

Whatever Happened to Mad Dog Lane?

By [Lynn S. M.](#) <lois_and_clark_fan*at*verizon.net> (Replace *at* with @)

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Summary: At her retirement party, Lois passes along some words of wisdom to the next generation of reporters. This story was written in response to the eighth 2021 weekly Kerth challenge.

Story Size: 507 words (3Kb as text)

Lois stepped into the bullpen to shouts of, “Congratulations, Lois,” and “Happy retirement, Mrs. Lane-Kent!” The chorus of good wishes was augmented by the tweets of party noisemakers. Clark gave her a kiss on the cheek just before he draped an incredibly gaudy, pageant-style sash over her shoulder. When she looked down, she saw that it proclaimed her to be “Officially Retired.”

Someone started a chant of, “Speech! Speech!”

She began, “Thank you all for this party and for doing your part to keep the Planet from being not just another major metropolitan newspaper, but a world-class one.”

“Those of you who have been here awhile will remember my first editor here – Perry White. Even after all these years, I still miss him; he was a good editor and, more importantly, a good man. But the Planet continued without him – as he would have wished. And it will continue without me, as well. But as he might have said, ‘A newshound can’t help but lunge after a story like a dog after a bone.’”

Lois paused to compose herself, but there was a catch in her voice as she went on, resuming her Perry imitation, “And though I ain’t nothin’ but a newshound dog, I won’t be cryin’ all the time. No siree bub. I might not be working here full time any more, but there’s nothing to stop me from freelancing.”

Jasmine – one of the younger reporters—interjected, “But now maybe the rest of us will have a chance at a Kerth.”

After the chuckles died down, Lois continued, “I think you probably will get that award someday – you remind me of myself in my ‘Mad Dog Lane’ days. But let me pass on some wisdom I learned along the way... A Kerth is nice, but the pride and pleasure you get from a Kerth – or even a Pulitzer – is fleeting. It’s nothing compared to the joy of a good marriage, or of seeing your children grow up and have kids of their own. If someone had told me that a couple of decades ago, I would have rolled my eyes and said that they were cornier than Kansas, but as corny as it may sound, it’s also the truth.”

When she looked toward Clark, she was not surprised to see her husband’s face beaming with love and pride. She marveled anew at how he had helped her to straighten out her priorities and open herself up to love. That may have been both his and Superman’s hardest challenge.

Her brief moment of contemplation was interrupted by someone calling for her to cut the cake. As she reached for the knife, she couldn’t help but wonder what new adventures her life would bring.

THE END