

# Thanksgiving Games: A Ficathon Story

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Rated: G

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Summary: When Lois spends Thanksgiving with Clark and his parents, she realizes two things: What a Thanksgiving should be like, and that she wants more than just a friendship with Clark. Will their Thanksgiving together help move things along?

My thanks to Iolanthe and to Lara Joelle Kent on their super quick and helpful beta reading of and generous commenting on this story. And my thanks as always go to General Editor Erin Klingler for catching my punctuation faux pas and for her patience in teaching me the errors of my ways.

Disclaimer: Warner Brothers and DC Comics own Superman and his universe. I am just borrowing them for a little not-for-profit fun.

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For Lois, this was proving to be the best Thanksgiving since...well, since ever. For as long as she could remember, the only thing she had ever been thankful for at Thanksgiving was that the family get-together did, eventually, end. Every year the Lanes started off their Thanksgivings with the charade of being a happy, loving family. And every year the celebration rapidly deteriorated into a free-for-all of accusations and blame-slinging.

But it was only now — when Lois saw the Kent family in action — that she realized just what a mockery the Lane family Thanksgivings were. By their every word and action, the Kent family exuded love for each other, and she considered it both a joy and an honor to be included in their circle for the holiday.

She thought back to the other night when Clark had invited her here. Her protest about not wishing to intrude on a family get-together was rapidly dismissed, as was her objection that she wouldn't be able to get a plane ticket in time. She had been reassured that Martha and Jonathan would welcome her company, and that Superman had agreed to provide transportation.

She hoped that this would be the perfect time to get closer to Clark and his family — but especially Clark. Clark's brush with death a few weeks ago had served as a wakeup call for her. During the hours she thought he was dead, she came to realize how much he meant to her. He had interwoven his life with hers so subtly that she had not previously realized just how intertwined they were. Her life would not have been the same without him in it; in fact, he had become its most important element.

Lois knew now that she wanted more out of their relationship than just friendship. And the more she thought

about it, the more she thought that Clark did, as well. His profession of love in Centennial Park several months ago seemed, upon reflection, to be much more sincere than his subsequent retraction of it. She was determined that before they returned to work on Monday, Clark would know of her feelings. She wasn't sure quite how or when they would have that discussion, or even how she would broach the topic, but broach it she would.

Her musings were ended by Martha saying it was time to come to the table. But Lois knew that, despite the heavenly aromas wafting from the Kent family kitchen, dining would have to wait a while. Clark had explained to her in Metropolis that before the family ate Thanksgiving dinner, they always had a ritual for giving thanks. Lois had known that some families went around the table with each member saying what they were thankful for. But the Kent family went beyond that. They had turned it into a kind of get-to-know-each-other-better game. They didn't go around the table just once, they went around it one time for each person there. Each person named a category and then everyone had to say one thing they were grateful for that would fit the category, complete with an explanation as necessary. And just to make things more interesting, they had a rule: No one could name something that had already been said before.

Martha started off this year's game. "My category is people. I am thankful for all of you, and that we could all be here to celebrate Thanksgiving together."

They proceeded clockwise around the table. It was Lois' turn next. "Hmm... Since we can't mention anyone who has already been said, I'll say that I am thankful for Superman." She wondered why Jonathan and Martha were looking at each other with a twinkle in their eyes. She hoped that Clark hadn't mentioned to them her erstwhile crush on the superhero. She hastily went on to clarify, "Were it not for him, neither Clark nor I would be here today. Superman's quick thinking in regenerating Clark when he had been shot a few weeks ago saved Clark's life, and he has saved me from death more times than I care to count."

Clark said he was thankful for Perry. "If it weren't for him, I wouldn't have been hired at the Planet, and we," he looked at Lois, "would never have gotten to know each other." Lois' heart quickened at the love radiating from Clark's face as he spoke.

Finally, Jonathan chimed in. "I'm thankful for the Irigs. Wayne and Sarah are true friends. They've been there for us in good times and bad. Whenever we fly out to see Clark, they always take over the farm work for us. Not to mention the loyalty Wayne showed us during the whole Trask fiasco."

Now it was Lois' turn to choose a category. Clark had told her that she could make it as profound or as trivial as she wanted. The goal was not only to give thanks, but also to have some fun and to learn about each other in the process. Previous years' categories had run the gamut from appliances to things that moved to plants. "I'm going to choose a silly category: TV shows. She briefly thought of saying that she was thankful for "The Ivory Tower" because compared to the problems its characters faced, hers were pretty minor. But then she came to her senses. No way was she going to tell them about that guilty pleasure of hers! She quickly continued, "I'm grateful for *Diagnosis Murder*. It's nice to

see a crime wrapped up neatly in an hour's time every week. I only wish real life were that simple!"

Clark said, "I'm thankful for *Touched by an Angel*. It's a new show that's only been on a few weeks, but I like the messages it sends: God loves us no matter who we are or what we've done, and it is never too late to change for the better and try to repair past wrongs."

Lois struggled to keep from rolling her eyes. Of course Clark would like such a touchy-feely, feel-good type show. She was more surprised, however, with Jonathan's reply. "I'm thankful for the original *Star Trek*."

Lois couldn't resist commenting. "You're a Trekkie?!"

Jonathan chuckled. "Surprised? I watched the pilot episode when it was first on, and I've watched the show whenever I could ever since. Back when it was first on, its competition was *Green Acres* and *Gilligan's Island*. *Star Trek* was about the only show on then that made one think. It brought up all sorts of social issues that would normally never have gotten past the censors, and it did so in ways that were usually entertaining rather than preachy.

"It also discussed aliens in a mature fashion; it showed them to be as complex as humans and with similar motivations. Up until that point, most aliens were just depicted as bug-eyed monsters intent upon earth's destruction. I sometimes wonder whether Superman would have been as well received by the general public if *Star Trek* had never aired.

"So yes, I have been a Trekker since day one."

It was Martha's turn. "I'm grateful for *The Evening News with Cindy Miron*. I enjoy seeing what's happening in the nation and the world."

Clark spoke. "My category is things that begin with the letter 'C.' I'm grateful for cities. I've never regretted moving to Metropolis. I love being around so many people. There's always something happening. Life is never boring there."

Jonathan said, "You already know what I'm going to say. You may be grateful for cities, but I'm grateful for the country, where you can really get to know your neighbor, and where the pace of life is slow enough that you can appreciate the simple joys of life."

Martha listed one of her simple joys. "I'm grateful for chrysanthemums. The flower comes in so many varieties, but they're all cheerful. Their perkiness always brings a smile to my face."

Lois concluded the round. "I'm grateful for Chinese takeout." Clark did roll his eyes at that one.

Jonathan cleared his throat. "I guess I choose the final category. Things that are red. I'm grateful for beautiful sunsets."

Martha said, "Red? That's tricky. Hmmm... I'm grateful for cardinals. They brighten an otherwise dreary winter landscape."

"Mom, those birds are bullies!"

Lois smiled to herself. Leave it to Clark to stick up for the underdog — or the underbird, as the case may be.

Martha shrugged. "They are a bit more aggressive than I would like, but usually, they are just trying to protect themselves or their territory or they're engaging in mating rituals."

Clark blushed. "Mom!" He prolonged the vowel in

protest.

Martha commented, "There's good in everything. You just have to look harder to find it in some things than in others."

Lois grinned. The apple didn't fall far from the tree. She could see where Clark got his rose-colored glasses from. She decided to end their debate with her own contribution to the final category. "I'm grateful for the Daily Planet."

Jonathan chuckled. "Well, I didn't spell 'red' aloud, so I guess that counts."

Clark concluded the game with, "And I'm grateful for cranberries."

Martha laughed, "I'll take that as a hint." After Martha voiced a prayer of thanksgiving, the feast at last commenced. Lois already knew what a good cook Clark's mother was, but Martha had truly outdone herself for this meal. The turkey was succulent, the cranberries delicious, the stuffing savory, the sweet potatoes just sweet enough, and the apple and pumpkin pies were to die for.

The only thing as good as the food was the conversation, which ranged from local gossip to world events to sports. Lois discovered that the entire family — Martha included — enjoyed football. That weekend, the Kansas City Chiefs were to play the Seattle Seahawks. Of course, all of the Kents were fans of the local team. Clark was sure that the Hawks would be slaughtered. "Just look at the two teams' records. Right now, the Hawks have only won four of the eleven games they've played this season — they lost seven games in a row! The Chiefs have won seven out of their eleven."

Lois couldn't resist playing devil's advocate. "But look what happened when the two teams played each other earlier this year. The Hawks won 38 to 23. That's not even close! And they didn't even have the home team advantage like they will on Sunday."

Clark questioned, "Say, how do you know so much about the Seahawks?"

Lois responded, "I had an English teacher back in high school. She was a sort of mentor to me. Ms. Stone was a transplant from Seattle and followed her home team religiously. I guess her enthusiasm for the Hawks was contagious."

Several minutes of good-natured debate on the relative merits of the teams and their players ensued. It concluded with Lois challenging Clark, "You're so sure the Chiefs will beat the Hawks... Are you willing to bet on it?"

"What do you wanna bet?"

"We'll spend some time together Sunday after the game — winner chooses the activity. Loser has to go along with it."

Clark asked for clarification. "*Anything* goes?"

"*Anything* goes."

"So if, say, I want help cleaning my apartment, you'd have to help me?"

Lois raised her eyebrow. "Only if I lose the bet. Which I won't. Are you willing to risk it? Or are you chicken?"

"You're on!"

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Before Lois knew it, it was time for Superman to fly her back to Metropolis. She had said her goodbyes to Clark, who went upstairs to use the bathroom while she bid her adieus to his parents. Unfortunately, he had not returned by the time Superman arrived and the two of them had to leave. The

flight back was pleasant, but her mind was occupied with the events of the evening. The visit had been almost magical, in a Norman Rockwell-esque sort of way. The contrast between it and all of her previous Thanksgivings could not have been greater.

Lois' only regret for the evening was that she hadn't had a chance to speak privately with Clark, and their weekend schedules were so busy that they wouldn't be able to get together until Sunday. But they would be together that afternoon and evening, and she promised herself that she would talk with Clark about their relationship then.

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Lois and Clark had spent a pleasant afternoon taking in a movie, browsing through the nearby mega-bookstore, and eating a wonderful dinner chez Clark. By the time they had finished cleaning up the dishes, the big game would have ended. Clark dialed his parents to find out the results.

Martha answered, "Hello?"

"Hi, Mom. Lois is here with me on speakerphone. We wanted to thank you again for a wonderful dinner and visit."

"Oh, it was my pleasure. Your Dad and I loved having you both over. It was so nice of Superman to bring you here."

"Speaking of Dad, is he there?"

"Mattie's taken ill; she's one of our horses, Lois. Jonathan's in the barn with Dr. Baynor now. I'll tell him you called."

"Thanks. Say, did you get a chance to see the game today?"

Martha's voice was teasing. "Of course. I wouldn't have missed it. It was quite a game. The score was close; it really could have gone either way."

Lois could tell that Martha was purposely delaying telling them the score, and, apparently, so could Clark. He gave his mother a gentle prodding, "And what was the result?"

"The final score was ten to nine."

Lois, always the consummate interviewer, asked specifically what they wished to know. "Who was the winner?"

"The Seahawks."

Lois pumped her fist as she turned to look at Clark. "Yes! The Hawks rule! And for this evening, partner, so do I!"

Martha chuckled. "Well, Clark, I can hear that you're going to have quite an interesting evening. I'll let you two go do your thing."

"Gee, uh, thanks, Mom. Speak to you soon."

"Love you. 'Bye."

"Love you, too. Bye, Mom."

When Clark hung up the phone, Lois gloated. "So, the Hawks won! And you do remember the conditions of our bet?"

"That I have to do what you want?"

"Uh huh." Lois stood up and gestured for Clark to do likewise.

Clark hesitantly asked, "And that would be...?"

Elephants were stomping around in Lois' stomach. This was it — lay-it-all-on-the-line time. She took a step forward, wrapped her arms around Clark's back, and stood on her toes. Her lips captured his in a decidedly un-platonic manner.

At first, Clark just stood frozen. Lois had anticipated that — she had figured he would be startled by her unexpected

move and wouldn't know quite how to react. But before long, he became a very active participant. How long their kiss lasted, she never knew. Time lost all meaning. But when they finally broke apart — minutes, or it could have been years, later — they gazed into each other's eyes, reveling in their unspoken but clearly demonstrated declaration of love.

And Lois knew without a doubt what she would be grateful for when she participated in the Kent family Thanksgiving next year.

THE END

Notes: This story was written for Female Hawk (Corrina). Her wish list was as follows:

Three things I want in my story:

1. Something typically American (although see point 3 below).

2. One secondary character - but shown in a new light.

3. Lois kissing Clark unexpectedly.

Three things I don't want in my story:

1. Villains.

2. A revelation.

3. Halloween.

Preferred Season: No preference.

Partly on Lara Joelle Kent's suggestion, I made sure to include in the story a reference to the Hawks winning a football game. Admittedly, it is the Seattle Seahawks winning an American football game and not the Hawthorn team winning at Aussie rules footy, but I didn't see how I could credibly work the Aussie team into my story.

The Seattle Seahawks really did play against the Kansas City Chiefs on November 27, 1994, with the final score as mentioned in the story. (The win/loss statistics for both teams are factual, as well.) I couldn't find out whether it was an afternoon or an evening game, so I decided to assume for the purposes of my story that it was an afternoon game. My apologies if it turns out that my assumption is false.

"The Evening News with Cindy Miron" is a fictitious show; all other television shows mentioned were being aired in 1994. (Star Trek was, of course, being aired only in re-runs.)

The varieties of chrysanthemums seem to be near endless. Images for some can be seen here:

<http://www.google.com/images?hl=en&sugexp=ldymls&xhr=t&q=chrysanthemums&cp=14&bav=on.1.or.&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&sa=X&ei=nfdiTdu-NM3UgAfW9dHHAg&sqi=2&ved=0CDcQsAQ&biw=1199&bih=655>

There are different species of cardinals, but the one I had in mind for the story is the northern cardinal, depicted here: <http://birdwatchingclub.net/bird-resources/the-northern-cardinal.html>

There is a plethora of stuffing recipes. It seems as though everyone has their own, and everyone thinks their own is the best. But stuffing is generally made with rice or bread (possibly fried) as the base. People add everything from fried onions to celery to chestnuts and raisins into their stuffing. Different seasonings are added to enhance the flavor. Some people cook the stuffing inside the Thanksgiving turkey;

others cook it separately. But however it is made, it is a cherished part of many Thanksgiving meals. Here <http://allrecipes.com/Recipes/holidays-and-events/thanksgiving/stuffing-and-dressing/Main.aspx> are some recipes for stuffing. (Of course, my Mom's stuffing really is the best! ;))