demanded. “Those were some very powerful people she made disappear.”

Clark pulled Lois into his arms and flew out of the resort. Lois curled into Clark’s arms, her head buried into his neck for safety. He didn’t fly very fast, since it was dark and he wasn’t used to the resort’s layout. He landed on the left side of the resort near several pine trees and twenty feet away from the pool house. The entire area was dark except for the half-moon and stars shining down. Clark led Lois to where he believed Jimmy had been when he screamed.

“Look,” Lois said, pointing to a dark figure in the distance.

Their hands were joined as they came upon Jimmy, who was dusting off the dirt from his black slacks.

“Jimmy, what’s going on?” Clark asked, coming up to the young man dressed up in a black suit and tie.

“I tripped over something and when I stood back up I noticed it was a skull,” Jimmy answered, pointing over to the small skull with prominent cheekbones.

Lois looked over to Clark and they realized it was a skull of a smaller figure. It was old like it had been buried for years. The skull was caked with dirt from being in the ground with roots and dead leaves scattered around it.

“Do you think it’s the boy from ‘63?” Lois questioned as Clark looked around for more bones.

“I’m not sure,” Clark replied as he moved his glasses back up after x-raying around the scene and locating a few more bones, but left them undisturbed for the police.

“Why were you screaming? Where did Perry go?” Lois asked Jimmy as she looked around for their boss.

“I screamed because I tripped then I looked down and there was a skull. I haven’t seen him,” Jimmy responded as he brushed more dirt off his suit. “My date and I got separated when she saw her ex. I saw a teenager running back towards the pool and decided to follow him. I stopped for a second when I heard screaming from inside the resort. When I turned around the boy was gone.”

“You mean you never saw Perry. He said he was coming outside to find you,” Clark mentioned as he looked over at Lois and then back to Jimmy.

“Clark, you don’t think he ended up back in the resort?” Lois asked, her stomach getting an uneasy feeling.

“Are you saying the Chief is missing?” Jimmy shouted, making big gestures with his hands. “We have to find him.”

Jimmy started moving toward the resort when Lois grabbed his elbow. She couldn’t let Jimmy go into the resort by himself.

“Jimmy, everyone disappeared inside. No employees. No guests. No Chief,” Lois explained with a sour taste in her mouth. “We need a plan.”

“Lois, how about you and Jimmy go find some help and I’ll go into the resort,” Clark requested as he looked over to Jimmy and then at Lois. He hoped Lois would get the hint that he was going to use his powers to help figure out what happened.

Lois tried to step closer to Clark but her heel was stuck in the dirt. She slipped off the heel and realized she wasn’t going to get very far in the red heels. Lois pulled the shoes from the ground and went over to Clark.

“Please, be careful,” Lois murmured before kissing Clark on the cheek. “We are going to go to the Jeep and call the police from my cell I left in there.”

Seconds later Jimmy and Lois were on their way to the Jeep when they heard an explosion. Jimmy turned his head to the blast and someone came up behind Lois and put a rag over her mouth. She went limp in the dark figure’s arms and he dragged her away. Another dark figure hit Jimmy over the head with a lead pipe. Jimmy fell to the ground unconscious with Lois being taken. Who had knocked Jimmy out? What would Clark find inside the resort? And where was Lois being taken?

Chapter Six

Glitter on the wet streets, silver over everything

The river’s all wet, you’re all chrome

Ah, dripping with alchemy, shiver, stop shivering

The glitter’s all wet, you’re all chrome

Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs - Heads Will Roll

* * *

Lois felt nauseous. She blinked a few times trying to catch her bearings. It was still dark, but she knew she was inside now. She knew this by the feel of the mattress she was on. Her hands felt the fabric of the comforter below her fingertips. Sitting up, Lois knew she had to figure out where she was and get help. She couldn’t scream for Clark or Superman because she had no idea how long it had been since she last saw him. Her wig was missing, which meant maybe Clark would know she was missing. Think. Lois. Take a deep breath and think. She got off the bed and her bare feet hit the cold wooden planks. Her eyes adjusted to the darkness and she could tell she was in one of the rooms. Lois took a few steps toward the table and reached for the phone.

“Darn it,” she snarled, realizing that there was no dial tone. She slammed the phone down and walked over to the door. She tried to open the door to the room, but it wouldn’t open. Lois tried to unlock the door, but it was unlocked and still wouldn’t open. Putting her head against the door, she closed her eyes for a moment. How was she going to get out of here?

“Help me,” a female voice whispered from behind her.

Lois turned her head instantly to the voice. There was someone else in the room with her.

“Who’s there?” Lois asked moving her head around trying to find where the voice came from.

“Help me,” the voice said again. “Save me.”

“Who’s there?” Lois repeated.

Lois moved using her hands to feel around the room. She didn’t find anyone, so she moved to the table trying to find something to open the door. Suddenly she found a folder from the resort at the table. She felt the number, embossed across the folder and realized what room she was in—217.

“Clark, where are you?” Lois wondered before she walked back over to the bed and fell upon the mattress.

It had been twenty minutes since Clark had stepped away from Lois. He had gone into the resort and realized what happened to everyone in the room. Now Superman was trying to escort the group outside of the resort. As he led the first group out of the resort Jimmy was running up to them. Jimmy was holding his head where he had been knocked unconscious.

“Jimmy, what happened?” Superman asked with sincerity but with a stern voice.

“Lois and I were heading back to her car when I was knocked unconscious,” Jimmy answered as he moved his hand from his head to look for blood. “When I came to, Lois was nowhere to be found!”

Suddenly Superman bit his lip and assumed the worst-case scenario. He looked around the area quickly using his x-ray vision and noticed the blond wig Lois was wearing.

“Jimmy help the guests from inside and I’ll look for Lois,” Superman told him. Jimmy nodded in agreement as Superman flew off.

Jimmy walked toward the entrance of the resort and came upon Perry in the crowd.

“Chief, are you okay?” Jimmy questioned looking over the King. “What happened?”

“I guess the three floors were connected like an elevator, somehow the entire ballroom was sent to the basement. Superman found us and was leading us up the back staircase,” Perry answered as he pulled his wig off.

“How did you realize you were in the basement?” Jimmy wondered, pursing his lips together.

“I don’t know. The floor just moved down one and we didn’t even realize it. The party kept going on as if nothing happened. I’m not even sure how we moved down a floor,” Perry stated as he leaned against one of the white pillars in front of the building.

Superman flew around the resort trying to locate Lois. He checked the exterior electrical box and noticed someone had turned the power off for the entire property. Superman turned the power lever back on and the resort lit back up.

Finally, Superman flew through the building trying to locate Lois.

He never noticed the woman on the second floor pounding on the window trying to get his attention. Lois could see the crowd outside coming from the main entrance. She had even caught a glimpse of Superman flying around. She couldn't get his attention.

"Superman, help," Lois screamed yet he acted like he couldn't hear her. Was the room soundproof? Why couldn't Clark hear her? She stepped over and grabbed a chair and threw it against the window. The chair bounced back at her, so she grabbed the legs of the chair and slammed it against the window a few more times. After the third time, the window finally shattered.

Jimmy stood on the cement driveway when he heard glass shattering. He looked up and noticed a chair falling from the second floor. He could see someone in the window waving at the crowd below. Jimmy looked closer and realized it was Lois. The light inside her room illuminated her figure. Jimmy could see she was yelling something, but couldn't hear her.

"Superman," Jimmy shouted, running toward Superman who had landed at the entrance again. "Lois is up there on the second floor. She threw a chair out of the window to break it."

Superman turned, looked up, and flew off seconds later. He stepped into the room through the window.

"I've been looking everywhere for you," he stated as he looked her up and down. He took a few deep breaths trying to calm himself. He had to watch what he did and what he said, he didn't know what had happened or what was going on. "What happened to you?"

"Someone must have chloroformed me. I woke up in here. The door must be locked from the outside," Lois babbled. "I kept pounding on the window. I kept screaming for you."

Lois started tearing up. She was exhausted. Superman went over to her and wrapped his cape around her.

"Do you want me to take you home," he whispered in her ear.

"What about the party? And our room," Lois cried, looking into his eyes. "I kept hearing voices in here. Someone kept asking for me to help them."

Superman looked around and realized they were the only ones in the room. There were no cameras, no listening devices, and no one else except them two.

"I can take you to my place," he stated, putting his hand on her cheek. "Just stay there until I figure out what is going on here."

Lois didn't hesitate. She couldn't be left alone. She wrapped her arms around his waist.

"Don't leave me," she cried, pulling him closer. "This place is haunted."

"I thought you didn't believe in ghosts."

"I didn't believe in aliens until you flew into my life," she responded with a huff. She let go of him and turned away. "I'm not crazy. I mean I know you think I must be. But there was someone else in this room. She kept asking for help. Kept saying 'help me'."

"I don't think you are crazy. A little overzealous at times, but not crazy," he told her, turning her around to look at him. "Whatever you want to do, it's okay."

"No, it's not okay. She did this on purpose," Lois stated, wiping her tears away. "This is Mindy."

Lois stepped into the restroom to clean off her makeup from crying. She turned on the light and turned on the water. The water came out thick and blood-red.

"Superman," she shouted before the lights in the restroom flickered. Lois looked up in the mirror and saw a woman behind her in a white Victorian dress. The woman had similar features with long auburn hair, a small figure, and brown eyes. She looked ashy, her dress was ripped in places and bloody tears were coming down her face. "Ahhhhhh!"

Superman ran to Lois, but the door slammed shut before he could reach her.

"Help me," the female said behind Lois.

"Superman, help me," Lois screamed as she turned toward the door pounding on it.

"Lois, stand back," he shouted before he crashed through the door. The lights were still flicking when he came into the room.

"What happened?"

"Look," she said, pointing to the water that was still coming out red, but not as thick as before. "This is not normal."

"Bad pipes?" he wondered as he turned the water off. "The building is old, maybe it's rust."

"The flickering lights and I saw someone in the mirror. Didn't you hear her?"

"I just heard you screaming," he answered, "and the lights could be from the wiring."

"I'm not crazy. This place is haunted," Lois scoffed in anger. "I need to get out of here."

Lois pushed past Superman and went back into the room. She was beyond scared and this wasn't like her. She had been through a lot in her twenty-eight years, but this was insane.

"We need to find Mindy Church and see what she did to this room," Superman said to himself then he went into the room. "Lois, I think I'll take you outside with Perry and Jimmy."

Lois looked up at him. The hair on her arm was standing up and she wrapped her arms around her body. She was so frightened that she couldn't get warm. This outfit did nothing for her. She stood there. Her hair was slicked back, her mascara smeared on her face and she was barefoot. Lois didn't want to be here. Looking up at Superman, she shook her head in agreement.

Superman went over to her lifting her up in his arms and swooped out of the window. They landed outside near her Jeep. He knew she had a change of clothes in the Jeep. She opened the back of the Jeep and sat on the trunk to put on a pair of socks and her tennis shoes. Then she grabbed a sweatshirt she had in her bag and put it on.

A few minutes later she closed the gate and looked up at Superman, "I'm ready. Let's go find Mindy Church."

"I'm going to go locate Mindy and have you stay with Perry and Jimmy until I find her. Then I'll come back for ya and we will interrogate her together," Superman told Lois as he put his hands on her arms to warm her up.

"I'm going to walk over to Perry and Jimmy. I see them from here," Lois explained, turning her head to the right and noticing Perry and Jimmy about thirty feet away.

"Are you sure? I can walk you over there," Superman suggested also looking over to Perry and Jimmy.

"I'll be okay," she responded looking up into his eyes.

"After we interrogate Mindy, I will take you away from here and make you forget all about tonight," he promised, reaching for her hand. He didn't want anyone to notice that they were holding hands. Sometimes his love for Lois was difficult to hide from the rest of the world especially when he was dressed as Superman.

"I'll hold you to that," she mumbled with a slight smile. She looked down at their joining hands and realized she couldn't live without him.

Letting go of his hand, she gave him one more smile and then walked toward Perry. He watched her for a moment until she was close enough for Perry to notice her and he

flew away. Superman needed to find Mindy and find out what she knew about the events of the night.

Within ten minutes, he located Mindy in the back of the resort near the body they had found earlier in the night. He landed and strode over to Mindy and a few of her employees.

"Mrs. Church," Superman stated crossing his arms. "What do you know about the body?"

"I had nothing to do with it. I think it's the young teenager who went missing in the 60s," Mindy explained in her unique voice.

"What do you know about the events in the ballroom tonight?" Superman wondered. "The doors locked everyone inside and the room lowered down a floor."

"I did know about that. We thought it would be a neat trick for those that wanted a good scare tonight. We maneuvered the doors to lock for five minutes while the floor moved so no one would get hurt," Mindy explained looking at her employees.

"But the electricity wasn't supposed to go out."

"Do you know anything about Miss Lane being kidnapped and locked in Room 217," Superman asked sternly?

"I don't know anything about that," Mindy informed him.

"Somehow I don't believe you," Superman told her as he stepped closer to her.

The men that worked for Mindy stepped closer to Superman.

"Guys, I think it's a horrible idea," Superman stated while still looking at Mindy.

"You know Superman, I don't give up very easily," Mindy retorted as she looked over toward her men. "I have ways of getting what I want."

"The police are here. You might need to explain that to them," Superman said as he heard the sirens from the police vehicles pulling up the long driveway of the resort.

Superman flew away and went to the police vehicles. After telling the officers where the body was discovered, he returned to Lois standing next to Perry.

"Perry, can I speak to Lois?" Superman wondered, putting his arm on her shoulder.

Lois looked over at Perry then at Superman. She knew it couldn't be good. And once they stepped away from the crowd, he let her know exactly what was going on.

"She admitted about the ballroom escapades but didn't admit about your kidnapping," Superman confessed.

Doctor Klein rushed up to them. His eyes did sidelong glances without moving his head. He didn't want anyone to hear this information that didn't need to know.

"I got a call from Star Labs," Dr. Klein stated as he pulled his wig off, "the kryptonite has been stolen."

"What," Lois wondered with a furrowed brow. "Why did Star Labs have kryptonite?"

"Dr. Klein was working on radiation therapy for me. Like a vaccine. If we can find a way to counteract its effects, then it won't be a problem any longer," Superman explained as he pulled Lois aside.

"If he can find a vaccine...Clark!"

"Superman," he told her looking around.

"I can't believe you'd even let that stuff around you. Why didn't you just get rid of it? Throw it in the sun or something. Now you can't because someone stole it. What if it was Mindy? Or what if whoever stole it has it aimed at you, right now," Lois rambled in anger. Her pulse was racing and she had her hands clenched.

"Dr. Klein, is there any clue on who stole the kryptonite?," Superman asked looking over at the science nerd.

"Oh, yeah. My lab assistant told me the burglars were dressed as zombies," Dr. Klein admitted, putting his hands on his hips and bending over. "This is all too much for me. I'm going back to the lab to see if there is anything I can do. I knew taking a night off was a bad idea."

Lois and Superman watched as Dr. Klein walked away. Then, she turned at Superman with her hands on her hips. She wasn't sure what she was more upset about—the woman in the mirror trying to scare her, Mindy Church, or Clark not telling her about the kryptonite.

"I know you're angry. I just wanted to try and find a cure and not worry you," he whispered to her. They stood next to each other leaning on the car behind them. His arms were crossed and so were hers.

"I just thought that two people that thought about getting married are supposed to tell each other everything," Lois stated looking up at him.

"I know and I'm sorry. You're right, I really should have told you. I just didn't want you to worry about me," he admitted leaning over toward her a little bit. "Now what do we do?"

"We find out how Mindy found out about the kryptonite—because it has to be her—and bring her down for good," Lois disclosed with a smile, "First, I think we need to call it a night and get out of these darn costumes."

"Sounds good to me," Superman said with a smile.

"You know what I mean," Lois laughed shaking her head.

"Okay, do you want me to take you to your place or mine," he wondered, turning to her more.

"Stay here for a bit and find out about the body. I'm going to take the Jeep home and I'll meet you at your place in a couple of hours."

"Are you sure?" Superman questioned.

"Yeah, just give me some time to decompress from tonight's events," Lois said as she turned away from him. "Don't worry, I'll be okay."

With that said, Lois walked over to her Jeep and drove off. She wanted this night over. She needed to get out of the tight clothes and she was hungry. Lois craved ice cream or at least chocolate. First, she needed a long soak in her bathtub. Maybe the night could end on a better note.

Superman watched her drive away and once he knew she was safely on her way, he flew back to Mindy and the police. He needed to figure out about the body and even get a few clues on Mindy's henchmen. Did Mindy have anything to do with the theft at Star Labs? Was she behind Lois' kidnapping?

It was three hours before Clark got back to his apartment. Between the police, the Raven Resort charade, the skeleton of the boy, and Star Labs, all Clark wanted to do is curl up next to Lois and relax. When he arrived at his apartment, he noticed it was dark and Lois was nowhere to be found. After a quick shower, he flew off to China and got Lois' favorite dumplings, then went to her place. The window was closed, so he let himself into her apartment with the key she had given him. He found Lois asleep on her couch. Her hair was still wet from her bath. He picked her up and started walking her to bed.

"Urrgh," Lois mumbled, nuzzling closer to Clark. He was in jeans and a t-shirt that he had spun into before entering Lois' apartment building. He didn't want to show up at the door in the Superman outfit using a key.

He put her down on her bed and wrapped her up with a blanket. Clark knew she must have been exhausted if she had fallen asleep on the couch. He was also tired from the night's events. He left her a note leaving it on her bedside table. Clark knew he would see her tomorrow. Maybe he would just show up with a chocolate croissant and coffee for her in the morning. So he left her apartment and did a quick flyover Metropolis to see if he was needed. Within an hour he was back at his own apartment and in his bed. Now that the month of October was over, what would come next? Would Mindy be caught? Would Lois learn to appreciate the holidays? All he knew was the devil was in disguise tonight and he was glad it was over.

The End