

Frigid

By Mozartmaid <mozartmaid@gmail.com>

Rated: PG-13

Submitted September 2011

Summary: Lois thinks she's unlovable, an ice queen. That is, until Clark enters the picture.

These characters are not mine, but belong to Warner Bros. Some dialogue taken from 'Barbarians at the Planet' by Dan Levine and Deborah Joy Levine

Frigid.
The ice queen.
The bitch.

These were all names that Lois Lane had been called over the years. Names that she had learned to ignore, to embrace even because she was a single, successful female. She just had never dated that many guys... partly because she had been so focused on her career, on winning her first Kerth... and then her second one... and then, trying to land the granddaddy of them all, the Pulitzer.

So she had ignored the snickers. And avoided men in general...

Until she had been dared, really, to sleep with Claude. He had played it all so suave, so cool, so... French. He had sympathized with her, empathized with her need to focus on her career. And yet it had taken only one night... one late night when he had suggested they take the story out of the newsroom and finish going over notes at his place. One night of her letting her guard down, letting someone in...

He had tossed her that charming smile, and with a wink said it would at least give the office something to talk about. And in the back of her mind, she had thought she might hear the end of those hateful words. Those words that haunted her on lonely nights when she had been up for hours finishing a story. Those nights when she hadn't had the energy to go out to a bar, and little desire to do so either, not wanting to be ogled... and so, she had let those words hover over her, taunt her, mock her. Make her feel somehow... less.

The ice queen...
...bitch.

So stupidly, she had gone with Claude, even though in her gut she knew what he would want ... and part of her had wanted it too. She had found him attractive... and she had thought, "What the hell. I'm a grown woman. Surely I deserve to have some fun." And in the deepest part of her, she had thought that maybe, just maybe, if she went along with what everyone else seemed to find so easy to do—sleep with the first guy one found attractive after a dearth of them ... - he would love her.

Only... it hadn't been that great, or even that much fun. It started out that way, but as they drank more and things progressed, Lois simply didn't want to go through with it. It just didn't feel right. And she felt stupid and silly for telling him that they should stop... yet somehow, he had coaxed her back into bed, back into his arms, gave her another glass of wine... and she had gone through with it.

Maybe to stop the taunts. Maybe to shut out her fear that she really was frigid, an ice queen.

The next day, he had possessively patted her butt in front of the whole newsroom, which infuriated her even while it confirmed to everyone that she had more than likely actually

slept with Claude. Even Cat had complimented her on her catch. Lois should have let it go, should have allowed herself to just be one of the women that got flirted with by the male population in the office.

Yet Lois couldn't. She wouldn't be treated as less, even though she feared, deep down, that maybe she was. That something was wrong with her because she couldn't be comfortable with just having a "fun" night... So she had snapped something scathing back at Claude, and suddenly her reputation was back in place.

The bitch.
The ice queen.

It didn't help matters that a few weeks later, Claude stole her story—right out from under her. She never saw it coming. But when that paper landed on her desk, with *his* byline under *her* story that she had spent months on rounding up sources, fact-checking, and basically setting up for what she hoped would win her a Pulitzer nomination ... she saw red.

She had stormed into Perry's office, waving the paper at him furiously, feeling like the whole world had betrayed her. The office had watched the drama unfold, including Claude with his smug smile.

Perry had closed his office door behind her, and then, when it was just Perry and herself, Lois had fallen apart. She had sunk into a chair and collapsed into a puddle of tears.

The ice queen had melted...

Perry had promptly fired Claude, promising Lois that he would never work for the Planet ever again and that he would do his best to run him out of town, refusing even to give him a recommendation to any paper in the city.

She had actually let Perry hug her. It was a first for her, and Perry never forgot it. Never forgot the vulnerability he had seen in her that day. He knew she was the best reporter on staff, and he would make damned sure that no one would treat her that way ever again.

Clark Kent had been a breath of fresh air in the newsroom.
Kind.
Generous.
Open.

Lois had softened just a bit, surprised and taken aback that this farm boy even seemed to respect her.

She had been certain though, that the poison around the newsroom would get to him too. That before long, even that sweet, Kansas boy would whisper around the water cooler those hateful words.

But he never did. That day never came for Clark.

In fact, quite the opposite. They became friends. Even though she gave him every opportunity to hate her, to think those things that she wished she could forget. Instead, much to her chagrin, he had quickly become her rock, a steady force of kindness against all the hate and pain that had followed her for so much of her life.

She had even started going to his place, or he came to hers, to finish up stories. And never once did he leer at her suggestively, or try any funny business like Claude had.

Clark became her safe haven, her comfort zone... In fact, she was so comfortable with him, that she never knew how in love with her he actually was.

And then, there was Superman...

That unattainable hero had swept her off her feet ... -literally. He didn't seem to think those horrible things that floated around the office about her either.

He was kind, gentle... a lot like Clark, really.

Strange that so many men had belittled her or betrayed her, and yet here was an intergalactic hero and a sweet, Kansas farm boy ... who also happened to be the office hunk ... -who simply were her friends.

Clark and Superman.

How could that be?

She had kissed both of them, too. She would never admit it, but she remembered exactly how many times she had kissed Clark... three. All under pretense, and yet—each one had given her a little hope; that maybe she wasn't frigid after all. In fact, she liked Clark much more than she could ever admit to him. Because if she did admit it, and he rejected her, then she could really be hurt. If she let that sweet, Kansas farm boy within an inch of her heart, surely he would stomp on it harder than anyone because she actually felt something for him... besides, he could never love *her*, right?

After all, she was the office bitch.

The ice queen...

Frigid.

And yet ... -even in Superman's arms, when he had been under the influence of that pheromone spray, she had felt something she had never felt before when he kissed her ... -cherished, beautiful... and only in her deepest heart would she admit... loved.

So why, why was she now marrying Lex Luthor?

His kisses didn't stir any passion in her, and she was terrified when it would come down to the wedding night how she would react. She couldn't help but worry that she wouldn't feel the passion for him that he so obviously did for her.

He would find her frigid... she was sure of it.

And yet she was pushing herself to go through with it—why? To prove something to herself? To prove that she could love the billionaire if she *tried* hard enough?

What she was really scared of, what kept her awake at night, was thinking about Clark... and Superman. She had believed she was in love with Superman—he made her toes curl. She couldn't ever imagine feeling frigid with him. Yet, he was a sort of god above the rest of them... someone she could never really be with, surely? And therefore, someone safe to give her heart to, like ladies of yore throwing a favor to their favorite unattainable knight.

So she had convinced herself that she loved Superman. Because, she didn't think she could ever be rejected by him, because he would never let her close enough to him so she could be rejected.

Which is why she had reflexively told Clark in the park that day that she didn't feel romantically about him. How could she? She was in love with Superman, of course! The man who she didn't have to risk anything for to love! She couldn't love Clark because... if he too found her wanting, she knew it would truly crush her.

She feared seeing in his eyes the same loathing that she had seen in Claude's after she had slept with him.

She could never imagine, could never survive seeing that disappointment in Clark's eyes.

Maybe she *would* be better off marrying Lex, even if her heart wasn't in it.

Her heart, actually, was lost, misdirected by her own insecurities. She threw it at those whose rejections would hurt the least—the unattainable hero, and the billionaire who would just deleteriously add her to his collection. She decided she would lose herself in his money, and then maybe, he wouldn't notice that she didn't love him.

Isn't that what countless other women do?

Why should she be so different?

Lois cried herself to sleep. It was only two nights before the wedding. She was utterly lost... her hero didn't love her, couldn't love her because she apparently didn't really understand something about him...

Lex would never really love her, not as she longed to be

loved. She was terrified of the physical part of their relationship, and had pushed away all of his sexual advances over the past few weeks, swearing that she just wanted their wedding to be special... Yet she was fearful that he wouldn't be patient with her, that like all the rest, he would somehow find her wanting.

Frigid...

And Clark... she suddenly sat up in bed and wiped her eyes. She had an inexplicable desire to see him, to talk to him. Somehow, she knew that he could sort out the mess that was going on inside her, that he was the key to it all making sense.

Why had she promised to marry Lex? And why did Superman not believe her when she had said she'd love him if he were an ordinary man? She loved him because he wasn't ordinary—he was extraordinary! And yet, that lofty vow she had made had been the very thing that had ultimately pushed him away.

She had been rejected by him after all. She had sworn that she would love him even if he were a regular guy and he had rebuffed her love... almost as if he could never accept her. Maybe he knew what the others said about her... and maybe he believed it. Her unattainable knight in shining armor was just a man after all.

Her perfect knight suddenly seemed...

"Like an ordinary man..." She thought of his reaction when she had said that. Like he blamed himself somehow. He had hung his head and shook it, like he couldn't believe what he was hearing. She hadn't realized it at the time, but she knew that somehow, what he had said that night was the key to Superman.

It was the key that she had held at bay for so long... afraid that he would find her wanting, if she dared to look beyond the flashy cape. And it suddenly hit her, like a ton of bricks, that Superman was an ordinary man. And yet, torn apart by her own insecurities, needing to believe in the unattainable hero who could never hurt her, she had refused to see it.

Suddenly, her reporter's instinct kicked in, knocking her emotions and fears to the back burner. She suddenly had a mystery to solve, and the only person in the world who could help her was Clark Kent. Even though she hadn't spoken to him in weeks. Even though she had rejected his love in the park. She knew she could count on him. He'd help her make sense of Superman's cryptic reaction, maybe even confirm that she was right, that Superman had another identity! And then once she faced that truth, with all cards on the table, maybe, she could decide how to move forward. She could either summon the courage to march down that aisle and marry Lex, or tell him that she couldn't do it because she was in love with an ordinary, *super* man.

Lois glanced at the clock. It was after midnight. But there was no time to waste! She had to sort this out *now*.

"Clark?" she said into the phone.

"Lois?" came his incredulous, albeit sleepy voice. "Are you okay?"

She closed her eyes with relief. Of course, only Clark, her best friend, would ask if she was okay calling in the middle of the night.

"Y—well, sort of. Clark, can you come over?"

Silence was on the other end. She almost panicked. Had she crossed a line? "Clark?" she said, a little fearfully.

"I'm here, Lois," he said with a resigned sigh. "What is it?"

"Please, Clark. I—I need you. I need to talk to my best friend."

A pause on the phone, then another sigh. "What's wrong?" he asked, his voice kind, encouraging. "You can always talk to me."

She took a deep breath. His words were comforting, but she really needed to see him, look into those reassuring eyes of his. "Would you please just come over?"

She waited another moment, afraid he wouldn't come.

Yet this was Clark, her dependable friend. And he didn't disappoint her.

"I'll be there in fifteen minutes."

After Lois hung up the phone, she paced her apartment, mentally in a triangle of men. Her best friend was coming to her rescue... Lex expected to marry her tomorrow... and Superman didn't believe that she'd love him as an ordinary man.

That last one kept getting ping-ponged in her brain over and over.

<<Superman, is there any hope for us? You and me? I'm so completely in love with you that I can't do anything else without knowing.>>

<<There are things about me you don't know, that you may never know.>>

<<If you had *no* powers, if you were just an ordinary man leading an ordinary life, I'd love you just the same. Can't you believe that?>>

<<I wish I could, Lois. But, under the circumstances, I don't see how I can.>>

Lois couldn't get the conversation out of her mind. It kept replaying itself, over and over as she tried to decipher the meaning of what he had been trying to say. Superman had vanished, and she had been left cold by the knowledge that somehow she had misinterpreted him all these months, that she had missed something crucial about him because she had been so wrapped up in her own insecurities.

Yet... she was certain that Superman felt something for her. Surely he didn't come to her window every couple of nights because he was bored.

There was a connection there, she knew it.

Despite all of her doubts about being able to feel... she couldn't have mistaken the warmth she felt from Superman.

It was almost like the cozy warmth she felt from Clark.

Yet Clark was comfortable like an old sweater...

And Superman was warm like the sun...

Both were warm enough to melt her... thaw out the ice queen until she was human again. A woman, who just longed to be loved.

Loved.

Clark loved her.

But she held him at arm's length... could she ever trust him enough to really love her? To keep at bay the cold that came around her heart whenever she felt the need to protect herself?

Would Clark ever find her wanting?

Unbidden, memories flooded her mind, of those few times Clark had kissed her. Even under duress, she could feel that those kisses had been warmer, more tender than any she had ever experienced.

Maybe, his warmth, his love was enough...

And Superman?

Who was the ordinary man underneath? For she was certain he was a man beneath all of that flashy spandex. Only a man, with human feelings and insecurities would leave her as he had that night... -scared to show his true self, despite how she thought he felt for her.

"Unless I somehow misinterpreted his feelings towards me?" she wondered aloud.

<<There are things about me you don't know, that you may never know.>>

But, her memory of his kiss... warmth, sunshine...

And the memory of Clark's kisses...

Warmth, tenderness...

Warmth.

She closed her eyes, imagining both men's kisses, until... -they merged into one.

She suddenly opened her eyes, truly seeing for the first time,

as a hundred little things converged together...

Her fear of rejection had pushed her into Superman's arms, the unattainable hero.

Yet her comfortable work partner, her best friend, loved her.

And he was the same man.

Suddenly, she felt the fears melt away, the ice from her heart was gone as she realized that Clark was Superman. That she loved him—both of him.

Superman wasn't an unattainable hero, but an ordinary man, yet extraordinary in his own way. Because, he saw through her fears, he saw through the gossip around the office, the hurtful words...

To him, she was his friend.

And she suddenly realized that she wanted to be so much more.

Her doorbell rang, and she nearly jumped out of her skin.

Clark was here!

She ran to the mirror, running her fingers through her hair. Had she been crying? She didn't remember. But she wasn't afraid anymore. She knew the truth, and she knew in every look Clark had given her, whether at her best or her worst, that he loved her.

And knowing that gave her the courage to open the door.

"Lois?" Clark said, a little uncertain as she stared at him, trying to decide where to begin with her revelations.

"Come in," she gestured. "I'll make coffee."

Clark entered, never taking his eyes off her.

Would he freak out if I launched myself into his arms and told him I love him? She wondered, and it made her giggle.

"Lois? Is everything okay?" he asked cautiously.

"Everything is better than okay, Clark," she said, her heart racing as she thought about what she would say.

Lois fiddled with the coffee, finally bringing Clark a cup, just as he liked it.

"I bet you didn't know I know how you like your coffee," she said smugly. "With whole milk and three teaspoons of sugar."

He looked at her, puzzled, yet a little impressed. "Lois... why am I here?"

She took a sip, burying her gaze into her coffee a moment, summoning courage. Then she sat her mug down and turned to face him.

"Well, I've decided something, Clark."

He looked at her expectantly.

"I'm not going to marry Lex," she said, releasing a gust of air. "Let me get that clear first. I have no idea how I'm going to tell him. But I first need to know that you... -will stand by me. I know I have no right to ask anything of you, Clark. And despite what I've said in the past, I don't trust Lex to take this well..."

He reached for her hand, and lightly squeezed it.

There it was again.

Warmth.

"And I've decided something else that you should know, Clark," she said, taking a deep breath as she met his eyes. "I'm in love with someone else."

The warmth was suddenly gone as he withdrew his hand, looking away from her. "Superman?" he said under his breath derisively.

She felt the chill come around her once more. She felt the need to hide, to turn away from this moment.

Her fear and his, keeping them from each other.

But she had known the warmth of the sun, the warmth of his kisses. And if she could break through this insecurity of his—then maybe there was hope. For both of them.

"I've realized that I'm in love... with an ordinary man," she said, purposely using those words, waiting to see them register in his eyes.

He glanced at her, a wary spark of interest in his eyes. Hope

was there too, just below the surface.

She moved closer to him, urging the warmth to reach her once more. *Keep the ice queen at bay, Clark. Trust me, and I'll trust you.*

She reached out a tentative hand, towards his glasses, and he flinched, just barely.

Her heart ached for him in that moment. She saw that he was as scared as she was.

“Clark? Do you trust me?” she asked, voicing her silent plea.

“Of course, Lois,” he said, almost automatically.

She reached out again, this time, gently stroking his hair back. He closed his eyes, his jaw moving slightly as he swallowed.

“Lois, what are you doing to me?” he said in a voice barely above a whisper.

She moved to her knees on the sofa, perched beside him, and cupped his jaw, urging him to look at her. She smoothed his hair back, and ever so gently, she took off his glasses.

“I’m telling the ordinary man—that I love him. That I choose *him*,” she said, her voice trembling with emotion.

She saw the confirmation in his eyes, the wary hope that she understood, and the fear that she did not.

“Clark, I’m sorry I didn’t see it before. I was so blinded. By my own fears, really... But, I love you.”

Their eyes met, and a bond was formed between them, right then and there. She leaned forward slightly, and Clark met her half way as they kissed. She lost balance on her knees, but Clark deftly moved her onto his lap as they kissed.

Lois felt warmth through to her toes.

The ice queen was gone forever.

She wasn’t frigid.

She wasn’t a bitch.

She had simply been lost, blinded by fears, and misused.

Because she had only always belonged to one man. *This* man.

And she had suffered and been hurt because she hadn’t realized, hadn’t known that she had only one perfect match in the world.

Her soul had told her for years to wait. Be patient.

The opposite of what she thought she should do.

What as a reporter she did on a daily basis ... rush in without checking the water level.

She had thought she couldn’t love, couldn’t be loved.

That she wasn’t patient enough for it.

That no one was patient enough to love her.

Until Clark.

Until Superman.

Until she saw them both as the same man...

And the ice, melted away...

THE END