

# Godzilla's Home

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Summary: A child's toy tugs at a guilty heart.

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Thanks, Sue, for your beta advice and for pushing me past the first draft. :)

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Godzilla mocked her.

Lois Lane's blood boiled as the scent of sewage permeated her skin. Hours of crawling through the muck — the filthy, festering underbelly of Metropolis — had led her to this. She clutched the map in her hand tightly, squeezing it as if her hand was around a throat, shaking in furious rage.

The plastic monster's frozen grin silently ridiculed her, laughing at her very presence in his home at the Metropolis Sewage Reclamation Facility. Godzilla taunted her in his primary colors, wearing the distinctive S of her caped hero. And the laugh — the full-out, roaring laugh — silently spilling from the child's toy, but echoing loudly in her head, sounded just like Clark Kent.

The gall of that man! He had set her up, planted this map conveniently into her hands, knowing she would take the bait. Cruel, beyond all belief. Unprofessional, unwarranted, unnecessary paycheck.

Oh, yes, it was payback. This was a deliberate act of retribution, targeted directly at her.

She had crossed a line — the brightest, most sharply defined line in all of journalism. She hadn't misstepped or stumbled or accidentally tripped; she had stomped on it forcefully and ground it under her heel. She had stolen his story. An unprofessional, unwarranted, unnecessary betrayal.

Clark would have shared his sources, worked together on the story. To him, she was a colleague; to her, he was competition. Because she didn't share, she didn't collaborate. Mad Dog worked alone.

The rules were off, anyway; Perry had absolved her of the need for common decency. He wanted Superman, and she wanted... Superman. Lois shuddered slightly as she pictured the Greek God in her mind, with his brown, brown eyes and chiseled jaw. The ends justified the means.

But she was wrong. She had done Clark wrong. Wronged him in such a cutting and painful way. Wronged him in the same way she had been wronged in the past.

She had played it off, made a joke when she had been caught. And he had done nothing; she had gotten away with it, just as Claude had when she was the one learning a hard lesson. Deep, unabashed shame filled Lois' heart, knowing that she was no better than the man who had given birth to the Mad Dog. Lois Lane had screwed Clark Kent. Without the sex, of course.

What had she done, when Claude had taught her that cruel lesson? Tried to explain, accuse, scream until her voice was heard. Useless, wasted effort.

What had Clark done, when she had taught the lesson to him? Lois picked up the toy, hanging the albatross around her neck as she so richly deserved. He had explained nothing, accused no one, but had silently made his point in a much more effective manner.

Well played, Mr. Kent.

How had he done it — worked past the fear of Mad Dog Lane that caused lesser reporters to scatter away from her war path?

No one ever took a shot at Lois Lane. Or if they did, they wildly missed: their bow hand quivering nervously before pulling the string, drawing their arrows off and to the right. Cowering under the weighty stare of her glaring eyes.

Except for him. Clark Kent's mud-brown eyes stared back — lovesick, pathetic puppy dog eyes, fawning in admiration. Unprofessional, unwarranted, unnecessary adoration.

But his mouth, with its luscious lips and cheeky remarks, was a sharpened knife hidden under layers of friendly banter and sexual innuendo. Words that touched the third rail of her soul.

She should thank him for the lesson. Should go back to the Planet, Godzilla in hand, covered in stench and dirt and shame, mutely admitting to the entire newsroom that she had been had. That she had had it coming — that his phony map was a righteous sword that had wielded justice in the most cutting of manners. She should lay the prize at his feet, bow her head in supplication, and pay homage. Or hand him the prize on a silver platter, nodding in deference and waving a white flag.

Or she should acknowledge what she really felt. Stop falsifying the anger and the indignation she would show the world. Be honest with herself — at least to herself — if she couldn't be honest with him.

Respect. Clark Kent had earned her respect. And that was not something easily earned. He had strung his bow, taken his aim, launched twelve inches of molded plastic, and struck his target true. Silent, deadly accuracy, aimed straight at her heart.

And he had struck that, too. Because mixed with the respect, with her desire to show him respect, was a desire to show him more. To have him see that, with one wickedly cruel joke, he had done something that few men had ever done before. He had turned her on.

How had he done it — worked past her defenses, touching something deep inside her that others didn't see, that she worked hard to ensure no one ever saw?

Sick and twisted, wasn't it? The feeling of slick heat that burned in her core like Godzilla's fiery breath. That he had put her in her place, but that her mind flashed her bedroom as that place's location. That she wanted to march to the newsroom, surrender in defeat, and offer herself as his prize.

God, she was pathetic. Or hard up and horny. Desperate and alone. To have those daydreams about him — the Hack from Nowheresville? Unprofessional, unwarranted, unnecessary thoughts.

It was so wrong. He was so wrong. He was... Lois searched for the right words, the scathing words that would define his looks, his character.

Smarmy. Insolent. Infuriating.

Sweet. Charming. Gracious.

Gorgeous, hard tan skin that made her ice melt and pool like liquid fire.

Quick, intelligent mind that made her thoughts race through a complex maze.

Lois scowled at Godzilla, willing the madness away. She breathed in deeply, nearly gagging on the stench of sewage that surrounded her, marrying the odor of garbage with the mental image of Clark Kent. And she should remember to always associate the two, because just like in a Japanese horror movie, a creature that seems sweet in the beginning will eventually stomp on people's hearts.

She should at least admit that she was sorry. Lois scoffed, because Mad Dog was never sorry, never apologized for crossing boundaries in full pursuit of a story. He should be sorry — sorry that he had tricked her, sorry for the world of hurt he was in for when she fired back. But Lois knew better, felt more, smacked

the dog on the nose with a newspaper and acknowledged the truth. She was, she felt, genuinely sorry.

She could go home now — leave Godzilla to terrorize his rotten city and pretend she had never followed her ill-gotten lead. Stand under her shower head and let the hot water wash away her sins, allowing her guilt and shame to circle the drain and spiral into the sewer below.

She could stand under her shower and close her eyes, allowing the steady stream to ease the tension from her shoulders, washing away the failure of the day. Renew her spirit and begin her quest for Superman again tomorrow. Let the hot water slide over her body in a way Superman's hands probably never would.

She could stand under her shower and close her eyes, letting the hot water touch her in places that Clark never would. Because she couldn't let him — she just couldn't. But God, it was suddenly so clear that she wanted to be showered with attention, kissed by stimulating words, challenged and pushed and put in her place.

She should get what was coming to her — what she so richly deserved. Revenge wasn't cold — it was putridly raw, but served by the hand of a delicious dish.

So what to do with her emotions? Honestly apologize to him — that would certainly be a start. A professional, warranted, necessary apology. Admit the truth and serve her penance.

Lois followed along her walk of shame, clutching the toy and the remains of her dignity as she made her way from the sewage plant to the Daily Planet. She ascended to the bullpen, oblivious to the curiously terrified faces of the people she passed. She dismissed Jimmy and Cat, offering her attention and explanation to the only person in the room to whom she owed anything. And she stood in front of Clark, covered in stench and betrayal and guilt, with an apology on the tip of her tongue.

But the words stuck in her throat.

He smirked, so pleased with himself for her comeuppance. Unprofessional, unwarranted, unnecessary smugness. The look on Clark's face twisted a knife in her gut, right in that petulant place inside her that always needed to win. He gagged her apology, silenced her confession.

Lois placed the plastic doll on his desk, turning it to face her chair. Then she sat at her desk, fuming that he had gotten the story that had been coming to him, and she had only gotten what had been coming to her.

She waited for the gloating. She waited for the mocking. She waited for the full-out, roaring laughter. And he...did nothing. Spoke to no one. Started working on his next story.

She set her jaw and narrowed her eyes. Fine. Maybe he wasn't a hack. But he was still from Nowheresville.

So she tried again: swallowed her pride, limped to his desk, and conceded defeat. And he was sweet, charming, gracious. She felt the corner of her lip curve up in a smile, but squelched the emotion, unwilling to give him everything. He should have to work for it.

As she turned to leave, Godzilla's upturned plastic claws gave her a frozen wave from its home on the corner of Clark Kent's desk. She would stare at that toy every day, and Godzilla would remind her to silently serve her self-imposed sentence. To share his byline, to regain his trust. To be worthy of the honor of being his partner.

And to someday be honest about her feelings for the man who had given her such a monstrously special gift.

THE END