

The In-Between Moments: Blind Date

By [JadedEvie](#) <evie.l.jade@gmail.com>

Rated: PG-13

Submitted: January 2025

Summary: The In-Between Moments is a series that rewrites, elongates or adds scenes. Most of them take place in between major plot moments. Some of them slip easily into the canon, others roll right into an alternative universe. They're short, not connected, and in no particular order. In fact, they're usually plot bunnies that strike when I'm supposed to be working on the other epic stories I've got in the works.

Story Size: 5,788 words (33 kB as text)

A fluffy scene that happens between episodes, taking place somewhere after Metallo. The rules of the relationships in the Clark/Lois/Superman triangle are generally true to the show timeline. Please do me the favor of ignoring how time zones work here—I cheated.

The food had been good.

The drinks had been better.

But her date was *abysmal*.

And his tie was devastatingly bland.

She'd had to find something to focus on, other than imagining the possible trajectory of her wine after she dumped her glass over his head, striking back at the tie had been less offensive than the conversation.

To start with, the man was an idiot.

On top of that, he thought he was far smarter than she was.

Her...

And all women, she soon found out.

It wasn't that women didn't have their place, it's just that they couldn't really be taken seriously.

She could understand that, couldn't she?

The imagery of an artistic wine splatter had started there.

She hadn't heard rhetoric like this since the Dark Ages! After the third misogynistic anecdote told from Troy's energetically narcissistic viewpoint, her fury had finally snapped the over-firing synapses in her brain, simply refusing to process his hot air as speech any longer.

But this date had been set up by her mother, of all people. So her wine remained in the glass. ...instead of painting a stain down his boring tie, as he so richly deserved.

After the whole debacle with Johnny Corbin, Ellen had gotten it into her head that neither of her daughters were making serious strides toward the grandchildren that she'd expected. Setting out to rectify this perceived problem in her usual overbearing way, Lucy had gotten a stern talking-

to about what constituted an appropriate male escort and Lois sat through a lecture on the hazards of putting her career first.

She'd managed to get off the phone before her mother could get the second wind that had been gathering energy.

But she hadn't managed to escape the blind date that Ellen had set up for her.

Lois wondered if Lucy had also been sent on a date dug up from the trenches of the eighth circle of hell.

She'd ask her—if she ever got out of here.

Because she couldn't just leave, she reminded herself, mentally pinning her feet to the floor. as she surreptitiously twisted her napkin in her lap. She couldn't storm out in the fit of pique she'd worked up. She couldn't even knock him down the several pegs his ego had elevated him.

She had to make this look like she'd made an honest effort.

Or else she'd never hear the end of it.

And if her mother thought she wasn't taking this seriously, she'd risk being sent on another date with someone her mother approved of. If the egotist she was sitting across from was any indication of the type of men Ellen thought she ought to be dating, she couldn't chance her mother menacing her with any more of these other bozos.

So she sat there, in the fancy, Zagat-recommended restaurant, on the top floor of an expensive high-rise, desperately trying not to cast wistful looks out the encircling wide windows and all the while willing the minutes to tick by.

Bored, she started assessing Troy's appearance. She may as well see what information she could glean—it might be good practice for an actual investigation.

Her gaze roved over his slightly receding blonde hair, his crisp suit, his matching pocket-square. High-end, she guessed, but he'd had someone put the outfit together for him. The tie, for some reason, was a particular affront to her. It was several shades lighter than his suit and blended in perfectly to create an unobtrusive aesthetic. She unequivocally hated it.

Overall, he had an uninspired, shopped look, even though it was fastidiously executed.

So he was rich, self-obsessed and ultimately boring, she deduced.

She resisted the urge to roll her eyes.

She'd been there before.

Their server came over, hopefully to put an end to this charade of an evening, and Lois tuned back in to interpreting human speech. But instead of asking for the check and putting her out of her misery, he'd ordered a passionfruit pavlova for her and a diplomat creme for him—neither of which, as far as she could tell, had any chocolate in them.

What kind of dessert was that?

Her hand tightened threateningly around her wine glass.

And who had even said she'd wanted dessert anyway?

Until that moment, she hadn't realized how deeply she'd been counting on the meal ending before dessert, a habit that had served her well, and a rule she'd positively needed to follow tonight. But Mr. I'll-Order-For-You-Because-I-Know-Best had thwarted her tried and true routine. Having been denied that, and the possibility of chocolate, proved to be too much.

Feeling caged and volatile, she stood up from the table suddenly.

She clumsily covered for her abrupt departure by excusing herself to powder her nose, and walked too quickly toward the back of the restaurant.

Heading into the ladies' room, she found both stalls were occupied. It would just figure that a jerk like this would bring her somewhere that only had two stalls in the women's bathroom.

Probably designed by a man, she huffed in annoyance.

She exited and headed further down the back hall, not willing to admit defeat and surrender herself back to her date yet. The kitchens were just up ahead, so she decided to loiter in the hallway, hoping to go unnoticed.

But luck had truly abandoned her tonight. Her server exited the kitchens mere seconds later.

Lois turned toward the wall, examining her nails and trying to look unobtrusive.

"Did you need something, ma'am?"

"Just... the restroom," she fibbed.

The young woman smiled at her. "It's right back this way. I can take you."

The friendly server started to lead her back toward the restrooms, and ultimately her date, and she panicked. "No!"

The server turned back, giving her an awkward look.

"I just... I needed a breather from that... date," she got out clumsily, her expression shifting to disgust as her eyes involuntarily sought the dining room.

"Of course, ma'am," the server said, with a knowing look in her eye. "I completely understand."

"You do?" she asked with relief.

Her table companion hadn't been shy in his conversation tonight. Naturally the staff at the restaurant would have overheard some of his egocentric blather.

"Listen..." her new conspirator said in a confidential tone.

Hope sprang up in Lois' chest! Was there a back way out of this place? Maybe she'd make a break for it, in spite of her mother. She hadn't been counting on that chocolate-less dessert, and she wasn't sure she'd make it through that, too.

"If you head back down this hallway, and take the second door, you can hide out on the balcony there. Some of us, uh, use it when we need a break, too," she glanced ahead of her, clearly keeping an eye out for her shift lead, who Lois suspected didn't know about the use of the balcony for unsanctioned breaks. Her new friend continued, "But it's been an easy night tonight, so no one should be out there if you want to build up a little resistance."

"Thank you," Lois breathed, suddenly deeply grateful for women who looked out for other women.

It was a little soft for her, but she wondered if there was an article in this somewhere, about women helping their cohorts survive awful social situations. Regardless, her new friend was getting an awesome tip tonight, even if she had to leave it herself.

The server winked at her and continued on down the hallway back to the dining room alone.

Lois moved back the way she'd come, passing the first door and stopping at the second. She quickly opened it, and followed the deserted hallway that she found on the other side. At the end of the narrow hall, there was a second door, and she grasped the handle, pushing it open.

Cool, fresh night air met her face.

Inhaling deeply, she finally found some relief after the stuffy, frustrating night she'd endured.

She glanced around her. It was a small balcony, but it was a sanctuary nonetheless. Eager to feel at least the placebo of freedom, she walked to the edge and right up to the metal railing.

The view that she'd been resisting inside was breathtaking from this angle. The lights of the city reflected across the sparkling water of the bay, and the moon had risen high tonight.

Hands tightening on the rail, she leaned out over it, to get a better look at the street below. With a rising level of jealousy, she watched all the blissfully unbound people who weren't spending the night shackled to Mr. I-Have-a-Finance-Degree-and-an-Ego-the-Size-of-Everest.

"Careful," said a voice above her. "Balconies seem to have a habit of testing whether you can fly."

She was surprised to see him and more even surprised that he'd stopped to chat.

But it was a welcome surprise, and she felt the warmth of seeing a friend surge through her.

"You have no idea just how tempting that test would be right now," she said drolly.

His brow furrowed.

"Can I help you with something?"

She looked up at him, and asked with a clear agenda, "If I did happen to fall in the next minute or so, would you catch me and drop me off somewhere far, far across the city?"

"That seems like a long way to go to avoid cab fare," she said lightly, catching her grin.

"Well, I left my purse inside," she reasoned blithely.

"Lois," he started, glancing over her shoulder, but apparently not seeing anything dangerous inside the restaurant, "Is anything wrong?"

It wasn't a conversation she'd envisioned having with him, but, well, any port in a storm, she supposed.

"My mother set me up on a blind date tonight," she admitted.

His placid mask slipped a bit, but she only read a faint surprise in his face before it was back in place.

"He's insufferable!" she burst out, throwing her hands up in the air. "His vocabulary is half the size of mine, but he's used all of his little one-syllable words to talk down to me all night."

The superhero chuckled.

"Don't you start," she warned. "I've had enough of men laughing at me tonight. Especially when they think they're above me," she gestured to his altitude, several feet above hers.

He checked his laughter, but still had a glimmer in his eyes as he floated down to meet her at eye level.

"Is this better?"

She couldn't help but feel like he was teasing her still, though his words were polite and expression innocent. She must be having a bad night if she was being snarky to Superman.

It was better, though, now that he was just in front of her. His presence had always brought her joy. His proximity was even soothing her now.

Still, she sniffed indignantly, "Yes. Now, about that rescue—"

"Hold on, Lois—"

"You offered to help!"

"I'm not sure this would qualify as an emergency," he equivocated gently.

"But I'm in danger of losing my mind here!"

He gave her a chiding look, and she recanted.

Mostly.

"...And if I 'fell'?" she asked in a small, pleading voice.

"Then I'd catch you and set you right back on your feet," he confirmed.

"On this balcony?" she clarified.

"It looks safe enough, and I'm sure you'd be careful not to fall twice," he said, with a look.

He had this way of tacitly suggesting that she agree with him, somehow indicating that she knew better than whatever ploy she'd been angling for.

It reminded her of something else. Someone else? Before she could place it, he cleared his throat to reinforce his point.

She rolled her eyes, but capitulated.

"Alright," she strained not to whine, but failed. "But stick around. You'll probably have to come back in a few minutes anyway to keep me from killing this clown over his next crack about women in the professional arena."

"Is it that bad?"

"He calls all the women at work 'doll' so that he doesn't have to remember their names."

His eyebrows raised.

“So can I bring him out here, and push him off?”

He didn't let himself smile, but there was a distinct tug at the corner of his mouth.

“I wouldn't recommend that,” he said. “But I'll be around.”

Their eyes caught for a moment.

It was one of the first things he'd ever said to her, and only now did she recognize it for the promise that it was. He had been as good as his word, too. She wouldn't have expected anything less from Superman, but back then she hadn't known what to expect. He had been a good friend to her, in spite of all of their false starts and near romantic misses. Catching the look in his eyes now, she wondered if he was thinking the same thing?

She'd been joking when she'd asked him to stick around, but it made her feel better to think that he'd be there, silently supporting her, even if he wouldn't get her out of this.

Then she noticed that he hadn't moved.

Usually, he'd have left by now.

“What?” It came out softer than she'd intended, her changing mood creeping into her voice.

He broke their gaze and nodded to the door. “With your luck in high places, I thought I'd just make sure you made it inside.”

“You don't trust me!?” she asked, voice high and scandalized.

He was suppressing a smile, she was sure of it.

“I would never—”

He broke off, his body suddenly alert and his eyes cutting toward the left. He tilted his head sharply in that direction.

“What is it?” she asked, when the distracted glaze in his eyes slightly receded.

“Someone needs my help,” he said quickly. “I'm sorry, Lois...”

“It's alright! Go!” she said, waving him away.

He nodded and started to move in the direction he'd looked a moment ago. “Get inside safely,” he said with a half-smile.

For a second, she thought he'd followed up his goodbye by blowing her a kiss.

But then a gust of air pushed her backward, landing her beside the door to the building, far away from the railing, and she realized exactly what he'd done.

“I didn't need any help moving in this direction!” she called out in the direction he'd gone.

For a moment, she thought she'd heard his laugh carried back to her on the wind, but it was gone before she could tell for sure.

She grasped the door handle and took a steadying breath. She could still feel the alight elations he'd left her with, the effect of his calming presence soothing her frazzled nerves.

If he could get through whatever disaster he was headed into, she could handle this disaster of a date.

She squared her shoulders and headed back into the restaurant.

* * *

An hour later, any peace she'd found had fled.

She silently marveled at her date's ability to talk.

About himself.

Naturally.

Troy had somehow dragged out dessert and then snuck in a coffee order when she'd taken a legitimate trip to the restroom.

Staring listlessly into the near-empty bottom of her coffee cup, she wondered where Superman had gone off to. She was used to having access to a television or radio for most of the day. But this restaurant was much too classy to let something like breaking news alter their ambience.

It left her feeling cut-off and even more irritated.

“You could have at least set off the fire alarm before you'd left,” she mumbled into her cup, hoping he'd hear, but guessing he wouldn't. It made her feel a little better that it was possible, even if it wasn't probable.

“Can I get you anything else?” a cheerful voice broke into her thoughts.

“The check, please,” she said quickly, before Troy-the-Neverending-Orderer found another reason to draw this night out.

Her co-conspirator from earlier seemed to take her hint and turned away to fetch the bill before Troy could say anything else to her.

He finished off his coffee and patted his mouth with his napkin.

“So, your mother tells me that you're a newspaper intern.”

She nearly did a double take.

Was this guy serious?!

The bill was on its way, and he'd finally gotten around to asking a question about her?

And he'd gotten it wrong?

It occurred to her right then that Clark had spoiled her for other men. She'd gotten so used to his deference, his polite manners, his unassuming ease of conversation, his care and concern for her wants, his overall high level of respect...

Her partner asked her out when they'd first started working together, and that moment, supported by the daily evidence of all of his other loyal attributes, had set her down a path that ultimately drove her to say 'no' to her fiancé on her wedding day. She'd turned Clark down, twice if you counted his recanted declaration of love, and for what? Luthor? This jerk?

Something heavy in the pit of her stomach sank a little lower at the thought.

She'd long since thought that her relationship with Clark was a special one, a once-in-a-lifetime friendship. Tonight's less-than-stellar sample of what else the dating pool had to offer her made her wonder if she'd made a misstep in the waltz of their relationship.

Had she missed a step?

When she thought Clark had died during the whole Bonnie and Clyde fiasco, she had so deeply wished that she could have told him how she'd felt, that they'd had a chance. When he'd defied all odds and come back to her, she resolved to tell him. But when her own declaration had fallen upon deaf, well, sleeping ears, she'd chickened out.

And time had passed.

Now she was wishing that it was Clark Kent she was sitting across from after a long, leisurely night out.

He would have ordered her chocolate for dessert.

She refocused on Mr. The-Passionfruit-Is-Divine, trying to remember his question.

"I'm a Senior Investigative Reporter," she ground out, at the last second remembering to smile.

"A writer!" he said, sounding impressed—the way you might if you congratulating a child on their finger-paint results. "Let me guess—do you write a gossip column?"

What part of 'investigative reporter' did he not understand?

"No, actually, I—"

"No, no," he interrupted with misplaced humor, "Don't tell me! Let me see if I can guess."

Clark didn't interrupt her either.

"An advice column?" Troy guessed.

She shook her head, biting her cheek to keep her mouth shut. She wasn't sure she could open it right now without telling him exactly what she thought of him.

"Hmmm," he pondered. "Do you report on social events?"

She shook her head again, pasting the smile on. Did he think her job was a game?

"Oh, well, that's three guesses. You may as well tell me."

She took a breath.

"I investigate for the city beat. Crime, corruption, politics."

"Wow! That's a big job for such a little woman!"

She did a terrible job of keeping the shock and insult off her face.

The server came by just then to drop off the check, distracting him and saving her from a response. He reached for the bill with a condescending wink and looked down to rifle through his wallet.

"One more comment like that, and I'm pushing him off that balcony, Superman," she said under her breath.

Her date stood.

Looking down at her, he asked, "Are you ready?"

"Oh, yes," she agreed, grabbing her purse. Casting an eye at the bills he'd left on top of the check, she saw that he'd under tipped. She rolled her eyes and surreptitiously pulled a ten-dollar bill out of her little handbag. She picked up her napkin to dab at her mouth, and left the ten on the table beneath it.

She glanced at him. He hadn't noticed.

That annoyed her, too.

She moved past him and headed briskly for the restaurant's exit.

Freedom was so close.

He opened the door, belatedly hesitating to let her pass through first. Standing with his back to the door, she'd have to risk rubbing against him to get out.

It was an indecent move on his part.

Hugging the door jamb to squeeze past him, she couldn't help but compare his manners to her partner's again. Clark would have opened the door and backed up, giving her enough space to pass through unmolested. And he'd have guided her out with a hand on her back to ensure that she didn't trip over the door jamb's floor plate.

Outside the restaurant, Troy gestured down the street. "I'm parked just down this way."

Was he crazy? She wasn't going to let herself be trapped in a car with this guy! She'd paid her dues to her mother. The date was over.

"Actually, I think I'll just catch a cab," she said moving toward the street.

"I thought we'd go for a nightcap."

He was crazy.

"I have an early morning tomorrow," she said, edging toward the street again.

"Right. For the newspaper," he said. As if it were a joke between them.

Her capacity for irritation grew.

"Right. The Daily Planet," she said, raising an arm to flag down a cab.

He caught her arm. "Well, then, I'll say goodnight here."

She didn't like the way he was holding her arm, and she instinctively tried to lean away.

He took a step in toward her, making her movement futile. "I had a lovely time this evening."

And then he leaned in toward her, his hand still gripping her arm.

He was going to kiss her.

No, no, no, she thought in a fury, feeling her veins adrenalize. This was too far. Now she was going to have to punch this guy and give her mother fresh ammunition for their next family get-together.

"Ms. Lane," a voice behind her interrupted sharply.

Her date looked over her shoulder and she watched the lecherous expression on his face shift to one of awe.

"Ms. Lane," the voice repeated urgently, and she turned, thrilling to see the blue and red suit.

He had stuck around!

He'd come back to rescue her!

"Superman," she greeted, trying not to sound too relieved, but failing and hardly caring.

"There's an urgent investigation, Miss Lane. I need you. Will you come?"

Her jaw dropped, and she fought to recover quickly.

His acting was awful, but she wasn't about to critique a gift horse.

"Yes, Superman, of course" she said expansively. Turning back to the idiot she'd been forced to spend the evening with, she tugged her arm away from his now stunned and slack grip. Unapologetically, she said, "I have to go. Urgent investigative business," she rubbed in.

The look on the man's face was one of disbelief, as he glanced at her and then back at the unmistakable red and blue figure just behind her.

She couldn't have planned this better herself!

The misogynistic windbag was confronted with watching the strongest man in the world intentionally asking a woman for help!

A woman he'd spent the entire evening ignoring and undermining.

Superman took women seriously.

She couldn't contain her glee.

Her rescuer must have noticed, because he followed up, "Thank you, Ms. Lane. This matter requires your specific expertise."

She thought he was really leaning into the double-oh seven of it all, but she'd forgive him the forced theatrics if it got her out of here!

"I'm always happy to lend a hand, Superman," she said back, putting an arm around his shoulders. "Shall we?"

"Not a moment to lose," he replied, as he swung her up into his arms. "Excuse us," he nodded to her still-flabbergasted date.

It was so rewarding to see the man with nothing to say—**FINALLY!**

They were in the air and rocketing skyward a moment later.

"Ahhh! That was great!" she crowed when they were above the cloud line. "Did you see his face?"

He smiled down at her.

"I can't believe you did that!" she said, hugging him in her joy.

He cleared his throat as she pulled back, banking left to head uptown and toward Carter Avenue. "Well, I couldn't risk public safety if you pulled a fire alarm or started a brawl in the street in order to get away."

Her eyes sharpened. Had he heard her tonight when she'd invoked his name over her coffee cup? She hadn't really believed he'd stay nearby—or pay that much attention to her—but the joke about the fire alarm was too on the nose for him not to have heard her.

“I wouldn’t have pulled it. I wanted you to pull it.”

“You know that’s illegal, don’t you?”

“Desperate times call for desperate measures,” she quipped back, still riding the high of her great escape.

He gave her another look, but she wasn’t able to entirely mute her grin.

“Why did you come back?” she asked.

His expression shifted, and she thought his arms tightened around her.

“I thought it over and decided that it might really be considered a state of emergency if you lost your mind. A lot of people count on you and the stories that you write. The criminals you expose make a big difference in the lives of people in Metropolis.”

She was unexpectedly touched.

He thought she made a difference.

Him.

The Superhero who had re-defined ‘making a difference’ in Metropolis.

“Thank you,” she said thickly.

“You’re welcome,” he said, voice a little lower than it had been.

She was just starting to smile at him in that lovestruck way that she could never seem to wholly displace when her mind started to tick.

Her thoughts must have read on her face because he gave her an inquiring look. “What is it?”

She bit her lip. There wasn’t a great way to say this without intimating an insult.

And he’d been so great tonight.

“Oh, nothing,” she tried to brush it off with a smile.

“Lois?”

“It’s just that...” If he hadn’t left her behind ever before for her jumps to conclusions and brash questions, he probably wouldn’t now, she reasoned. She phrased it carefully, hoping to cover a few sins and suspicions with one question. “Well, it’s just... I thought Superman didn’t lie.”

“That’s right,” he said back slowly, as if measuring his words alongside hers. “Superman doesn’t lie.”

He had replied in the third person, she noticed.

Interesting.

She wondered if that was a tacit admission of some kind. Lately, she’d been wondering anew how he spent his time

when he wasn’t stopping metallic robots or cleaning up after rogue toymakers or pulling her tail out of the fire.

But she’d think about that later.

Now, she looked at him expectantly.

And he was clearly waiting to see what conclusions she’d drawn herself before offering to address anything.

Honestly, she could recognize an interview technique like that a mile away! He must be spending too much time with the press if he’d picked this up.

“So?” she prompted.

“So?” he asked back without guile.

“Well, I guess...” she hesitated. Intimating something to the superhero was easier than saying it right out loud! “Did you really have anything for me to investigate?”

An easy smile crossed his face, and she thought it was the first time she’d him look so relaxed around her since she’d been engaged to Lex.

“I’m glad you asked,” he said, descending.

She could see her street unfurling below them. To her surprise, he touched down not at her always open window, but on the roof instead.

She dropped down to the ground—her hop down in perfect tandem with his release. His arm hugged her until she found her balance, and his hand drifted down to her lower back before he took a half step out of her space. The fluidity of the motion bespoke how many times they’d done this before.

It felt like they were finding their balance together again in other ways, too.

Tonight was reminding her of the old days, when he sought her out for exclusives and stopped by to check up on her, cheering her up by super-alphabetizing her rolodex or showing her how Kryptonians danced.

He crossed the roof and opened the door to a small shed where her super, Mr. Tracewski, usually stored tools.

He retrieved a white paper shopping bag and held it out to her.

This was new.

First, he bent his rules for her with the almost-lie, and now a gift?

“Open it,” he said.

She carefully removed a box, wrapped in glossy brown paper. Whatever was inside felt dense. Sitting down on the low wall at the edge of the roof, she placed the box on her

lap. She unwound the brown velvet ribbon, pulled away the paper and lifted open the lid.

A perfect round of chocolate was inside.

“Chocolate!” she couldn’t help but be enthusiastic. Having been denied her go-to mood stabilizer earlier, she’d been planning to dip into the rocky road as soon as she’d kicked her heels off at home.

This looked so much better than ice cream.

“I told you this needed your specific expertise.”

She beamed up at him, impressed and delighted but stunned. “You needed me to investigate a chocolate cake?”

“There is a time limit. It was baked fresh tonight. It won’t stay good forever.” He shrugged, the teasing glint in his eye belying his serious tone.

She laughed out loud. She’d only seen glimmers of this side of his personality before, and never like this.

“Have you ever tried a Sacher-Torte?” he asked.

“No,” she replied, enthralled.

He knelt to reach for the bag at her feet.

“I could tell you that it’s a Viennese delicacy, invented hundreds of years ago by a precocious pastry apprentice, and that it was a favorite of the imperial court in Austria,” he said, reaching into the bag.

“But all you really need to know is that it’s really good chocolate cake.”

He pulled a fork out and offered it to her.

She took it, feeling giddy, as he stood.

Superman had brought her chocolate cake.

Her fork cracked the thick glaze, and she felt the soft cake give way. She lifted a bite to her mouth and tasted it.

He hadn’t just brought her chocolate cake.

He had brought a decadent, rich, dream of a chocolate cake! The taste was luxurious and unique, the texture somehow simple and elegant at the same time. She felt the stress of the night fade into the background as the confection practically dissolved on her tongue.

“This is incredible,” she said, so happy that she almost sounded drunk.

And maybe she was drunk—on Viennese chocolate or on his proximity or some critical combination of both.

She absentmindedly licked stray chocolate from the fork.

And noticed that his eyes involuntarily dropped down to watch.

Curious and emboldened, she licked her lower lip, hunting for an imaginary crumb.

His eyes snapped back to hers, and while he held his facial expression still, she couldn’t miss the heat that suddenly swept over his eyes.

She cut another small piece of the cake and held the fork up to him.

“Try a bite.”

He held up a hand, forestalling her offer, “No, thanks, I’ve tried it.”

“You haven’t tried this one,” she said, gesturing to the cake in her lap.

She could swear his eyes darkened another degree.

She’d meant the cake, but if his mind went somewhere else, she’d be happy to investigate anything he suggested tonight.

He slowly closed the distance between them and sat down beside her on the low wall.

The air charged around them.

She held the fork out to him again.

The tension rose.

He leaned forward, and she felt a thrill of anticipation roll over her.

She flirted with him all the time, but he rarely returned her serves. Now he was upping the ante. What had changed?

Instead of taking the fork from her, he enclosed his hand over hers, and guided it to his mouth.

Their locked eyes as he took the bite.

She’d never thought she’d prefer to watch someone eat chocolate than to eat it herself.

But tonight was a night full of surprises.

“You’re right,” he said, releasing her hand. “Incredible.”

Did he mean the cake?

Surely.

Right?

He stood as she tried to gather what was left of her super-charged wits.

“Now that you’ve been rescued, I’ve got to go.”

Was that regret she heard tinging his voice?

“Enjoy the chocolate,” he said, stepping up onto the ledge she was still sitting on.

His low timber sent another thrill through her.

She smiled, wanting him to stay, but not sure how to ask him not to go.

THE END

He looked back at her.

“You look lovely tonight, Lois.”

She felt the blush creep up. “Thank you,” she said, meaning it. Her own date for the evening hadn’t noticed one way or the other, and hadn’t had good enough manners to mention it anyway.

He nodded at her and lifted off.

Lois watched him go, wondering how in the world her night had brought her here.

Her smile was irrepressible as she speared another slice of her chocolate torte and looked out over the lights of the city.

She’d had a great date tonight, in spite of how it had started.

All she’d needed was a change in partner.

Earlier in the evening, she’d been comparing her mother’s arrogant set-up to her polite work partner. And perhaps she did compare other men to Clark. He was a good man.

But since she’d met Superman, every man, including her best friend, ultimately had to measure up to the hero.

Tonight had reminded her of why she stood by this tenet, why she waited for something extraordinary, why she wanted to be with someone who was, well... super.

Maybe she shouldn’t be too hasty in pushing Clark toward a date.

She didn’t want to risk their friendship on something she wasn’t quite sure about. Moreover, Clark and Superman were friends. She didn’t want to introduce that awkwardness between them all, especially when the relationship inevitably crashed down in flames, achieving federal disaster status, as all of her relationships with human men did.

But she was getting ahead of herself. Because regardless of what she might be interested in, she could ever truly pin down how Clark felt about her.

Superman, on the other hand...

Her relationship with Superman may still just be a flirtation, but it was still her longest lasting romantic relationship to date.

Her mind sped back to his rescue of her tonight.

“I need you,” he’d said.

And Superman never lied.