

Rules of War

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Rated G

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Summary: When Clark challenges Lois to a snowball fight, he learns he is way out of his league. A 2008 Holiday Ficathon Story.

Author's Notes:

This 2008 Holiday Ficathon Story was written for Saskia. Her requests are at the bottom. Set mid-season two.

Thanks go out to my beta IolantheAlias!

Standard disclaimers apply; not my characters, but it is my idea.

Lois stopped suddenly, mid-sentence, as she realized Clark was no longer walking next to her. Turning to look for him, she began, "What are you..."

Foomp!

Once again cut off mid-sentence, Lois was momentarily rendered speechless as she stared first at the sleeve of her overcoat and then at Clark.

From a few paces back, where he had stopped to gather his frosty artillery, Clark just grinned at Lois and her unusual, though undoubtedly temporary, lack of response. "Whatsa matter, Lois? Big city girls too good for snowball fights?"

Cured of speechlessness by Clark's taunting, Lois replied with a disdain that was mostly in jest. "Please. If this," as she held out her ice-dusted sleeve, "is what you farm boys consider a snowball fight, then you have a thing or two to learn about urban winter warfare." With a toss of her head, she turned around and resumed walking, not even deigning to brush the remaining snow from her overcoat sleeve.

Clark glanced at the snowball in his hand, prepared in case of Lois's revenge, briefly considered the target practically painted on her back, and then decided he valued his life more than a parting shot. Dropping the snowball, he jogged a few paces to catch up to her.

As if the snowball incident had never happened, Lois resumed the conversation where she had left off. "So how was Christmas in Smallville?" Though the words were no different, Lois's tone when referencing Smallville had gradually lost its snarkiness over the year and a half she had known Clark. It was the day after Christmas, and Lois and Clark were back on the beat, as always.

"It was great. Mom and Dad send their love and want me to extract a promise from you to come visit Smallville soon."

Lois sighed. "I love your parents. They're just so normal..." then, with a slight smirk at Clark, "especially for a small town."

Clark just shook his head. They continued walking in friendly silence for a few minutes before he spoke up again. "So what are your plans for New Year's?"

Lois shrugged noncommittally. "Oh, you know..."

"So let's do something together. We both have to work that day, so let's just make a whole day of it. I'll plan the whole thing; it'll be fun," entreated Clark.

Lois thought for just a moment, then agreed with a cheerful, "Sure." She added, in mock warning, "But you better make it good. I don't often agree to being surprised."

"When have I ever let you down?" Clark smiled broadly.

Lois stopped and just stared at Clark. When his grin stayed firmly planted on his face, she rolled her eyes and pushed through the doors to the Daily Planet. Clark and his grin followed closely behind.

Clark woke the next morning to polite but insistent knocking on his front door. Rubbing his eyes and yawning as he slipped his glasses on his face, he opened the door to greet a courier.

"Clark Kent?" Receiving a nod in response, the courier handed Clark an envelope and stuck out a clipboard and pen. "Sign here, please." After signing and thanking the courier, Clark absently kicked the door closed as he headed back down the stairs into his apartment.

The envelope contained a single white sheet of paper with a typed message:

Lesson #1: Watch your back.

Somewhat baffled by the message, Clark looked again at the envelope and both sides of the paper. He considered scanning for fingerprints when the previous day's events asserted themselves in his still sleepy brain.

"Lois," he grinned to himself. "This oughta be fun." Clark tossed the envelope and message on his dining table as he headed to his room to get ready for work.

Half an hour later, Clark pulled his apartment door closed and jogged down the steps. He set out for a brisk walk to the Daily Planet, turning off Clinton Avenue when it hit him in the back. He wheeled around to pinpoint his snowball sniper, but to his surprise, could spot no one out of the ordinary. He recognized nearly everyone who was out going about their business as someone who belonged in the neighborhood. Lois, for example, was certainly nowhere to be found. Clark narrowed his eyes as he wondered which of his neighbors she had recruited for her nefarious deeds, but no one on the street seemed to be paying him any mind. He had to give her one thing; she was good. For the second time that morning, Clark grinned and shook his head as he continued on his way to work.

"Good morning, Lois," Clark called out as he breezed past her desk on the way to his.

"Good morning, Clark," Lois answered without looking up from her screen or pausing in her furious typing.

"What are you working on?"

"Holiday filler stories. We need something big to break or I'm going to go crazy." Lois hit the last few keystrokes with a flourish and sat back, finally looking over at Clark.

"I have a little investigating to do," Clark said in a carefully neutral voice.

Lois did a fantastic impression of the proverbial cat who ate the canary. There was no chance she was falling for the innocent act. "You're not going to figure it out."

"Which one of my neighbors have you corrupted into your evil snowy plans?" Clark persisted.

"I told you, you'll never figure it out. Besides, I also told you you had a lot to learn. Now, let's go hit the streets." Lois pushed back from her desk and grabbed her overcoat and briefcase. She headed up the ramp, trusting Clark was following her.

Outside the Daily Planet, Lois stopped for a cup of coffee at the kiosk. Half a step later, Clark was standing next to her.

"The usual, please," Clark ordered from the coffee vendor.

"Hmph," snorted Lois, though her expression turned nearly blissful as she inhaled the life-giving aroma of the coffee warming her hands.

Clark could not help but chuckle. "I've told you, Lois, life is short. I'm going to order what I want."

"Hmph," replied Lois again. This was not a new conversation for them.

The vendor set a steaming cup of coffee in front of Clark,

who reached into his back pocket to retrieve his wallet. As he pulled out a few bills, he also pulled out a piece of paper he did not recognize. “What...” He absently handed the money to the coffee vendor as he unfolded the unfamiliar paper:

Lesson #2: Be prepared.

Clark’s head shot up as several thoughts sped through his mind at once... at virtually the same instant he felt an increasingly familiar thud hit his back.

“Unh,” he groaned as he realized Lois had somehow made her escape while he had been preoccupied with his coffee.

“Lois!” Clark called after her, half in exasperation, half in laughter.

“Don’t forget your coffee!” she called back.

Clark halted in his abrupt turn from the kiosk as he discovered he had, in fact, utterly forgotten about his coffee. The coffee vendor did not even bother to try and hide his amusement.

Mild-mannered reporter persona notwithstanding, pulling one over on Clark Kent was not an easy task. That Lois Lane had managed to do so not once but twice the previous day was at once perplexing and fascinating to him. Of course, simply by existing Lois fascinated Clark, which probably facilitated her perplexing him. That, combined with the almost hyper-alert he had been on since the second message and snowball ambush the day before, was enough. Clark was finished with being on defense. To that end, he was formulating a plan.

With the makings of an offensive strategy in mind, Clark found himself at work earlier than usual and also earlier than Lois. Not one to waste time given the inherent unpredictability of his day, he was engrossed in research on his computer when Lois walked in. Out of habit, Clark kept half a super ear out for her progress. She stopped to drop her things at her desk then headed to the coffee maker.

A moment later she was walking past Clark’s desk, which, had he stopped to ponder it, was a rather circuitous return path to her desk. However, that thought never even had time to form, as several things occurred practically simultaneously. An inter-office instant message window popped up on his desktop with a soft “ding!” Clark’s eyes widened a bit and his considerable senses perked up a bit as he read:

Lesson #3: Know your enemy.

Lois, back at her desk by this point, had her eye surreptitiously trained on Clark, waiting for the moment he put it all together and looked for her. As soon as his head shot up and his gaze unerringly met hers, she smiled mischievously and called out, “Catch!” as she lobbed a snowball at him.

The high arc of the throw provided plenty of time for Clark’s likewise considerable reflexes to kick in; unfortunately, his higher reasoning skills did not have a chance to get a word in edgewise, which he realized as he caught the only slightly melted snowball that instantaneously exploded into a million melting ice crystals upon contact with his hands...and shirt...and pants...and floor...and desk...but fortunately not his computer.

Those few in the newsroom who had managed to catch the entire episode were hard pressed to hold back the chuckles at the sight of Clark and the dumbstruck expression on his face. The others who had only looked up after they heard Lois’s command followed by Clark’s involuntary gasp of surprise just laughed and shook their heads as they went back to their work. The unlucky few who were too close to Clark and suffered glancing blows from the debris of the projectile tried to brush off the snow and wondered to themselves just how long it was going to take for those two to get their acts together and get together.

For his part, after the shock passed, Clark just adopted his own mischievous grin and stood up, grabbed his coat, followed by Lois’s coat, and then Lois’s arm as he marched them both up the ramp and out of the newsroom.

“Clark!” Lois tried to protest through the giggles she had only marginally tried to stifle. “What are you doing?”

“Put this on,” Clark ordered as they hit the elevator, handing her her coat. “You better put on your scarf and mittens, too, because we’re going to settle this Smallville style.”

“Oh, really? You have some cows hiding around here somewhere to be referees?” Lois challenged right back.

“Ha ha. Nope, Smallville style is classic fortify-and-defend your position, with specific requirements for the winner and loser.” Clark had buttoned up his coat and was fishing in his pockets for seldom-used gloves.

They exited the elevator into the lobby and headed out the door and down the block toward the park. “So what are these special requirements for the winner and loser?” Lois asked, figuring the answer might determine whether or not she temporarily suspended her “never lose” policy.

“Sorry. That’s for me to know and you to find out,” Clark quipped. Lois was not the only one with a competitive streak, and she excelled at bringing it out in Clark.

“You’re going to regret that, Kent!” Lois yelled as she ran ahead of him, scoping out the best defensible position in the park.

“I hope so!” he yelled back, running to a clump of tall bushes with a line of sight to Lois’s chosen position, a slide on the playground.

Twenty minutes later, Lois and Clark had attracted quite a bit of attention from other park-goers, particularly children, who were thrilled to join in a snowball fight actually started by adults. They had also displaced a significant amount of snow, though the amount given and received by each side was relatively even. The battle was still going strong when Clark paused. “Lois!”

“You surrendering, Kent?” she hollered back.

“Jimmy paged me. We have to go back!” Clark stood, and the kids on his side gave a collective groan. “Sorry, guys. Gotta get back to work,” he grinned.

“So you’re surrendering,” Lois reiterated, meeting Clark halfway between their respective positions. They hardly had time to get out of the danger zone before the kids resumed firing.

“Nope. Smallville rules call for a draw if the fight is interrupted by extenuating circumstances.” As they worked to brush off snow, they started on the walk back to the Daily Planet, though definitely at a more “holiday” pace than was their norm.

“I’m beginning to suspect you’re making up these rules,”

Lois grumbled.

“I wouldn’t dare. These rules have been in existence nearly as long as Smallville itself,” Clark said solemnly.

Brightening, Lois acquiesced, “Fine. But I still win.”

“How do you figure?” Clark asked.

“Because I hit you three times unanswered!” she declared victoriously.

“Okay,” Clark agreed easily.

Naturally suspicious at his lack of argument, Lois remembered, “So what’s the deal with the winner and loser, according to these ‘Smallville rules?’”

Clark stopped walking to look at her with a teasing smile. “If a girl beats a boy in a snowball fight, she has to kiss him.”

Lois looked back at him steadily. “Seriously?”

Clark held her gaze. “I wouldn’t lie about Smallville rules.”

For a moment, they both just looked in each other’s eyes, oblivious to the other people on the sidewalk or the particular noise of the city during the holidays.

After a beat, Lois gave a slight nod, “Okay.”

Clark’s eyes grew a little bigger and he stopped breathing momentarily as Lois took a step forward. She took a deep breath, and then, as if channeling all of the kinetic energy of the butterflies in her stomach into courage, lifted her face slowly but surely towards Clark’s. In the eternal moment required for her

lips to reach his, both of their eyes drifted shut. Of their own accord, Lois's hands rested themselves on Clark's chest as she kissed him. The kiss was sweet but dangerous. Sensing the danger in the same instant, their eyes snapped open, and they each swayed backwards just a fraction, needing a modicum of physical space in hopes of reestablishing a measure of emotional space.

Her eyes never leaving his, Lois recovered first. "So how many snowball fights did you throw when you were a kid?"

Clark just stared at her as his brain frantically attempted to shift gears. "None!" he finally managed. Then, with a grin, "This was the very first one, I swear."

Lois processed that for a second, then protested, "Clark!" as she reached for snow from a nearby window ledge and pelted him.

Clark laughed and started jogging back toward the office. "Perry needs us!"

Lois began to chase him, forming and throwing haphazard snowballs as she ran. "Chicken! If you ever want to do that again, you'll get back here and fight like a man!"

Had she been any closer, Lois would have run smack dab into the brick wall that became of Clark Kent at her threat.

He turned around to face her as she stopped short behind him. "Will you kiss me again if I let you win?" he asked softly.

"No," she replied, equally softly. "But I might let you kiss me if I win."

Clark leaned slightly closer as he spoke. "That's not in the rules."

"Maybe not," Lois agreed. "But you're playing by Lois Lane rules now."

"Okay," Clark breathed. His gloved hands found her mittened ones as he slowly bent his head down to hers. His expression was something just short of wonder, trying to imprint the moment into his very being. He looked in her eyes when their faces were a mere breath apart. "You win," he whispered, just before their lips met again.

THE END

Saskia's requests:

Three things I want in my fic:

1. fluff/waffyness
 2. snowball fight
 3. a kiss without being caused by holiday reasons such as mistletoe and midnight on new year's eve
- Preferred season(s)/holiday [if applicable]: 2 — Christmas or New Year's Eve

Three things I do not want in my fic:

1. Villains
2. Superman revelation
3. much involvement of other character than L&C