

Like Father, Like Daughter

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Summary: Lois showed a lot of concern for Superman when he almost died in the Season 3 episode "Home Is Where the Hurt Is." What might have happened if Lois's parents had been watching her more carefully than she realized? A 2009 holiday fanfic.

Disclaimer: This is a fanfic based on the television show, Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman. I have no claim on the pre-existing characters whatsoever, nor am I profiting by their use. The new story elements are mine. No infringement is intended by this work.

This is for Elisabeth.

Time frame: Season 3. The morning after "Home is Where the Hurt Is"

Sam couldn't believe it when Ellen asked to meet him for breakfast at the little coffee shop down the street from Lois's apartment. Sure, this breakfast was nothing more than coffee and a pastry, but the fact that she wanted to meet at all meant something. He just wished he knew what.

Ellen was already seated and waiting at a small table when he arrived. Sam got a cup of coffee and sat down across from her. He had only started to take his first sip when his ex-wife opened up. "What are we going to do about your daughter?"

His daughter? That was a switch. Ellen being upset wasn't surprising, but he usually had some idea what she was talking about. "What?" was the only reply Sam could muster.

She was in rant mode and had started waving her arms around. "Lois always wanted to make you proud. Leave it to her to take your worst example and do you one better."

Now he was seriously confused. "Ellen, I have no idea what you're talking about."

If she heard, it didn't show, as her rant — as well as her arm flailing — continued. "At least you waited until we were married for a few years before...your interests started to wander. Lois isn't even married yet and she's already half-way to an affair with Superman."

At least he knew what this was about now. And for once, he had to admit that Ellen was right. When Superman had been sick and her fiancé away on business, Lois had been all over the hero. "Ellen, I saw the same thing that you did, but it wasn't just Lois. Did you notice that the first thing that Superman did when he woke up was say her name and then go looking for her?"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't believe it. Okay, as it turned out, I'm glad he did since she was in trouble, but still."

"But what can we do?" Sam asked. "This is her life. I just feel sorry for poor Clark. Do you think he knows?"

Ellen shook her head. "I'd like to think so, but I doubt it. I wish he would have come home while this was happening so we could see how Lois would have acted with both of them present. For that matter, I'd like to have seen the look on his face if he

came in and saw his fiancée asleep on top of Superman." Ellen's expression turned sad and thoughtful. "Then again, no I wouldn't. I know how that feels." After another second, she looked up at Sam. "How do you think most men would react to that situation?"

Her reminder of his own infidelity stung and he took a few seconds to compose himself before answering. "Well, I can't speak for everyone, but I think most of the men I've known would be very upset to walk in on that. That was a very...compelling scene. If she was engaged to Superman, I'd be thrilled that they were so close. Ellen, I hate to say this, but Lois is in love with Superman. And, unless I completely misread the situation, he's in love with her too."

Ellen nodded in agreement. "Based on what we saw, I can't believe that she's engaged to Clark when she's clearly involved with Superman. And she was acting like that in front of Clark's parents. What could that possibly mean? It was like they didn't even notice. Did you see how worried they were about Superman? They seemed to be taking his illness personally."

Sam considered the way they had reacted. "I have an idea. What if the reason that Clark is a friend of Superman's is that the Kents sort of adopted him when he first came to Earth? It might be that they think of Superman like Clark's brother."

Sam could see the idea register with Ellen. "You might be right," she said. "That would explain why Superman was at Clark's apartment and why the Kents didn't seem to notice Lois's... indiscretion. They were probably so worried about him that Lois's behavior never registered. But, Sam, even if he's like a brother to Clark, there is still going to be a problem. Brother or not, Lois shouldn't be in love with one when she's about to marry the other."

"So what do you think we should do?" Sam asked.

She got a determined look on her face. "We need to talk to her."

Sam shook his head. "If you and I corner Lois, she's going to go into denial and ignore everything we try to say."

Ellen looked anxious for a second as if she wanted to say that wouldn't happen, but then realized it would. Another few seconds ticked by and her face lit up. "We'll get the Kents to help."

Sam considered it for a moment. "That might work. But we'll need to convince them that there is a problem. How do you think we can do that?" he asked.

Ellen seemed ready for the question. "They saw the same thing that we did. If Superman is like a son to them, then Lois will end up driving a wedge through their family. I'm sure that once we point out what's happening, they'll help. After all, I just want my little girl to be happy. I don't care which man Lois is with, but if she's in love with Superman, then that's who she should be marrying. I'm sure that they'll side with us enough to insist Lois commit to one of them for the sake of their family."

Sam knew that once Ellen got something like this in her head, there was no point in opposing her. Besides, this time he pretty much thought that she had the right idea. He didn't know what had gotten into his daughter, but she needed to get her head straight before she married anyone.

Fortunately, Ellen already had plans to meet Martha at Lois's apartment. A phone call verified that Jonathan was also there. Sam and Ellen had barely arrived at Lois's apartment when Clark and Lois headed in to work for a few hours. A few minutes later Ellen and Martha headed out to see the city, leaving Sam and Jonathan in Lois's apartment. Sam was trying to figure out how to bring up the problem about Lois and Superman with Clark's dad. Almost in desperation he asked, "Jonathan, what do you generally do at Christmas in Smallville?"

Jonathan was in front of the television watching a weather channel. He looked over in a very casual way and said,

“Checkers.”

“Checkers?” Sam asked.

“Sure. It may seem quaint, but there’s really nothing better than spending time with your friends and neighbors. Usually Martha and I will head to a neighbor’s house or into town and talk with friends. If you don’t have something to do, then sooner or later you get to gossiping and that’s not good for anyone. So, before long we’ll pull out a checker board and start to play.”

‘Perfect,’ Sam thought. That will give him time to figure out how to raise the subject of Lois’s behavior. “Jonathan, I’ve played a game or two of checkers in my day but it’s been years. I saw a board in Lois’s closet. Would you like to play?”

“Sure,” Jonathan replied. Jonathan hoped that Sam didn’t catch the look of glee on his face when Sam had asked. He’d let Sam win a few games but then he’d start playing for real. After all, family or not, checkers was a game for men. It was no accident that Jonathan had been the champion of Lowell County for the last four years.

As for Sam, he was also looking forward to playing. Jonathan probably played many games of checkers and might be good — for Kansas — but Sam had played with people all over the country. It’s amazing how many lawyers and doctors that get pulled into boxing find ways to kill time. In the circles that Sam used to travel, you were judged by your ability to win even one game. Sam won many.

Sam got down the board and set it up on the dining table. When Jonathan sat down, Sam commented in his most casual tone, “Now, if I remember correctly, the real rules for checkers are that you always have to take a jump that is available. Is that right?”

Jonathan smiled in reply. “That’s the way we play.”

“Then that’s the way we’ll play today,” Sam said.

The first few games were almost comical. Both men were trying to let the other win, but not have it be obvious that they were throwing the game. Sam didn’t appreciate it at the time, but it was a tribute to his skill as a player that he managed to lose two of the first three games. By coincidence, as of the fourth game, both men decided to give up on being polite and just play. That game was a challenging affair that Sam managed to win largely because he had been granted the opening move.

When the game was finally over, Jonathan pushed back from the board and looked over at Sam thoughtfully. “I’d say you weren’t exactly trying your best those first few games.”

Sam chuckled. “True, but I think that goes both ways. Based on what I just saw, you’ve won your share of games.”

“Well, if we’re putting our cards on the table, then yes. I’ve won a few. What about you?”

“I have. Shall we play again?”

Now that they were no longer trying to let the other win, Sam was able to enjoy the games much more. Jonathan had a very aggressive style. Had Sam not seen this in other players before, he might have been surprised at the difference between Jonathan’s personality and his style of play. In Sam’s experience, successful players fell into two categories, attackers and trappers. Jonathan seemed to play with an attacking style. The intent of every move was to force the opponent into a position of weakness usually resulting in a forced bad jump.

Sam was happy with Jonathan’s approach to the game, since Sam played a strategic trapping style. He’d learned that sometimes people playing the all-out attack mode could be lured into elaborate traps. He had evolved his game so that to most players it looked like an attacking style, but his real objective was to build a trap that he would spring in the late middle game.

Jonathan seemed to be unfamiliar with this approach and that allowed Sam to take two of the next four games with one draw. Although Jonathan didn’t like losing, he remained cheerful and talked about looking forward to trying some of Sam’s techniques

on his friends back in Smallville.

After the fifth ‘real’ game, they took a short break. They were in the kitchen next to the refrigerator when Sam realized this was probably the best time to talk about the Lois intervention.

“Jonathan, Ellen and I are worried about Lois and Clark.”

Jonathan’s face turned serious. “What’s wrong?”

“Well, when Superman was sick, Lois’s concern seemed a bit too...personal. You and Martha were there. You know what I’m talking about. It seemed clear that her feelings for Superman go way beyond just friendship. Ellen and I are worried that she’s not being fair to Clark.” Sam paused. He knew that this would be difficult. “We like Clark and don’t think he’s done anything wrong. We want to approach Lois and talk to her about commitments. Ellen and I were hoping that you would help.”

Jonathan’s mind was racing. “Sam, we’ve seen Lois a lot this past year and we’re sure of her feelings for Clark. I saw the same thing you did, but I’m sure she was just worried about her friend. I don’t think there’s anything to worry about.”

This reaction surprised Sam. He didn’t expect this level of denial from one of Clark’s parents. “I know this must be difficult for you. I’ve seen how Clark looks at Lois and I think he would be great for her. We just think if she’s going to marry Clark, she needs to recognize that she has to give up on Superman. Ellen and I will talk to Lois alone if we have to, but we think it would help if you were there. You and Martha don’t have to say anything, but we’d like your support.”

Jonathan wasn’t sure what to do. He should have paid more attention to how Lois was acting while she was so worried about Clark. Jonathan was so worried about his boy that the little detail that Clark was in the suit had been completely lost. In hindsight, it was easy to see from the way Lois had acted that she was in love with the man in the suit. Jonathan could play dumb, but that didn’t seem like the best thing to do. For now the best course of action would be to play along. “Sam, you’re right. That didn’t look good, but I know Lois loves my boy so I guess I didn’t think much about her behavior. I’ll need to talk with Martha, but we’ll stand with you when you talk to Lois.”

For Martha, this trip to Metropolis had turned into a great opportunity to bond with Lois’s mother. It was almost funny to see elements of Lois’s personality in Ellen. Ellen had a cynicism born of her own experiences, but underneath the layer of negativism was an intensity that Martha had immediately recognized for its similarity in her soon-to-be daughter-in-law.

Their initial meeting in Lois’s apartment a few days ago had been a disaster. Things would have been awkward enough if it would have simply been that she and Jonathan had been in Lois’s apartment when Ellen came to visit for Christmas. Then Sam had showed up with that silly robot. At least it served to deflect Ellen’s attention away from feeling like Lois had preferred Clark’s parents to her own mother.

Then Clark had gotten sick. As terrible as that had been, it had served to unite the families. Sam had been great in taking care of her boy. Not only that, but when the situation turned so serious, Ellen had become both positive and supportive. It was really too bad that they didn’t know that Sam had saved not only the famous hero, but his future son-in-law.

This morning had been pleasant enough. Ellen had been showing her parts of Metropolis that she hadn’t seen before. Ellen’s guidance was particularly helpful for seeing places that had special Christmas decorations. Some of the window displays had been nothing short of amazing. However, Martha was sure that there was something else on Ellen’s mind. Several times she had been certain that Ellen had been on the verge of bringing up whatever it was that had been bothering her, but each time it was as if Lois’s mom had gotten scared at the last minute.

They had just finished walking through an elaborate display

in an indoor shopping center. Ellen wanted to show this to Martha because it was a mock small town. Ellen had told Martha that after hearing Lois's description of Smallville, this was the image that she couldn't get out of her mind. She stressed that she knew that Smallville didn't look like this, but she wanted to share her image just the same. Martha had to admit that she could see why Ellen would think of this based on a description of her home town. There were similarities in the same way that a Norman Rockwell picture represented living in Small Town USA. Martha had to admit that it was fun to see Ellen's image of Smallville.

As they approached the exit door, Martha caught that look on Ellen's face again. It was time to get to the bottom of this. "Ellen, are you going to tell me what's on your mind this morning?"

At first, Ellen just froze. After a second she stepped to Martha and threw her arms around her. Martha didn't know how to react to this. It was very different from what she'd come to expect from her companion. This hug had an element of desperation, or possibly supportiveness, Martha wasn't sure.

After a few seconds, Ellen pulled back and looked her future in-law in the eyes. With a look of anguish on her face she said, "Martha, I'm sorry about Lois's..." Ellen paused as if struggling to find the right word. "...inappropriate behavior. She... She gets it from her father."

Lois? Inappropriate behavior? Ellen sounded serious but what had Lois done? "What in the world are you talking about? Lois is a wonderful woman. She's a sweetheart."

The look on Ellen's face turned skeptical. "Don't tell me you didn't notice how she was acting when Superman was sick."

Martha's voice caught in her throat. This was dangerous territory. "Well, she's a good friend of Superman. She was very worried."

"Martha. When you're sick, a good friend will hold your hand. Lois was sleeping with her head on his chest. There's a lot more going on there than friendship. I'm just glad that poor Clark didn't walk in and see that."

Martha's mind was racing to try to figure out a reasonable explanation for Lois's behavior. "Ellen, Clark knows that Lois loves him very much. I'm sure he's not worried about Superman."

Ellen didn't seem to be buying the 'just worried' explanation. "Sam and I are worried that Lois hasn't reconciled her feelings toward Superman. I remember her chasing him around when he first appeared. The whole world saw her kiss him when he went to stop the Nightfall asteroid. I thought she had given up on him, but that's not what I saw the other day when he was sick. Even if Clark trusts Lois for now, she needs to understand how that looked. In the long run, that kind of thing will undermine their marriage no matter how much Clark trusts her."

Martha didn't know where to take this. Ellen was right, based on what she knew. Lois hadn't acted like a woman whose friend was deathly ill. Lois had looked every bit the woman that was about to lose the love of her life. Mostly because she couldn't think of what else to say, Martha asked, "What do you think we should do?"

"Sam and I are going to confront Lois this afternoon. We're going to tell her what we saw and insist that if she's going to marry Clark, she has to give up Superman. Since Sam and I don't have the greatest relationship with Lois, we're afraid that if it's just us, she won't admit that she did anything wrong. All we want is for you and Jonathan to be with us when we talk to Lois. She needs to know that you saw the same thing that we did."

The look on Ellen's face had a sincerity that Martha hadn't seen before in Lois's mom. Martha was trying to think of a way to talk her out of this plan when Ellen continued. "I know what it's like to have your marriage go bad because of...something like this. I don't want that for Lois and you don't want that for Clark."

In that instant Martha realized that however this was going to

go down, it would be better if she and Jonathan were there when Sam and Ellen approached Lois. "Ellen, I know what we saw but I still have confidence in our kids." She could see that Ellen was about to make another plea. Martha held her hand up and continued. "I'll tell Jonathan that I think we should support you when you talk to Lois."

When they got back to Lois's apartment, the parents held a brief meeting about how to proceed. They agreed that Sam and Ellen would lead this discussion and Martha and Jonathan would only speak up if Lois tried to dismiss her parents as not having seen what they did. Jonathan tried again to make the case that it was just a misunderstanding, but neither Lane would budge. They were going to talk to Lois whether the Kents helped or not.

Martha and Jonathan were trying to figure out what to do. Their hope was that they would be able to talk with the kids before Sam and Ellen got around to having their intervention. It would probably be enough to encourage Lois to go along with her mom and dad. As long as they had the chance to talk with Lois and Clark before any confrontation, things should work out fine.

It was about 2:30 in the afternoon when Lois arrived. Unfortunately, the man that accompanied her was Sam, not Clark. Sam had gone out for a walk and had run into Lois and Clark in front of the building.

When they came in, both Martha and Jonathan had been in the kitchen. As soon as they saw Lois, Jonathan asked, "Where's Clark?"

Lois was still shedding her coat and answered from near her doorway. "Dad wanted to have another look at Superman. Clark had another errand that he just remembered and figured he could contact Superman while he's out and ask him to drop by."

At that moment, Ellen spoke up. "Lois, there's something that we all wanted to talk to you about. We'd like to do it now, before Clark returns."

Lois looked curious but unconcerned. "Sure. What is it?"

Ellen made a motion to indicate the living room. "Please sit down."

As Lois was sitting down on a chair, she asked, "Mom, what's this about?" Lois could tell that something was wrong.

Sam moved over to sit beside Ellen, who was across from Lois. "Martha, Jonathan, if you would please?" Sam indicated the empty chairs around the room. Once everyone was sitting, Ellen turned to Lois. "Honey, this is about how you acted when Superman was sick."

Lois actually looked confused. "Mom, what do you mean?"

Ellen paused for a moment as if looking for the right words. "Are you in love with Superman?"

A look of panic entered Lois's eyes, but it only took her a second to recover. "Mom, how can you ask that? I love Clark."

Sam interjected. "Honey, you're marrying Clark, but, well, it was pretty obvious that you're in love with the man that almost died the other day."

In a flash, the confusion turned to anger and Lois responded with a shout. "Don't start projecting your own history onto me!" Then she took a second to compose herself. "Daddy, I appreciate what you did for Superman, but you didn't see what you think." She looked at Martha. "Martha, you know that they're wrong."

Ellen was ready for something like this. Before Martha could reply, Ellen cut in. "Your dad and I asked Clark's parents to be here because they saw the same thing we did. Lois, if you have a relationship with Superman, that's your business, but based on what we saw — what we all saw — we don't think you're ready to marry anyone."

Lois was struggling with what to say. Part of her wanted to keep yelling but she knew that her parents were trying in their own way to help. She had never expected to be in a situation

where keeping the secret would lead to such a terrible misunderstanding. In a flash of insight, she suddenly had a much better appreciation of the tightrope that Clark had walked in keeping the secret.

As Lois fumbled for a reply, Martha stood and moved behind her. Martha put her arms on Lois's shoulders and looked at Sam and Ellen. "We did see that Lois was very concerned about Superman. Yes, Jonathan and I saw what you did, but we trust Lois completely. We aren't worried about anything inappropriate between Lois and Superman. I had hoped that you were just going to caution Lois about appearances." Then Martha moved so that she was standing in front of Lois. "Honey, you do understand how it looked when Superman was ill. Your parents are just trying to help."

Ellen and Sam looked at each other for a second before Sam responded. "Martha, Ellen and I already figured out that you and Jonathan think of Superman as part of your family. That was the other thing that we noticed when Superman was sick. But you must understand that this could tear your family apart."

There was a moment of silence while the Kents and Lois fumbled for a response when they heard a tapping on the window. Superman was floating outside. Before Lois could even react, Sam was out of his seat. He opened the window and let Superman in.

Clark stopped right inside the window and addressed Sam. "Good afternoon, Dr. Lane. Clark told me that you wanted to check on my condition. I assure you that I feel fine. There seem to be no lingering effects and I appear to be back to full strength."

Sam had already gone over exactly what he was going to say when Superman arrived. "Superman, I'm glad to hear that, but the real reason I asked you here is to talk about Lois."

"What about Lois?" Clark was confused and he looked to his fiancée for guidance.

Lois stood and came over to stand next to her dad and Clark. "My parents think we're having an affair. They've been telling me that they don't think I'm ready to get married." Her voice was a mixture of anger and irritation.

Clark looked around at the people in the room to try to gauge the situation. The only thing he could tell for sure was that this was a mess. He looked back to Sam. "Dr. Lane, I assure you that there is nothing about my relationship with Lois that can possibly harm her marriage to Clark."

That got Ellen out of her seat. She took a position beside Sam, across from Lois. As she looked at Clark, her expression was a mix of determination and anger. "Don't try to tell us you two are just friends. We aren't stupid." It was obvious that she was struggling to contain her emotions. "I don't want to see my daughter head into a marriage that..." The words seemed to fail as she was overcome by the stress of the moment.

Sam could see that this was getting to be too much for Ellen. "Superman, in light of what has happened this past week, I think you owe me honest answers. Will you swear to answer two questions truthfully?"

While Sam was asking that question, Martha and Jonathan had come up behind Lois so that the whole group was standing together.

Clark could sense the trap but didn't see a way out of it. He took a deep breath and answered with a solemn, "Yes."

"Are you in love with my daughter?" The question was an accusation.

Clark looked at Lois. He delivered his reply with his gaze locked on Lois. "Yes."

Sam's only reaction was a tiny nod. "Good. So at least you can keep your word about answering honestly."

Clark looked back at Sam. "Dr. Lane, I always keep my word. Especially for something like this...and to you."

"Lois is about to get married. Will you promise to end

whatever relationship you two have and keep your distance?"

Clark barely hesitated. He turned back toward Lois then reached toward her in a motion that was clearly an invitation to hold hands. It only took Lois a second to respond and their hands were intertwined. Clark looked at their clasped hands for a second and then at Lois. After a moment, he turned back so that he was facing both of Lois's parents. "I can't do that. I tried to end our relationship once and it was the worst mistake I ever made. I love Lois, and she loves me. That's why we're getting married."

Sam just stood there with his mouth hanging open. Ellen was quicker to respond, if not to understand. "But..." she stuttered, "what about Clark?"

Clark let go of Lois's hand and stepped back to create some space. "I'm sorry. We probably should have told you sooner, but it's a very dangerous thing to know." They just stared as Superman's image was replaced by a twirling blur and suddenly Clark was standing there. "You see, I'm Clark." He stepped over to Lois, put his arm around her shoulders and drew her into a hug.

The silence dragged on for several seconds until Sam finally found his voice. "So that's why you were at Clark's apartment."

Before Clark could respond, Lois stepped away from Clark and moved to her father. "Daddy, you didn't just save Superman, you saved the life of my fiancé. At least now I can thank you properly. Thank you." Sam found himself in a hug the likes of which he hadn't gotten from Lois since she was a little girl.

While Lois was hugging her dad, Ellen looked at the various Kents in the room in quick succession. "Why didn't you tell us?" she asked.

Clark replied quickly. "Ellen, you must know that Superman has powerful enemies. While Superman is invulnerable, the people I care about aren't. If it ever got out that Superman was really just Clark Kent in bright clothes, everyone in this room would be at risk of being threatened, kidnapped or who knows what. As I said, it's a very dangerous thing to know. From this point forward, you have to be careful to never give any sign that Lois is married to anyone other than Clark Kent."

While Ellen was fumbling for a reply, Martha stepped over to her. "We're really sorry," Martha said. "Once we talked this morning, I was pretty sure that you would know Clark's secret before this was done. Please understand that this is Clark and Lois's secret to tell, not ours."

Ellen was flustered. Part of her wanted to be mad but she just didn't have enough energy left in her today. Then she realized what the Kents must have been going through when Clark was sick. "I guess I understand. The past few days must have been especially difficult."

"Yes, it was," Martha replied. "But we were surrounded by family."

The warm feelings filling the room were palatable. The smile on Ellen's face made Martha think that 'happy' and 'family' were not ideas that Ellen normally thought of together. She hoped that today would be the first step toward a better feeling. Not only would it be good for Ellen and Sam, it would help Lois and Clark as well.

With that, Martha realized that she had one more obligation. She stepped over to where Lois still had one arm around her dad. "Lois, excuse me but I need your dad for a minute."

As Lois moved away from her father, Martha extended her arms in an invitation for a hug. Sam hesitantly took the small woman in his arms. As she pulled in close, in a voice only barely above a whisper, she said, "Thanks for saving my boy."

At first, Sam was too choked up to reply. As he fumbled for words, a question popped into his mind. "Are you and Jonathan...super too?"

Jonathan burst into laughter as Martha pulled back and

answered with a smile. “No. Clark is adopted.”

Clark cut in. “Can we all sit down? I have a feeling that the questions could go on for a while.”

As the family moved back to the seating area, Clark intercepted Lois, pulled her into a hug and said, “With all the hugs going on in here I was feeling a little left out.”

Lois smiled and squeezed as hard as she could. “Well, you know where you can always get one.”

“Lois, are you okay with your parents knowing? I didn’t know what else to do, and in the long run I think it’s for the best.”

“I understand,” she replied. “I let too much show when you were sick. I was just so worried that I didn’t think about how it looked.”

“That’s okay. What better time to share the truth with family than Christmas?”

Lois pulled back to look at him. “I hadn’t thought of that. In some ways this might be my first real family Christmas.”

Clark just had to smile even bigger at that. “Merry Christmas, Lois.”

“Merry Christmas, Clark.”

As they drew together for a kiss, all thought of Christmas and the future were lost to the joy of being together.

THE END

Elisabeth’s requests:

Three things I want in my fic:

1. Martha
2. hug
3. friendly competition

Preferred season(s)/holiday [if applicable]: second to third season

Three things I do not want in my fic:

1. villains
2. alcohol
3. anything above a PG rating