

The (Semi-)Annual Safety Seminar (April Comedy Challenge)

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Rated: G

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Summary: Lois and Clark are forced to endure what might just be the world's most boring seminar. How do they cope?

Standard disclaimer: None of the characters herein belong to me, except for the seminar presenter — and anyone who wishes is welcome to him! The other characters belong to Warner Brothers and DC Comics. I just borrowed them for a little not-for-profit fun.

This bit of fluff was unbeta-ed.

“... but nothing can beat my mom's rhubarb pie.”

Clark was enjoying some light conversation with Lois... much needed after the recent asteroid scare. Their conversation was interrupted by a familiar bellow.

“Kent, Lane. My office, now!”

The two partners exchanged glances and followed Perry into his office. Lois asked, “Do you have a lead? Something that's not literally earth-shattering this time, I hope.”

“Something far more routine. Next week, you and Kent will be going to a safety seminar at the Lexor.”

Lois' eyes narrowed. “But I already went to my annual cure-for-insomnia seminar this year. I'm not due for another one for at least another six months.”

“You've been given a special invitation — by upper management — to attend an extra session. You're the best at what you do, and I'm not one to argue with success, but the muckety-mucks upstairs are complaining. They say that you are single-handedly causing the paper's workers' compensation premiums to skyrocket. I've told them that your methods may be unorthodox, but they get the goods and your articles sell papers. They'd have none of it. They had wheedled the insurance company into lowering our premium if you attend an extra safety seminar, and they insisted I pass along an ultimatum: Either you go to the next seminar or you go to the unemployment office. The next monthly offering of the seminar is next week, and you and Clark will both be there. I'm sorry, darlin', but even Elvis got drafted.”

Clark protested, “Me, too? I went to my annual seminar, and I've never even filed a workers' comp claim.”

“You're her partner. The head honchos wanted you to have a refresher course so that you could remind Lois not to do anything dangerous.”

By the time Clark and Lois arrived at the seminar room, all of the adjacent seats had been taken, but they managed to find two empty seats close together, one diagonally behind the other. Lois wanted to sit as far away from the speaker as possible, so Clark took the seat closer to the front. The seminar started shortly thereafter, and it was every bit as boring as the last one Clark had attended.

About ten minutes into the lecture, Clark felt Lois lean

toward him and start to whisper a complaint about how long the day would be. Clark wasn't enjoying the presentation any more than she was, but out of deference to the speaker, he pretended not to hear her, in the hopes that she would take the hint. Silly him! Of course, that only prompted her to repeat her complaint at a higher volume. Clark turned to face her and jerked his head and eyes toward the speaker in an attempt to communicate to her to pay attention.

He returned his own attention to the speaker, who was currently droning, “And in the event of a fire, do not use the elevators. Use the stairs. But before you open the stairwell door, put your hand to it to feel if it is hot...”

A few minutes later, he felt his side being poked. Instead of responding, he focused on the speaker, who was saying, “In the event of a work-related injury or an injury which occurs in the workplace, you need to fill out a health incident form and a worker's compensation form. You can find these forms by going to...”

Poke. Poke, poke. Poke, poke, poke. Clark grimaced. Lois — endearing, exasperating, ever-persistent Lois — was never one to be ignored. He turned around and felt a piece of paper being thrust into his hand. He opened it up and read, “This stuff is half common sense and half nonsense.”

He nodded his agreement and turned back to the speaker. “Remember that there are first-aid kits available on every floor. Also available on every floor are...”

Sometime later... Poke. Poke, poke. He chose to avoid the triple-poke that was sure to follow, and reached backward to receive another slip of paper. This one read, “He has to have a degree in ‘boring.’”

A few minutes after that... Poke. He decided that even if he weren't super, he could have fast enough reflexes to avoid the double-poke. The third note was a follow-on to the second. “Make that a doctorate in ‘boring.’”

An hour into the seminar... Poke. Paper. “Spock could give him lessons on emoting.”

Half an hour later, the poke-paper polka repeated. “Does Guinness have a prize for the most boring monotone — or should that be the most monotonous bore? Either way, he'd win.”

Several interminable hours and numerous pokes later, they were finally emancipated. As they left the building, Lois commented, “I'm not sure even Superman could have survived such fatally boring folderol.” Clark couldn't disagree with her.

The next morning, they were thrilled to be experiencing the excitement of the bullpen once again, and even to hear the chief's bellowing for them. When they closed office door, Perry came right to the point. “The big wheels upstairs had told yesterday's speaker to keep an eye out for you. It seems he reported that you were passing notes and weren't paying attention. You're going to have to go to next month's safety seminar offering.”

Lois and Clark looked at each other and groaned.

THE END