

# Ants at a Picnic

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Rated: G

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Summary: What happens when you mix Lois Lane and Clark Kent with Lex Luthor at the Daily Planet's annual picnic charity event? Read on!

This is my answer to the summer fic challenge. I do not own the characters because they are the property of DC comics, December Third Productions and any other entity who lays legal claim. I'm just having a little non-profit fun.

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"Really, my dear, come, join me in the shade of my tent and have a chilled mimosa. It is so much more comfortable and refreshing than lying on a coarse blanket drinking lukewarm lemonade," Lex Luthor said, smiling down at her. As usual, he looked very suave yet casual. The bright white designer polo shirt and hand-sewn knife-pleat khaki pants he wore probably cost more than she made in a week. For the past hour or so, he had moved around among the various corporate movers and shakers, pressing flesh and discussing any number of projects or deals. Still, it was intriguing to observe him and other members of Metropolis' society mingling with the 'common herd.'

Lois took in the sights of Centennial Park. It was early summer and this Saturday was the Daily Planet's Founder's Day celebration. As per tradition, the paper sponsored a huge charity picnic to raise money for journalism scholarships. The occasion, although no one else knew it, held a special place in her heart. After all, if it weren't for this event, there might not have been enough money for her to attend New Troy University.

Surrounding them were Daily Planet employees and their excited families sitting and eating on blankets and at wooden tables and benches. Several people, not content to sit down and enjoy the crisp but lazy day, were playing softball or participating in carnival games. A few intrepid souls had rented paddle boats to go around the lake. The tantalizing smells of hamburgers and hotdogs sizzling on the grill reached her nose. But once Lex arrived, Lois remained rooted to the blanket, unlike her friend and co-worker, Diane Pallister, who had wandered off to get a hotdog.

Earlier that morning she had gotten up quickly, completed her daily ablutions, and dressed in a light green cotton short-sleeved blouse and white walking shorts. Since it was going to be a picnic and probably all the tables and benches would be taken, she had decided it was best to bring her own supplies and creature comforts. So she had pulled out a backpack and filled it with 'picnic' items: blanket, icepack, thermos of lemonade, and a trashy romance novel. She had meant to pick up a can of bug repellent, but completely forgot about it once she entered the park.

The pleasant weather had made the day even better than she had expected so far. She had arrived in time to help set up the first aid tent and light a few grills. Once that was done she'd laid her blanket out under a large sheltering oak tree. Several co-workers had come over to chat with her briefly. Even Cat had stopped by with her latest date; a bored looking blonde Adonis whose name escaped Lois' memory as soon as they left. Shortly

afterwards, Diane sat down and the two young women exchanged friendly 'water cooler talk'. They had even discussed Superman and wondered just what such a man did when he was not patrolling the city in blue spandex. She had wondered where Clark could be, but was told by Perry he was put in charge of the hot dog grill. She was pleased her 'do-gooder' partner was properly occupied; she was immensely satisfied to sit and relax indulge in reading her guilty pleasure...until Lex showed up.

Lois glanced casually up at the older man. She always found him to be immensely attractive, witty and charming. Since meeting him at the White Orchid Ball they had enjoyed a mild, innocent flirtation. But there was something about Lex Luthor that nagged at the back of her mind. Something was not quite right about the man. Her occasional work partner, Clark Kent, never missed an opportunity to warn her against him. While Cat Grant and Lucy kept urging her to encourage Lex's interest, she wasn't entirely certain what her behavior towards him should be. Still, what could be the harm in merely talking with him? Maybe she could \*finally\* get him to open up about his past and nail down an interview.

"Oh, I don't know, it's comfortable here under this tree." A little embarrassed that he was seeing what she was reading, Lois put down her book, thinking Lex's tastes were a little more cosmopolitan. He probably considered Voltaire 'light' reading. She slid over and patted the blanket. "C'mon, have a seat."

His expression clearly said he wasn't happy to sit on the rough old blue blanket, but he acceded to Lois' request and kneeling down to the ground, made himself as comfortable as possible on the old blanket.

"There!" Lois smiled, her brown eyes twinkling with mischief. "Isn't this better than sitting under a tent away from the sunshine? After all, this \*is\* a picnic. You know, a relaxed time for family and friends?"

"If you say so, my dear." Lex grew quiet, even pensive, and then he spoke. "Speaking of friendships, I believe it is time for us to take ours a step further," the billionaire said as he tenderly took her hand.

"Really? What... what do you mean?" Lois responded, clearly baffled.

"I think perhaps we should see each other on a regular — more exclusive — basis. My dear, you have such fire, such drive, the uncanny ability to transcend the mundane. You possess the \*raw\* potential to become so much more than a mere newspaper reporter. To ignore such talent would be a terrible pity."

"B...being a reporter is what I do. Besides, we barely know each other."

"Given time we can grow to 'know' each other. Say you'll consider the matter very carefully. I find a woman like you very attractive."

Loud klaxon alarms went off in her mind, along with a dance of icy fingers fiercely pirouetting up and down her spine. There was something decidedly wrong with that particular turn of phrase.

The atmosphere between them was charged, not with a sense of physical attraction or even mental stimulation. The older man's dark eyes riveted her with the mesmerizing intensity of a striking cobra. Lois felt as if she was being measured and considered not as a cherished friend or even as a deeply desired lover — but as a possession. One to be pursued, acquired, displayed before a breathless audience and then unceremoniously discarded. Did Lex Luthor want to add her to his lists of conquests?

"Hey, Lois, there you are!" A familiar voice called out.

She released the breath she did not realize she was holding, and turned to the owner of the voice.

"Clark!" she cried with more excitement than she meant, quickly releasing Lex's hand and waving him over. "I thought you were manning the hot dog stand?"

“Yeah, but Diane told me you were sitting here, so I asked Eduardo to take over for me. Hey, can you be my partner in the three-legged race?” He asked with that terrific, heartbreaking smile. The handsome young man wore comfortable faded blue jeans and a blue chambray shirt, which showed off his magnificent physique. In languid, easy movements he sat down on the blanket next to Lois, totally ignoring the blistering glares of anger from Lex.

“Mr. Kent.” There was an undercurrent of ice in Luthor’s voice. “Miss Lane and I were having a \*private\* conversation...”

Lois looked from one man to the other. Clark clearly had no intention of going anywhere and neither did Luthor. She was ready to try and break up the standoff when she felt the sensation of sharp biting stings on her toes. Staring downward, she was greeted by the horrifying sight of dozens of large reddish-brown ants crawling over her bare feet.

“Fire ants!” she shrieked.

Lex immediately jumped up and stood back from the blanket. “Kent! Quick! Pick her up and take her to my tent! Asabi can wash her feet with ice until the stinging wears off!”

Clark quickly but gently scooped up this sweet welcomed burden, but he turned to the other man and said forcefully, “No way, Luthor! Jimmy! Get me a bucket of ice!” With those words, he ran with almost unnatural swiftness towards the first aid tent, leaving his stunned rival behind.

Swiftly Lex regained his composure and walked towards his tent. “Mr. Kent, we shall meet again, without a phalanx of ants to offer an interruption.”

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Under the shade and comfort of the first aid tent, Lois lay on a cot while an excited Bernie Klein stood by and explained what happened. “You are the \*fifth\* victim today! Next year, the Daily Planet must move the festivities to a place without a water source nearby. This attack from these pesky ants shouldn’t be a surprise. They usually nest in the soil, often near moist areas, such as river banks, pond shores, watered lawns and highway shoulders. Usually, the nests aren’t visible. Especially to someone who isn’t aware to look for them. They build under objects such as timber, logs, rocks, or bricks. Good thing you aren’t sensitive, Lois. Otherwise we would have to take you to the emergency room. This antiseptic cream should do the trick.”

He bent to apply the cream, but Clark gently removed the tube from his hands. “Thanks for volunteering today, Dr. Klein, but I can take it from here.”

“What? But Mr. Kent... Oh, you are probably right, there are a few other injuries I need to look in on. It’s not often I get to work on real people...”

“It’s okay, Bernie,” Lois said, patting the gentle scientist’s arm. “I trust Clark will do a great job.”

“Oh, okay -if you insist.” He moved off to help with another fire ant victim.

“Oh, Clark, thanks for helping me today,” she said, her brown eyes gleaming gratitude.

He smiled, nervously adjusted his glasses, and said, “No problem, Lois. I couldn’t let those ants have a picnic on your feet!”

She swatted him playfully. “No, I wasn’t referring to the ants at the picnic. I was referring to the snake in the grass!”

THE END