

'Tis the Season

by htbthomas

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Rating: T

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Author's Note: A birthday ficlet for kara_el. Her prompt: carolers. Thanks to mark_clark for the beta.

Lois ran a hand across the back of Clark's head, snowflakes melting on her fingers. As warm as his lips were against her own, the light snow he had flown through was only just melting. Stepping away with a shiver, Lois closed the window behind him and shut the drapes. "I thought you weren't going to be back for another couple of hours..."

"The accident was cleaned up a little faster than even I thought it would be." He spun, a blur of color, and when he slowed, he was dressed in a pair of comfortable slacks and a red sweater. With a Christmas wreath on it, no less. Lois frowned slightly - she supposed that hiding even an eyesore like that sweater did absolutely no good when you were married to a man with x-ray vision. Clark grinned, a knowing twinkle in his eyes over her reaction to his outfit. "And now you have me for the evening."

From around the corner, Lois heard the sound of pelting feet, and suddenly a green blur was tackling her husband around the legs. "Dad! You're home!"

"Surprise, surprise, huh?" He looked down into his son's pleased face. "Well, what do you want to do tonight?"

Jason hardly had to consider it at all. "Would you play a game of chess with me?"

"Sure." He took his son's hand, and they both began to walk toward the living room. Lois smiled at the picture they made as she followed, the two of them decked out in Christmas colors. Jason seemed to like to wear the holiday clothing as much as his father did. *I wonder if I burned the sweaters...*

Clark moved toward the cabinet where they kept the board games. "Do you want to play traditional chess, or the Kry-"

His words were cut off at the sound of the doorbell. From the other side of the door, a faint sound emanated from below the doorjamb.

Come, they told me, pa rum pum pum pum...

Oh, crap... But before she could even react, Jason was standing at the light switch, questioning look on his face. "No, it's too late now," she whispered, "they can probably tell we're home..."

Clark looked between the two of them, clearly confused. "It's just a few carolers, what is the big-?"

"Shhh!" Lois hissed. "They'll hear you!" With a grumble, she added, "Don't they know it's snowing? Sheesh."

"Mommy doesn't like carolers." Jason mouthed his words for good measure.

Clark stood there for a moment, an expression of consternation on his face. The carolers, a persistent group it seemed, kept right on singing:

So to honor him, pa rum pum pum pum, when we come...

Then he was moving toward the door with a determined step. "I'll take care of it."

As he passed out of sight, Lois stood stock still, afraid to move. She heard the door open in the entryway and Clark's cheery voice call, "Merry Christmas!" The voices of the carolers grew suddenly louder, and Lois waited for Clark to say something, anything... but all she could hear was the added sound of some percussion instrument. *Are those finger cymbals..?* Clark was probably enjoying making her mad, letting it go on because of some crazy Midwestern notion of how the holidays should be celebrated. She looked over at Jason beside the wall, and he was now swaying in time to the music. Okay, that was the last straw. She clenched her fists and prepared to put a stop to this ridiculous noise, when-

Baby Jesu, pa rum pum pum pum

I am a poor boy, too, pa rum pum pum pum

I have no gift to bring...

Lois' mouth dropped open. A rich baritone voice had added to the group, the voice of... Clark? Jason giggled and slipped into view of the carolers. There were several of them, all bundled up, snow lightly falling about their heads. In this unreal picture-postcard scene, Lois felt herself drawn closer too, to observe her husband, eyes closed as he sang his heart out. Completely against her will, she settled against the wall, and just listened.

Mary nodded, pa rum pum pum pum

The ox and lamb kept time, pa rum pum pum pum

I played my drum for him, pa rum pum pum pum

I played my best for him, pa rum pum pum pum

Then he smiled at me, pa rum pum pum pum...

Clark turned toward Lois as he sang that line, a toothy smile breaking across his face. Somehow, all the unhappy reminders of Christmases as a child without her father, and the Christmases spent eating take out, and even the Christmas when Lois had been locked in a storage closet in the midst of a story... all of the bad associations Lois had with caroling... they all faded away in the brilliance of that smile. And Lois smiled in return.

The carolers finished their song, waved, and moved on with a chorus of well wishes. Clark closed the door with a quiet click. Lois was still impressed despite herself. "I didn't know you could sing."

"It's nice to know I can still surprise you..." He grinned mysteriously, and wrapped an arm around her as they walked back into the living room. Jason slid past them, eager to get the chess board set up.

"I always wondered where Jason got the musical talent... I guess I know now."

"Well, there's more where that came from..." He cleared his throat, and burst into song once more: "*'Twas in the moon of wintertime, when a-*"

A well-placed jab to his ribs cut him off mid-word. "Don't push it, farm boy."

A/N 2: Now don't get me wrong - I love caroling. I was part of a semi-professional caroling group for quite a while, and I look forward to going with my family every year. And the birthday girl is a member of the **Stairwell Carolers**, who are really awesome! But Lois? This is just how I imagine she might react. :)