

# Better Holiday Memory

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Rated G

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Summary: A Ficathon response for CarolM. After Lois & Clark defeat Trask, Perry gives them time off for an early Thanksgiving.

Story Size: 1,101 words (6Kb as text)

Author's Notes: The title kinda sucks, but it was the only thing I could come up with. The challenge said "a revelation or unexpected gift." They're not big, but I put one of each in this fic.

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters or the settings in this fanfic. I only own the idea. The rest belongs to Warner Brothers.

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Perry had given Lois and Clark a few extra days down in Smallville to let Clark recuperate from the Trask debacle (they had sent the story to him by fax already) and to have time with his parents for an early Thanksgiving celebration. Lois, who never turned down food as good as what she'd been fed for the last few days, accepted the invitation to stay when it was given.

Sitting at the kitchen table, she watched Mrs. Kent—er, Martha—putter around her, preparing a full turkey dinner. Well, "putter" was really the wrong word. Martha's gait and ease on her feet were really too vivacious to call them "puttering." *The woman must live on Energizer batteries*, Lois thought. *She just keeps going, and going ...*

"You seem contented," Martha remarked, startling Lois out of her reverie. "Kind of like the cat that ate the canary, what with that grin you've got."

"Oh!" Lois gasped. "Um, I was just thinking, that's all."

"Really? What about?"

Thinking it would be rude to compare her hostess to the Energizer Bunny out loud, Lois improvised. "Actually, I was thinking how nice it is here. I mean, I wouldn't want to live here, but it's nice not to be mashed into a few city blocks with crowds of other people every once in a while."

"Huh," Martha said.

Perplexed, Lois asked, "What?"

"Nothing. It's just that, from what Clark's been telling us, and what I've seen so far, I was almost sure I had you pegged for the workaholic, never-leave-the-city-on-your-life type."

Caught, Lois blushed. "Well, yeah. But a girl can appreciate some time off; no matter how much she loves the work, can't she?"

"Absolutely."

Thinking it was time to change the subject, Lois asked, "So where are Cl—the boys?"

A twinkle in her eye as she turned back to the turkey in the oven, Martha answered, "Oh, they're around somewhere. Since this will be our only chance to have Thanksgiving with Clark this year, he and Jonathan decided to hang the Christmas decorations earlier than usual."

"What do you mean? Christmas isn't for another month and a half."

"We decorate on Thanksgiving," came the answer from the sink as Martha prepared some brussels sprouts for boiling.

"Why is that?" Lois asked. "I've never done much more than find a tree on Christmas Eve myself."

"Just a Kent family tradition, I guess. We don't take down any decorations until New Year's either."

"More than a month of Christmas?" Lois couldn't decide whether she was in awe or pure catatonia at the thought of all that ... cheer. "How can you stand it? I can barely tolerate the decorations they put up at the Planet in the middle of December."

When Martha's answer did not come right away, Lois looked up. The older woman had a somewhat sad expression on her face. "Bad memories?" she asked.

Lois scrunched her head further onto her shoulders and rubbed her entwined fingers together on top of the table. "I don't really like to talk about it."

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Clark put the finishing touches on the staircase. He'd wrapped the rails in garland and white Christmas tree lights—for the next two months, his parents wouldn't have to worry about breaking their necks if they went downstairs for a midnight snack. And, hey, it was also festive!

Suddenly, his super hearing kicked in:

~"How can you stand it? I can barely tolerate the decorations they put up at the Planet in the middle of December."~

*Hmm*, Clark thought. *I wonder why Lois is so repulsed by Christmas decorations?* Shaking his head, he resolved to try not to eavesdrop anymore—and to help Lois enjoy the holidays.

But before he could turn off his hearing, he heard his mother's question. ~Bad Memories?~

Hoping it wasn't true, Clark's heart broke a little when his partner answered very quietly, ~I don't really like to talk about it.~

Desperate now to find a way to cheer Lois up about the season, Clark searched the room. He must have been staring in certain places, because his father was looking at him with a question in his eyes. Clark shook his head in a "not yet" gesture, then spotted exactly what he was looking for in a box balanced precariously on the back of the couch.

Going as fast as he could without alerting the kitchen's occupants (or rather one of the occupants) that he was super-speedy, Clark grabbed a bit of mistletoe, tacked it right outside the kitchen, and went back to his place by the stairs just as the door started to open.

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Meanwhile in the kitchen, Martha nodded, and turned back to her cooking just as a timer sounded. "Whoops! Looks like that's dinner. Want to help me get it all to the table?"

"Sure." Lois stood and took the dish of mashed potatoes toward the dining room. She carefully opened the door, and took only a step or two into the other room before Martha called, "Stop, Lois!" She stopped.

Looking back to the Kent matriarch, Lois asked, "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," came the answer. "You're just standing under the mistletoe."

Lois looked up; sure enough, there was a tiny sprig of the dratted weed tacked to the ceiling just outside of the kitchen doorway. Her eyes widened—how the hell could she get out of this one?—"Oh."

Movements out of the corner of her eye made Lois turn her head. Clark was walking toward her. *He'd better not do what I think he's going to do*, Lois thought to herself in vain. Clark grabbed the potato dish from her nerveless fingers, gently set it on the table just to her right, and—quick and soft—put his lips on hers.

*Hey, where'd he go?* Her thoughts contradicted themselves as Clark pulled back with a smile.

"Happy Thanksgiving, Lois," he said as Lois mused to

herself, *Maybe the holidays aren't so bad after all.*

THE END

Word Count: 1,000 words even!