

Keep Me Warm

by JJ-the elusive

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Rating: K

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When she was a kid, Lois loved these trips to the icy tundra of the great north. Camping in a snowy area sounded like a bad idea, but that was the fun of it. Survive, and have fun while surviving. Her father, the General had put her through special forces training when she was just a skinny wisp of a girl at 16 years old. Included in the training was learning to survive in extreme conditions, from the hot Sahara to the freezing Arctic. Again, it was fun to do when you were younger, but not when you were in your thirties and had unwillingly encountered many similarly "fun" situations during your long investigative journalism career. Lois idly wondered as she continued to hike towards their destination whether which was a better situation- getting shot at or slowly freezing to the bone. But then again since becoming a mother and a wife she tried to shy away from that sort of "fun", because it wasn't worth it to get shot at for a story when you had more on the line than an afternoon edition deadline. Because of that, she supposed camping with her family in a remote area in extreme northern Canada was enough fun to last her a year.

Camping with your family is always an interesting and fun experience, but not when you know you're the only one who really has to worry about staying warm. The others? Not so much, seeing as how they're walking talking solar batteries who think it's funny to run out into the snow barefoot, or on one memorable occasion, naked. (Lara, naturally. She was three at the time and didn't know any better, but still. Whodathunk any of Lois Lane's kids would be little troublemakers?) But the biggest irony was the fact that they were camping, but not really. There was no room for hardship. The two tents would be easy to pitch with Clark's strength, the hiking didn't tire anyone out that much (save for Lois, but she wasn't complaining), and generally everything would be easy. The easiest part of it all? They flew here. Flew as in Clark flew them here in his arms- well, Lois first then the kids of course. She shook her head. All the fun of it, gone. Regardless, it was fun to see the kids try to superspeed through high, thick snow. Being young, they couldn't exactly go as fast as their father yet, so it was always funny when they would fall over laughing with glee.

Lois brought up the rear of the hikers, watching them and making sure they were alright though seeing as how they were launching themselves into the snow occasionally and jumping back up easily, her efforts were futile. She shook her head. Years ago she said following her sister's footsteps and having her own brood of children would drive her "bananas" and yet here she was, watching all four of them walking, jumping and trudging through the snow. After having Jason she was sure she didn't want to have any more children, but at that point Clark hadn't been there. Perhaps deep down she just didn't want to have children with her then

fiancé, Richard, but that was a whole different story altogether. Regardless, Clark came back and they soon reconciled, though it took her a little while to forgive him for lying to her about his identity again and taking her memories of them together away before he left. They were married and soon after had their second child, a girl, Ella, named after Lois' late mother. Lois figured two children, one of each gender, was enough. Apparently, it wasn't because two years after Ella, her twin boys Christopher and Dean were born. Four was enough, and a handful, and a blessing. Without her children and Clark, her family, Lois was sure she'd be miserable and alone. Granted, having a family wasn't always the best idea for everyone, and she used to think she was one of those people, but she happily learned she was sorely mistaken. It wasn't easy to balance being a parent and having a relationship, but she and Clark worked at it wholeheartedly, and were happy. In fact, Lois was pretty damn sure she was still head-over-heels in love with him as she was years ago, and he felt the same. Lois even dared to think that having children strengthened their relationship, made them love and appreciate each other even more if it were possible. Having such a large family wasn't easy when it came to the fact that Superman was their father, but they took every precaution and implemented Kryptonian technology to keep them and their home safe. Also, the kids were taught from a very young age about their father's identities- he was only Superman when in uniform, never daddy. It seemed a tiny bit harsh, but for safety's sake, it was needed. They were safe here, though...wherever here was. The middle of nowhere in a frozen tundra, and of course they stopped there. They ended up on the outskirts of a large forest, thick with pine, spruce and aspen trees.

"I'm guessing we're at the arctic treeline between the boreal forest and the tundra," Clark noted out loud as they came to a stop.

"You think, Smallville? We flew here, then just hiked for a little bit. You think you know where we are?"

Lois loved to yank his chain just as she used to before she knew who he really was, when they were still just "Lois and Clark" and Lois would tease him about his crush on her.

He turned to her with a grin and just shook his head. "Whiner."

"What's a boreal, like aurora borealis?"

Jason, at 13 was beginning to be insatiable in his curiosity, much to his parents' delight. Lois enjoyed finding him books to read on different subjects, a good handful of them about media and journalism, though Lois pretended not to notice as she handed them to him. What was so wrong about wanting her son to go into the family business? She might as well see if he liked the idea of being a journalist at an early age, right? Aside from reading, he excelled in all the things Lois didn't and Clark did. Science, math, history ...spelling. He was beginning to look much more like his father, as well. The soft chubbiness of his face was turning into strong curves and angles, with his mother's nose but his father's strong chin and jaw. The twins looked just as Jason did when he was their age, and Lois was sure they'd look mostly like their father as well, with a few things from her. Ella on the other hand, with her dark blonde hair and freckles looked just as her mother did when she was eight years old, and the only thing she had inherited from her father were those beautiful deep sapphire eyes.

"The boreal forest is the part of Canada that's made up of different species of trees and wildlife, and it has a natural ecosystem to support itself. It spans the entire length of Canada and sits between the tundra of the north and the rainforest and woodlands of the south. We're in the upper corner of the Yukon Territory, right on the edge of where the boreal and the tundra meets."

Clark smiled widely, which Lois knew meant only one thing.

"Want to see?"

Shaking her head with amusement she watched as Clark somehow managed to pick up all of the munchkins, with Jason on his back and the twins and Ella in his arms, then launch up into the sky, gone within a second. She knew they might take a little while, Clark was very excited to bring them here as it really was a beautiful part of the country and probably wanted to show them around. Digging through her large backpack, Lois found an extra fleece jacket and put it on under her outer coat. She knew from her training years ago that when you reached camp and had stopped moving rigorously such as you did when hiking, it was hard for the body to keep the temperature up. So before her body cooled down, she could warm it up with another layer of clothing. The others on the other hand were only wearing hats, mittens, fleece and outer jackets. Jason particularly was against wearing it all, complaining that he couldn't even feel the cold that much to begin with. The little ones needed it, but were getting to the point of being like Jason and their father, their molecular make-up making their skin almost impenetrable due to their Kryptonian genes.

Lois was surveying the snowy area and trying to figure out where to set up the tents when they all came back, the kids' voices mingling together as they all tried to tell her about what they'd seen.

"Mommy we saw a Pine Marten, it looks just like a fox and a cat rolled into one! It's soo cute! Can we have one?" Ella asked as she held onto her waist, looking up at her with wide eyes. The twins were arguing over what color birds they'd seen, and Jason was trying to tell her about how they flew over Russia's boreal forest, and how cool it was. Being used to kids who spoke just as fast as they ran, Lois answered them all enthusiastically, wondering at the end what in the hell kind of a name a Pine Marten was.

"Jase, where do you think we should set up the tents?" Clark set his hands on his son's shoulders. "Remember what we discussed when we camped in the Rockies?"

"Oh that's right! Try to pick a spot where there's not much wind and where there's the most light." Jason looked up at his father expectantly. "Right?"

"Yup! So where should we set them up, you think? We could go further north if you want."

Lois picked that last bit up and answered for him with a resounding no. She was already turning into a popsicle, no need to speed up the process! Lois watched as Jason surveyed their surroundings, scrutinizing every detail with a familiar look on his face. Lois took suit and shielding her eyes, looked around their surroundings. There wasn't much but snow and trees, the trees around her and the frozen tundra that went on for miles and miles to her right.

"Right here's fine, I think. The trees will cut the wind and the sunlight will be coming from the north end, over there."

"Good idea, Jase. So what now?" Clark encouraged him eagerly, remembering all the camping trips he'd had with his father. He hoped he was doing a good job of being a father so far, wondering how Jonathan Kent managed a hormonal teenaged Kryptonian child. Clark worried a little because he had not one, but four to handle eventually. Thankfully none of their curtains had been accidentally burned...yet.

"We pack the snow!" Ella jumped up and down, trying her best with little mittened hands to flatten the soft snow.

The two small dome-shaped tents went up rather quickly, and the tent stakes were

reinforced and held down by heavy logs to keep them in the soft snow. Wanting to sleep without their parents by their side, the four children would take one tent while their parents would sleep in the other. They sat around a small campfire, having just ate their dinner-Martha's vegetable stew, which sounded gross but was amazing, of course.

"You know Smallville, this is so not camping. It's cheating. Look! You used your heat vision to heat up the food!"

The log Lois sat on rolled a little as she crossed her arms in a huff and glared at him.

"This isn't the type of camping I did when I was a kid."

Clark laughed. "Yes, well, I didn't use my abilities when dad and I went camping. In fact, he wouldn't let me! I figured it would be easier to do it this way, plus without a stove its one more thing we don't have to carry. You're in a mood, Lo, what's wrong?"

"What's wrong?" Lois laughed back, enjoying their fun bantering. "I'm slowly freezing while the rest of you could wear nothing but your spring jackets and not be cold!"

Clark chuckled, putting an arm around her and held her close, and she rested her head under his chin comfortably.

"Don't worry Lola, I'll keep you warm." He bent down to kiss her lips when a voice cut in.

"Blech!"

They looked over to see Dean and Chris giggling at Jason, who was grinning at his joke.

Lois arched an eyebrow. "Yuck? Oh really, Jase?"

"Yup! I'm glad we have two tents!"

His mother shook her head. "One day when you're older you're going to find someone you-"

"Ugh! Girls! Mom, you know I hate this speech!"

Bemused, Lois looked at Clark who was only grinning. She shook her head at her boys' strangeness. Inherited, she was sure.

"Two tents is a good idea, you'll be able to learn how to sleep the right way when camping," Clark explained as he ran a hand through his daughter's long hair slowly.

"You sure you won't be scared without us, Ellie?" Lois smiled when Ella's face morphed into a cute annoyed frown, very much like her own.

"No, I have Jase with me. An' I'm big enough to protect Dean an' Chris!"

"No you're not, small fry."

Jason laughed at his little sister, resting his forearm on her head as she was much shorter. Swatting his arm away she stood akimbo with a determined look on her face.

"Am too! Remember when I outran Dean in the cornfield? See? I'm stronger! And plus," she smiled slyly, "Grandpa Jor-el says I'll probably start flying before you 'cause I'm a girl!"

Uh oh. If it was one thing Lois couldn't handle it was when her kids fought, and did they ever fight dirty! She could almost see the fire burn in Jason's eyes as he quickly registered what his little sister taunted him with. Clark quickly responded, knowing very well what could and most likely was going to happen.

"Ella, he said maybe. We aren't sure, and we already know Jason can hover a little bit, so it's not fair to say that."

"Yeah, but hoverin's not flying!"

"Ella, let's not discuss this here, huh?" Lois reached over to her daughter, putting a hand to her cheek. "Want me to show you how you're supposed to sleep in your sleeping bag?"

"Ooh! Okay!" Ella quickly followed her mother into the kids' tent. Clark sighed heavily, crisis averted. For now.

"Jase? You okay?"

Jason swallowed hard, his face still an angry mask.

"Dad is she right? I know girls apparently grow up faster than boys, but I can hover. That means I can fly soon, right?"

Sighing, Clark put his arm around his son. Hovering was a start, but he honestly didn't know if Jason would be flying soon, or if he ever would.

"Possibly, son. We're not sure because you're half human. With me I started hovering then right after that I could fly fully. We'll just have to wait it out and try things out at the farm, okay?"

Jason nodded, a bit sullenly.

"Daddy, are we gonna fly, too? I wanna hover like Jason!" Chris tugged at his father's sleeve, excited at all the talk of flying.

"Probably." Clark sat his twin sons on his lap, holding them close. "But not 'til you're much older."

They complained as one.

"Awwwww!"

To sleep correctly in snowy conditions, you have to first make sure you're sleeping on an insulated mat or two. Your sleeping bag can be insulated further by using a bivouac sac, a thin sort of tarp that will help seal in warmth and can help create 5 to 10 degrees more to keep you warm. Lois explained all this to her children, but knew they'd wake up with their sleeping bags unzipped and sprawled around them. She on the other hand did everything by the book, knowing how to keep warm. It was evident that Clark could keep her warm with his natural heat, but should he be called away she would have to take care of herself.

Unzipping a vent window at the top of the tent, Lois crawled backwards out of the kids' tent. The warmth created by all the people in such a small tent could gather and turn into condensation at the top of the tent, and if cold enough would fall as snow. The vent let out enough of the heat to prevent this from happening, but not enough for them to be cold.

"So you're all warm?"

Four little heads nodded from their sleeping bags, their eyes drooping with sleepiness.

"If you need us we're right here." She nodded next to her at the other tent, not a foot away. "Ella if you get scared.."

"I won't!" her head popped up from the sea of sleeping bags. "I'm in the middle, I'm not scared!"

"Okay then, remember what to do when you have to go-"

"Goodnight mom!"

Rolling her eyes with a smile, she left the tent and headed for her own. Clark had left about an hour earlier after hearing a bank robbery in progress in London. Looked like she was on her own for a bit. Should anything happen so that he wouldn't come back for a while, arrangements were made with a certain friend in Gotham to help the family out. Lois smiled as she slowly took off her icy boots, imagining Clark telling Bruce of all of the family's plans enthusiastically while Bruce paid hardly any attention to him as he scanned all of the computer screens in the Batcave.

"Anything particularly funny on your mind?"

She hadn't even heard Clark come back! She looked up to see him crawling into the tent, still in his uniform. Snowflakes in his hair glittered in the light of the lantern that hung above

them, and a lone snowflake stuck to his little spit curl. Lois grinned. He was so adorable and most of the time he didn't even know it.

"Yeah, the image of Superman crawling around in a tiny tent. It's slightly ridiculous when you think about it."

He shrugged his broad shoulders with a shy smile. "What? It's cold out and it's snowing a little, I didn't want to change in midair."

She rolled her eyes. The cold issue again.

"Please, Clark. You don't even feel the cold, I on the other hand do." Tugging her knit hat on her head roughly, she slid into her sleeping bag, disappearing into it completely.

He laughed to himself as he unzipped his own sleeping bag, putting it over Lois'.

"You know I'll keep you warm, Lo. I always do."

A pale face appeared at the end of the sleeping bag.

"I know."

Lois slipped out a little and sat up. The hat was half off and her curly hair was a frizzy tangle, which he thought was adorable.

"Well?" she smiled coyly. "Are you going to keep me warm or what?"

"Well." He put a hand to his chin in mock thought. "You're probably going to have to take some things off."

Lois laughed quietly. "You're going to have to keep it PG rated there, buster. In case you haven't noticed, the kids have not only your eyes but your ears, too."

Clark glanced over to where the kids were, noting that they were all out like lights. Dean and Chris slept nose to nose towards the back of the tent, Ella was sleeping comfortably in the middle on her belly as she loved to do since she was a baby, and in the front Jason slept on his side with an arm reaching over his little sister protectively.

"They're all out like lights, and they're fine. Warm as can be."

"Unlike me. So why am I taking off my clothes again?"

"Because." Clark helped her tug off her fleece jacket, leaving only her long johns shirt. "You'll get too hot with me near you."

She quirked an eyebrow, a mischievous twinkle in her eyes. Looking down at what she was wearing, the feeling faded a little.

"Sexy."

He put a hand to her chin, making her look at him. "Trust me, Lola. You could be wearing a burlap sack for all I care and I'd still think you were beautiful."

She rolled her eyes with a smile, trying to ignore the blush that always crept along her cheeks.

"Well, if I'm undressed, what about you?" Lois tugged on his cape a little. "Certainly you're not wearing this to bed."

"No, I'm not. First we're going for a trip!"

"A trip? Smallville it's freezing out!"

Smiling, he wrapped her in his sleeping bag and held her close as he stepped out of the tent. Snowflakes clung to Lois' eyelashes and she batted them away, watching as the tents became smaller in her vision as they ascended into the air. She ducked her head under his chin as they broke through clouds, and was surprised by the sudden moonlight. Next to them was a full moon, so large and close looking it was as if she could reach out and touch it. Thousands of tiny stars twinkled in the light, scattering far off into the horizon. Slowly Clark shifted her so she stood on his feet, facing him and he wrapped his crimson cape around her tightly.

"God." Lois whispered quietly, as if the serene scene would disappear if she didn't. "It's so beautiful, always is."

"I know."

She felt his hand caressing her cheek and she leaned into it with a sigh. She looked up to see him watching her with that same loving look she would never tire of. The look she received when she was in the bull pen trying to argue with him but failing, which annoyed her but she secretly loved and she knew he knew it. The same look he'd give her while she held onto her children as they sat in the living room doing their homework, making them laugh often as she'd attack them with tickles and kisses. That same loving look he gazed at her with all those years ago when she first fell into his arms, and she'd been there ever since.

She smiled at him as his thumb came up and traced her bottom lip gently, and she took a breath as he leaned down and found her lips with his. She could feel her heart beating erratically as she deepened their kiss. No matter what happened, or how much time had passed, he would always have this effect on her. She wrapped her arms around his neck, pressing herself as close as she could, never wanting this to end. Opening her eyes, she realized they'd descended and were now back in their tent. Setting her down he quickly changed into a pair of flannel pajamas and slipped into her sleeping bag with her. Clark reached up, turning off the little lantern that hung above them and settled down next to his wife, holding her as close as possible.

Lois grinned as she buried her face in the curve of his neck. "Sneaky move there."

She was rewarded with a kiss just as deep as before, and purred in content as she felt his hands caressing her sides, slide up her back and tangle themselves in her hair. Instinctively she pressed her body closer to him, winding her leg onto his hip and bringing them much closer.

He broke away from the kiss with a grin. "I thought we were supposed to keep this PG?"

"Well you're supposed to be keeping me warm, right? According to winter camping rules, the best way to stay warm is through vigorous activity. Like hiking...and other things."

Laughing, he kissed her again. "Yes Ma'am."