

When You Call

by repmetsyrrah

© 19-Jun-09

Rating: G

Disclaimer: All publicly recognizable characters, settings, etc. are the property of their respective owners. The original characters and plot are the property of the author. The author is in no way associated with the owners, creators, or producers of any media franchise. No copyright infringement is intended.

A/N: This was written for the 12days_of_clois challenge "Somewhere in Metropolis" prompt #01- Balcony.

"I'll have him back by noon tomorrow," Richard said as he swung Jason up into his arms. "Alright." Lois nodded, "Have fun," she called out to her son as the pair left the apartment.

It was the first of many handovers the former couple would experience. Lois had finally called it quits when she realized she could never love Richard like he deserved. It had been difficult but necessary and she hadn't regretted it until she watched her son walk away from her with the man he still thought was his father for the first time.

How could I do this to him? she thought, leaning against the door and closing her eyes. She never meant to tear apart his family, it wasn't his fault that his real father just happened to come back three months ago and his mother just happened to realize she still loved him. And it certainly wasn't his fault that said father had then revealed to said mother that he had just happened to work beside her every single day as her dorky, four-eyed partner and never told her.

She needed a cigarette.

She looked out the window, the sun had just gone down and with winter making itself known in Metropolis, she decided to slip on her jacket before heading onto the balcony. Even when Jason was away she'd never risk smoking in the house, she'd stopped completely five years ago when she'd found out he had asthma and only started again when Superman had returned and her relationship with Richard had started to fray.

Clark had managed to convince her to stop after the separation but finding out he'd been lying to her about his true identity and relationship to her son a month ago had pushed all her resolve out of the window. She was onto her second pack that week.

She clicked open her lighter and held it up to the end of her cigarette, pausing for a moment but the only thing to flicker the flame was the wind.

It was only when she stubbed it out on the rail and turned to go back inside did she realize how distracted she must have been. The balcony door was locked- from the inside.

"Dammit!" she cursed, reaching automatically to her pocket for the keys which lay on the coffee table in full view, taunting her through the glass with how near yet unreachable they were.

Her lock picks were inside as well, not that they'd do her much good - when she'd moved out of the riverside house and into the apartment she'd ordered new locks from Sweden, her

reasoning being that if she couldn't pick them then there were very few people in the world that could. Perhaps she was extra paranoid to install them on the balcony door as well but motherhood had made her that way and nothing was too good for the safety of her son.

Except maybe being stuck on a freezing cold balcony with almost no way out. The sun had just disappeared behind the skyscrapers of the city and the already low temperature was rapidly dropping. Lois wasn't really concerned about freezing to death though. If worst came to absolute worst she'd break the window and stay out of the living room and kitchen for a while.

Although, she'd really rather not pay for a new door right now. She sighed and thrust her hands into her pockets, giving an excited yell when her fingers hit something hard and plastic, her cell phone.

"Alright, who's coming to save me from my own stupidity?" she muttered, flipping it open. The number was half dialed before she even realized what she was doing.

Her finger hesitated right above the 'send' button. Of course he was the most logical person to call, hell, she'd probably have called him even if she didn't know he could fly right onto the tenth story and pick her up. Clark had always had a key to wherever she was living, he was one of the only people in the world she'd trust with one. But he didn't have one this time, she had actually had one cut and he would have it right now had he not chosen the day she was going to give it to him as the day he told her about his dual identities.

If she couldn't trust him to tell her who he was, how could she trust him with her life and the life of her son?

Their son, an annoying voice in the back of her head corrected her.

Yeah? she shot back, *then where's he been for the last five years?*

He didn't know, she reminded the bitter part of her, *he thought everything he did was for the best.*

So? she mentally rolled her eyes before shaking her head.

This was bad. She was talking to herself - worse, she was *answering*. She closed her eyes and hit 'send'.

He arrived only seconds later, showing up in all his primary colored spandex glory. "Hi," he greeted her as if they hadn't just been talking, looking nervous and closing his cell phone.

"Did you just hang up on me?" Lois asked as he landed next to her.

"How can I help?" He ignored her snark and seemed to be trying, and failing miserably, in Lois' opinion, to look like he wasn't incredibly happy that she'd said more than two words to him since the secret had been out.

"I locked myself out." She glared at him, daring him to laugh. "You were the only one I could think of that could come and get me."

"Am I?" he didn't sound like he was laughing at her at all. "Doesn't Richard have a key?"

Lois opened her mouth to reply but found herself hesitating. Richard did have a key, and he and Jason would only be a few blocks away. "Well," she started, knowing he could tell when she was lying, "I didn't want to bother him and-"

"So instead you called me, whom you've been avoiding for the past month?" he asked.

"I-" she looked at the phone in her hand. "Well, you can help too."

Clark looked genuinely confused for a few moments before asking, "How can I help? I don't have a key and if you wanted the window broken you would have done it yourself by now."

"I don't know," she finally admitted, trying to shrug it off, "I don't know why I called you, I wasn't thinking."

"Maybe you were," he said the words so quietly she almost didn't hear them.

"Pardon?"

He cleared his throat. "Maybe you were thinking," he said louder, "subconsciously."

"What do you mean?" she asked suspiciously, confused as to what he was implying.

"I mean-" he broke off and looked around nervously, for a moment he seemed perfectly in between Clark and Superman. "I mean," he continued, "maybe you were thinking when you called me. I've really missed you, Lois. Maybe in some way you missed me?"

He sounded so hopeful it was almost pitiful, Lois reflected. "I miss Clark," she told him, "I miss what I had with him. I don't miss you, whoever you are." She turned away so she wouldn't have to see the hurt look on his face.

"I am Clark," he spoke after what seemed like hours. "I'm still the same man you knew, I grew up in Smallville and Jonathan and Martha Kent are still and will always be my real parents. I never asked to be famous, I just wanted to help-"

"Yeah, because tight spandex and bright red Speedos really say you don't want to stand out," she muttered sarcastically. She was silent for a moment then; "You lied to me," she said suddenly, turning back to face him, not afraid when what she was saying was true. "You abandoned me, you abandoned Jason, you abandoned the *world*." She glared at him, daring him to deny it. "I called you to help me get off this balcony so I wouldn't freeze to death and I wouldn't have to replace an expensive glass door. No other reason," she said stubbornly, pulling her jacket tightly around her.

"Lois," he said after another moment's silence, "I don't believe that and I don't think you do either. I made a mistake - no," he corrected himself, "I've made a lot of mistakes but I want to know what I can do to make things up to you, to make things up to Jason, whatever it takes."

Lois bit her lip and sighed. She knew he'd do it, hell, if she asked him to cut off his right arm for Jason he'd do it. And she was tired of this game they'd been playing, avoiding each other, her because she was hurt, him because he was afraid of provoking her temper. "I miss you," she said finally, her voice barely a whisper but she knew he'd hear. "I miss what we had. But you hurt me when you kept this a secret," she told him, speaking louder and turning to look him in the eye and make sure he understood. "And there's no easy way out of that. But..." she sighed, "I'm willing to try if you are."

From the look on his face she might well have just told him that world peace had just been achieved. "Really?" he asked as if he couldn't quite believe what she'd said.

"We'll find an arrangement we *both* like," she told him, "you can't have everything, you have to accept you left and Jason does have another father."

"I know," he said quickly, "Richard's a wonderful man and I'd never-"

"I know," Lois interrupted him, repeating his statement. "We need to talk, it's not going to be easy."

"No," he agreed, "but I'm willing to take responsibility for my mistakes if you'll just give me a second chance."

She smiled at him, feeling for the first time in a long time that things might actually be okay, he smiled back. "So... now what?" she asked finally when the silence started to get a little awkward.

Clark had a look she could tell meant he had something to say yet wasn't sure how she'd react. It was a look she knew well from the past months.

"Well," he started hesitantly, "if you really don't want to break the window or wait all

night for Richard, you could stay at my house. I mean-" he continued hurriedly as she raised an eyebrow, "I'd sleep on the couch and you could take bed, I'm not asking for you to come stay with *me* just in my house, and I'll go to the *Planet* and get the spare clothes you have there, or I could-"

"Clark," Lois interrupted him, trying not to laugh at the sight of Superman looking so flustered, so *Clark*. "Thank you, I'd like to stay at your place for the night. And," she sighed, "we really do need to talk."

They were halfway across town before Lois even realized they had left. She gasped, she had forgotten how nice it was flying with him. His building came into view and they were just touching down when he spoke.

"I'm on the couch aren't I?"

"See, Clark." She grinned. "I told you we could find an arrangement we both liked, and it looks like we've started already."