

Five-Word Challenge: Summer 2019

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Rated: G

Submitted: June 2019

Summary: Response to summer challenge.

Story Size: 1,577 words (9Kb as text)

Folc4evernaday issued the following challenge.

Five words challenge

Your story must include the following words.

- Lemonade
- Pink
- Pool
- Float
- Cape

Like a dummy, I accepted the challenge (first one I've ever taken up). The following tale came out.

The familiar characters of this story are not my own but are the property of corporate entities (DC Comics, December 3rd Productions, ABC, etc.) other than myself. This work is a labor of love and is presented with no expectation of remuneration.

Lois leaned on her cue and sized up her next shot – a two-bank carom that would knock in the twelve ball and set her up with a good angle at the eight ball. Her opponent, a short, rotund man who must have weighed three hundred pounds, stood to her right and shook his head. “You’ll never make that shot, Lois. You should just tap it off the side rail and let me shoot.”

“Ha!” Lois returned. “You’re just worried you’re going to have to drink that lemonade I bet you. It’ll make a good chaser to that beer you’re sucking down.”

“At least it isn’t pink. Just leave me a good shot when you miss this one.”

“I’m not missing this one, Al. Just shut your pie hole and let me shoot.”

“Fine. Go ahead. But I’m gonna tell you I told you so.”

She chalked her cue and set up for the shot. She held the cue still for a moment, then stroked the cue ball against the first rail. It kissed off the second rail and tapped the twelve ball to the lip of the corner pocket. It hung there for a long breath, then it slowly fell in.

Al snorted disgustingly. “I can’t believe you made that shot. Minnesota Fats might not be able to sink that one.”

Lois chuckled and lined up the eight ball, an easy tap into the side pocket. “Get ready to give me the money.” She called the shot, took a few seconds to line it up, then gently tapped the cue ball into the eight and watched it meander into the pocket.

She tipped her cue over her shoulder and made a “gimme-gimme” motion with her left hand at Al’s girlfriend Yvonne, who’d been holding the two twenty-dollar bills the players had bet on the game. “Thanks, Yvonne,” said Lois. “Don’t forget to get that lemonade for Al.”

He slammed his cue back into the rack with the others. “I’ll

drink it later.”

Yvonne brought a glass with yellow liquid in it and forced it into his hand. “*Se debe beber ahora, querida*. You promised *la señorita* that you would drink it as she watched.” She pressed his fingers around the glass. “I will not have it said that you break your word.”

He stared at his girlfriend for a long moment, then grunted and set the glass to his lips. Lois called out, “You want a straw?”

Al gave her a dirty look around the side of the glass, then tipped it up and chugged the entire contents. When the glass came down, he put his free hand on his ample stomach and let out a champion belch. He waved his hand in front of his face and said, “Wow, that tastes nasty.”

Lois laughed again. “Especially the second time around, right?” She gave Yvonne a thumbs-up and grinned at her. “He really did give me a good game. Don’t give him too hard a time, okay?”

Yvonne smiled back. “I will not. But who will you play next?”

Lois shrugged. “Well, I’ve had the table for almost an hour, and I’ve got a good stake for my next poker game. But I’m game for another one. Any takers?”

No one spoke for a moment, then a baritone voice spoke from the front door. “How about me?”

Lois turned and said, “Sure, pal, just pick out—”

Her voice froze. It was suddenly quiet enough to hear a cricket burp. Her next challenger was Superman.

Superman shut the door behind him and walked to the table. “You’re playing eight-ball, right? What are the stakes?”

She made the decision to rip her husband a new one when they got home. How dare he interrupt her tonight? She rarely got to take a night to herself any more. This was her night and she was having fun!

Al shook off his torpor and said, “We been layin’ twenty a game.”

Superman smiled at Lois. “How are you doing, Miss Lane?”

Al laughed. “She’s been winning for about an hour, Mr. Superman. Can you cover a twenty-buck bet?”

He grinned. “Just call me Superman, please. And no, I don’t carry money. I can, however, bet a ten-minute flight over the city, payable tonight, if I lose. Is that good enough?”

Lois glared at him. “Sure. You trust me to hold my own bet?”

“Of course. I’m certain you wouldn’t welsh on me.”

She gave him a lopsided grin. “Mind if I break?”

He waved at the table and said, “Please do.”

Yvonne set up the rack as Superman picked out a cue. Lois addressed the cue ball from an offset position to the right, then slammed it into the triangle of pool balls at the other end of the table. They scattered, and the nine ball dropped into the far corner pocket.

“Nice break,” said Superman. “You shoot the stripes and it’s your shot. Do you have anything?”

“Hush up and let me take a look.”

She ignored the quiet gasp from the room. Superman smiled lopsidedly and leaned on his cue on her left. As she frowned and moved to her left to check out the table, he moved back several feet. She finally decided on the fifteen ball and cautiously tapped it into the side pocket.

“Nice shot. Good touch.”

Lois ignored the super-compliment and picked the eleven ball as her next victim. She lined it up, aimed and stroked.

But her cue didn’t strike the cue ball cleanly. It spun and kissed off the eleven, which missed the pocket, and ended up almost touching the three ball against the rail.

Lois grunted and sent a sharp look at her opponent, who lifted his eyebrows and stared back. “What? I didn’t do a thing. It was just bad luck.”

“Yeah, right.” She stepped back and pointed at the table.

“You’re up. Try not to break anything.”

“Thanks for the vote of confidence. Let’s see – yeah, I can reach that.”

“Across the table?” blurted Al. “You want to use the bridge?”

Superman smiled at him. “No thanks. I don’t need it.”

With those words, he lifted up in the air and slowly swung horizontal. The people watching collectively held their breath for a moment, then someone giggled and broke the tension. Superman addressed the cue ball and took a long look at the three ball.

Before he took the shot, Lois said, “I don’t think you’re allowed to float above the table like that.”

He floated back to the floor and collected his cape behind him.

“Can you show me that rule?”

Al laughed. “There ain’t no such rule, Superman. The house rules say you can’t lie down on the table, but they don’t say nothing about floatin’ over it. You go ahead like you were.”

Lois shot a dirty look at Al, who picked up the empty lemonade glass and saluted her with it. “I think you’ve met your match, Lois.”

Superman floated over the table again, lined up his shot, and tapped the three ball into the corner pocket. He settled back to the floor and walked to the opposite side of the table, where he tapped in the one, the seven, then the six.

Lois leaned back against the bar and sighed. “You’re going to run the table, aren’t you?”

He glanced at her and nodded, then leaned over the table again to line up the four ball. “I’m going to try.”

And he did.

His last shot at a solid ball – the one – left the cue ball five inches from the eight ball. Lois shook her head and pulled a twenty out of her pocket. “That’s a mulligan, Superman. Here’s your money.”

“Hang on to it until I earn it.”

She walked to the cue rack and put her cue away. “No, I know when I’m beaten.”

“Okay,” said Superman. He leaned over the table and gently tapped the eight into the side pocket. He straightened and put his hand out. “I’ll take it now.”

She shook her head and grinned. “Doesn’t count. You didn’t call the last shot.”

He blinked. “What are you talking about?”

“You sank the eight ball without calling your shot. You lose.”

She shoved the bill back into her jeans pocket. “I think you owe me a ten-minute flight over the city.”

Superman looked at Al, who shrugged and said, “Sorry, but that’s house rules.”

“No one told me what the house rules were.”

Lois chuckled. “You should have asked.”

He opened his mouth, then sighed and didn’t protest any more. “Fine. Miss Lane, are you ready for your flight, or would you like to schedule it for later?”

She almost laughed in his face. “I’m ready now. I want you to fly me home so I can tell my husband how I beat Superman at eight-ball.”

THE END