

M/R

"Smallville"

TESS

INT. BARN - KENT FARM - DAY

Through the dusty haze, the striking silhouette of a woman appears in the barn doors.

TESS

takes in her surroundings in high heels and a pencil skirt -- not exactly dressed for the situation. But it doesn't keep her from exploring, looking in a tool box. She finally hears a noise and turns to see

CLARK

standing at the top of the loft in shadows, wiping his hands on a rag -- he's been there a while. She curiously grins.

TESS

Not telling a woman she's being watched... That can get you killed in some countries.

CLARK

So can trespassing.

She sets the toolbox down and watches Clark descend the stairs. Once he steps from the shadows they take each other in, neither disappointed.

TESS

You're... "taller" than I expected.

CLARK

You want to tell me who you are?

TESS

So much for small town hospitality. Good thing I didn't come looking for sugar.

(steps closer)

I just moved to Smallville. We're practically neighbors.

Clark takes in her legs and heels.

CLARK

And something tells me you're not here to farm alfalfa.

She brushes the comment off with a charm-filled smile.

TESS

Tess.

As she holds out her hand, Clark opens his -- despite the rag it's still smudged with grease.

CLARK

Clark. Sorry, I'm a little dirty.

She reaches over and shakes his hand anyway.

TESS

And I'd heard you were squeaky clean.

He can't help giving in to her boldness.

CLARK

You didn't mention what property you're moving into.

TESS

The Luthor mansion. In his absence, I'm in charge of Mr. Luthor's estate.

Clark tenses. Tess considers his posture.

TESS

Guess I was being naive, thinking that wouldn't be a big deal around this town.

CLARK

That doesn't strike me as naive. It just strikes me as a lie.

Instead of getting angry, Tess is intrigued, amused.

TESS

I can understand why you're so guarded. There's a rumor you were the last one to see Lex alive.

(Clark tenses)

Funny, Lex's disappearance is almost as much a mystery as why his father would take a random farm boy under his wing.

CLARK

Lionel Luthor was a family friend.

TESS

He lusted after your mother -- possibly gave your father a fatal heart attack. "Friend" seems a little... strong.

It's a charged standoff. But still under friendly fire.

CLARK

If you're sorting out the Luthor estate, this won't be the only thing you find that doesn't make sense.

TESS

Thanks for the neighborly warning.

CLARK

Any time.

TESS

I'll take you up on that.

As she strides out, her heels kicking up dust, OFF Clark, having met his new match...