

# The Best Day of Lois Lane's Life

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Rating: K+

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Lois Lane read the letter once again - she'd read it so often in the past two weeks she had it memorized. The paper was wilting around the edges but she couldn't help it. It was as though she was afraid the words would change if she didn't keep an eye on them.

*'You have been invited to interview for a position at the Daily Planet...'*

It didn't matter that the position was for a summer intern - the Daily Planet only had three such positions per year and even getting the invitation to apply was an incredible honor. But Lois wanted more than just the honor of the invitation. She wanted - had been working on earning - a job in the newsroom. Even sweeping the floor at a place as hallowed in journalistic history as the Daily Planet would be acceptable - okay, maybe not sweeping the floors, but anything else would be fine by her - anything to just get her foot in the door.

Her grades were excellent - she'd been on the president's list every semester so far. Her portfolio and references were also excellent. She had already won several awards for her writing and her dorm-mate's personal betrayal and the theft of one of her articles, while infuriating, had done nothing to keep her from being at the top of her class.

The proof was in a slim file in her shoulder bag.

*'Interviews will be held in the Editor-in-Chief's office at 9:00...'*

Lois checked her watch. She had plenty of time to get there, provided there were no traffic problems. Metropolis was famous for its public transportation but Lois promised to buy herself a used car as soon as she had a real job. She didn't like riding the bus - there were too many strange people on the buses and right now one of them was staring at her with bleary eyes.

Lois tried not to think about the ragged man watching her. Metropolis public transit was one of the safest systems in the world, but the man still gave her the heebie-jeebies. To get her mind off of him she cast her thoughts back to the first time she'd seen the newsroom of the Daily Planet.

She'd been ten years old and her fifth grade class had taken a field trip to the historic newspaper. The other kids in her class had been more impressed by the new skyscrapers of Midtown than by the history of the place they were visiting. Even the man who had been assigned to give them a tour of the building had seemed less than impressed by the Daily Planet's august past. Only Lois seemed to care.

In third grade Lois had discovered Nellie Bly, Marguerite Higgins, Ethel Payne, and Ida Tarbell - four women journalists whose courage and forthrightness changed the world. It was then she set her sights on becoming a journalist. She chose the Daily Planet for its history, as

well as the fact that it was one of the few papers her father let in the house. General Sam Lane had a grudging respect for the Planet, especially a war correspondent and investigative journalist named Perry White.

Lois met Perry White for the first time that day during the class tour. She recognized him from his photo on his columns and had tried to explain to her classmates why she was so excited to meet him. They hadn't been impressed. White was shouting and swearing at the paper's editor and the newsroom staff.

She had no idea what had happened to make him so angry but Lois was the only member of the tour that hadn't been frightened by him. White sounded like her father did when *he* was furious with his troops but she knew it was all bluster.

Miss Atkinson, her teacher, had been horrified both at White's language and Lois's reaction. "Attaway t'go Mr. White," Lois had shouted. "You tell 'em!"

Lois still had no idea why she had done it except that it had seemed right at the time.

The brakes hissed and whined as the bus pulled into the stop only a block away from the Daily Planet. Lois got off and joined the morning throng, holding her shoulder bag close to her body.

She stopped for a moment inside the lobby. The lobby displayed framed copies of famous frontpages - Washington's inaugural, the exploits of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the sinking of the Titanic, the destruction of the Hindenberg, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Apollo landing, Kennedy's assassination, the fall of the Berlin Wall.

'My name is going to up there some day,' Lois promised herself.

The crowd in the lobby had thinned out and when she got on the elevator she was alone.

The last time she'd been in an elevator heading for the Daily Planet newsroom, she'd been fifteen. She was supposed to be taking her sister Lucy to the movies but had taken a detour to the Planet to try to talk Perry White into giving her a job, even if it was just for the summer.

White had been polite but firm - she was too young and untried. Even when she returned the next day with evidence of malfeasance as well as inadequate security at one of the city's major financial firms, he had been firm.

"You're what, fifteen?"

Lois nodded. "But I'm a senior in high school," she added.

He smiled at that. "You've got promise, kid," he said. "But I can't hire a fifteen-year-old. Aside from the child labor laws, I need people with good educations and proven track records. Come back in ten years and we might have something to talk about."

"What if I come back in three years?" she challenged. "I'll be legal then."

He actually laughed. "Bring your references, your portfolio and something I can use and *maybe* we can talk."

Today was three years to the day. Lois wondered if Perry White would remember his promise.

The butterflies in her belly were doing strafing runs against the rest of her insides and she wasn't sure if she should be glad or not that she'd skipped breakfast.

The door to the editor's office was open and a young man was just leaving. He didn't look at Lois as he hurried for the newsroom doors.

Lois steeled herself and strode down the aisle of dark gray carpet to Perry White's office.

He didn't look up until she spoke. "I said I'd be back in three years," she said. "So here I am."

White didn't seem surprised to see her standing there. "Your advisor over at Columbia

sent me copies of your work," he said conversationally. "Not bad. Not bad at all. But nothing I can use."

Lois pulled a file from her shoulder bag and handed it to him. She watched one brindled eyebrow go up as he scanned the contents of the file. She had spent three months working on the investigation that was documented in those flimsy sheets. She had all her i's dotted, all her t's crossed - she hoped.

"Has anyone else seen this?" White asked.

"Professor Coulter has seen an outline but nothing else," Lois answered. "He told me the subject would not be suitable for the school paper and suggested you might be interested in it."

"You can substantiate your allegations?"

"Yes, sir."

"This would be a Daily Planet exclusive?"

"The Daily Planet was my first choice," she said. She didn't tell him that the Daily Planet had been her *only* choice for her story. If White didn't want it she wasn't sure who to take it to.

"This could cause quite a stir, assuming I choose to run this," he said. "It may create problems for you at school. Are you willing to risk that?"

It was all Lois could do to keep from shouting 'Yes!' "Shouldn't the truth be more important than personal comfort?" she asked instead.

He nodded and stepped to the office door. "Beatty! Take Ms. Lane here down to personnel and get her paperwork filled out. When you get back I want the two of you to go over what she brought me and I want it ready for tomorrow's first edition." White turned to Lois and held out his hand to be shaken. "Welcome to the Daily Planet, Ms. Lane."

A/N: Some material has been adapted from **The World of Metropolis** (issues 1 & 2) by Byrne/Mortimer/Giordano/McLaughlin (©1988).