

I'm Not Cheating - Christmas Party

by Vgerland

© 17-Dec-08

Rating: K+

Disclaimer: All publicly recognizable characters, settings, etc. are the property of their respective owners. The original characters and plot are the property of the author. The author is in no way associated with the owners, creators, or producers of any media franchise. No copyright infringement is intended.



The office potluck Christmas party was in full swing when Lois arrived back at the office after running a last minute errand. She had noticed an ad for a toy that Jason really wanted at a local store and ran over as soon as they opened to be sure to get one before they sold out, again. The men including Richard were sitting together at desks near where the food table had been set up most likely for easy access to refills. The women were all over by the tree. That is all the women except Cat, who was off in a corner talking to some guy Lois didn't know. She wasn't surprised to find that Clark was missing.

Everything looked so tempting that it was hard not to load her plate with a bite of each item although she did skip most of the meat dishes being a sometimes vegetarian. As always though, she found some dishes were just too hard to resist, like the honey baked ham. She had to have a bite of that. Once her plate was filled, overfilled actually, she surveyed the two groups of people and without hesitation joined the men taking a seat between Jimmy and Richard.

She asked Richard between bites, "Did I miss anything?"

He shook his head. "Just Perry's little speech about how we are all a big family and what a great team of writers we are."

Lois listened to the guys talking but at the same time started eyeing all the neatly wrapped packages under the tree. She was determined to get a great gift this year. Last year she had spent hours trying to pick out the perfect gift to bring to the office exchange finally deciding on a bottle of wine, two finely etched glasses and a nice delicate smelling candle. She had gone well over the twenty-five dollar limit. It was a gift she would have loved to have gotten instead of that stupid carving knife. *So what that it was a special carving knife in a self sharpening holder from Decadent Pets, I mean Decadent Chefs*, she thought. *You don't need a special*

self sharpening carving knife for take out boxes. Although Clark might have found it useful if she could ever find the darn thing.

This year she had a plan. She would pick her own gift or the one Clark had brought and if that failed she would ask Clark to peek for her so she would know which wrapped gift to choose. That'd work. She had her ways of getting Clark to do what ever she wanted, within reason that is. This was definitely within reason.

Clark finally arrived and quickly filled his plate pulling over another chair as Jimmy moved his to make room for him next to Lois.

Polly stood up as everyone finished eating. "We decided to do something a little different to add to the fun this year." She started handing out numbers as she spoke. "Each of you will be given a number from one to twenty-three. The person with number one gets to choose a gift and unwrap it. But here is where we have the fun. The person with number two can steal the opened gift or pick a new one to unwrap. If a person has their gift stolen then they get to choose another gift or steal an unwrapped gift but not the one just stolen from them. If a gift is stolen a second time that gift is frozen and no longer in jeopardy of being stolen. This continues until everyone has had a turn. Are there any questions?"

Lois looked at her number and smiled. It was number three. "What number did you get?" she asked Clark.

"Nineteen" He said showing her the little slip of paper. That made her smile even more, thinking that they had good positions at both ends of the spectrum.

Polly looked around the room. "If there aren't any questions we'll take a ten minute break to let you refill your drinks and do whatever you need to do then we'll start the game as soon as everyone gets back."

Lois immediately grabbed Clark's arm and directed him to their shared office. "Here's the plan. You look in all the packages and tell me which ones are the best options. That way we will end up with something good... and I don't want any cooking gadgets or gag gifts."

"Lois, I can't do that! Ah, it's cheating." He shrugged.

"Not even if I make it worth your while?" She smiled seductively then whispered in his ear, "Remember that lacy black number you like so much?" She snuggled up to him practically kissing his earlobe as she whispered the last part.

He smiled back. "How could I possibly forget that, but even so, I won't cheat for you."

"What if I spsssssss sppppppppp" she whispered in his ear.

He turned and looked at her swallowing hard. "Sounds very tempting, but my answer is still no. If you want to cheat, you'll have to do it without my help. Just be happy with whatever you get. I think this sounds like it could be a lot of fun."

"Fine, will you at least go get me some coffee? At least I know I'll like that. Joyce from the Foods section made it."

Jimmy had gotten number one so he was the first to pick a gift. Opening it he smiled, "Gee, this is great. My girlfriend loves this cologne."

Lois looked at him like he was crazy. Why would he be happy he got a bottle of woman's cologne? Why would someone bring a gift like that anyway? Duh, unisex people, ever hear of it? She shook her head.

Bob, one of the sports writers was next. He chose the gift Lois had brought figuring it was the same thing she had brought last year and he was right.

Lois stood up. "My turn," she said and proceeded to grab Bob's gift.

Bob protested, "Wait you can't steal the gift you brought in. No fair."

"Sure I can. I don't remember Polly saying it wasn't allowed. Hand it over." Polly shrugged in sympathy. Clark and Richard both rolled their eyes knowing that the game was likely to get testy.

Handing the gift over he went back to the tree and found another gift that just by looking at it you could tell it was some kind of Wine. Sure enough it was two bottles of his favorite wine. Quite happy with the gift he sat down smiling again.

A couple more people had their turns then Frank from entertainment stood in front of Lois. "I'll take that please."

"It's frozen."

"No it's not but it is now," he said smiling as he took the prize.

Lois reluctantly stood up and went to the tree. Before she selected a new gift she turned and gave Clark a hopeful look. She put her hand on one of the gifts hoping he would give her a sign but all he did was shrug. He wasn't going to be any help. She looked over at Bob's wine. Could she really be that heartless? She looked back at the wrapped gifts. Finally deciding on the one Clark had brought in. He had good taste. After all he fell in love with her didn't he?

Opening it up she found the most intricate crystal angel she had ever seen. She wasn't really into such things but this was just beautiful. He had to have found it in Italy. She was already imagining just how it would look on the mantel right next to her..."

She looked up to see Francine from the Religion section standing in front of her blocking her view of the tree. "I'll take that if you don't mind."

It was right then and there that Lois decided she absolutely hated this game but she was even more determined to get something she would like. Seeing nothing she wanted to steal that was available she went back to the tree trying to remember which gift Richard had brought. He had good taste too as she remembered. Unfortunately she couldn't remember seeing him with a gift so ended up picking a gift she thought might have been his contribution. Opening it she found ...house shoes... well they were unisex... but house shoes? *Sheesh I'm doomed* she thought. Now it's all up to Clark to bring home something good.

Sitting the box of house shoes down by her chair she decided to go get some more coffee. At least that was good, darn good. She should talk to Perry about trying to get the food section moved up to their floor.

The game continued in her absence. Just as she was sitting back down Bobbie from the health and fitness section came over and asked to see the house shoes. Lois narrowed her eyes and complied, maybe she was back in the game after all.

"Hmmm, I've read about these," Bobbie said obviously interested in the shoes. "They're made of special materials and have let's see," reading she continued, "French lavender that, once heated stays warm for up to two hours after just two minutes of microwaving. Cool."

"Wait, what did that say?" Lois asked suddenly interested herself.

"Too late, they're mine now. Thanks Lois." Bobbie walked away with the house shoes still reading the box as she took her seat smiling.

Lois took a deep breath and headed back to the tree to once again pick a gift. Someone else had already stolen the angel she had liked and it too was now frozen. She looked at the gifts under the tree again and picked one. It was in a small little gift bag, most likely a gift card. That might be alright. Her luck it would be for some sports bar. Thinking twice she put it back and turned to look at Bob. No one had stolen his wine. She smiled and went to him with her hands out just waiting for him to once again hand over the goods to her.

Everyone laughed as the big burly man reluctantly complied and returned to the tree to choose yet another gift. He picked the small bag Lois had just rejected and upon opening it found a gift card for a popular restaurant. He looked and saw it was marked '50 Dollars'. "Wait this is a mistake that is way over the limit. I can't accept this."

Joyce broke out into a huge grin. "Well actually they allowed me to buy a couple cards as gifts both half off as a Thank You for a recent review. So enjoy."

Clark leaned over to Lois and whispered "The Christmas Spirit works in mysterious ways, you are never going to win against it so I suggest you just start enjoying the game."

"It doesn't matter I have what I want now. This wine will go great with Sunday Dinner. You just wait and see."

"Sorry Lois hand it over," Richard said not even having to get up holding his hands out waiting for her to hand him the bag with the wine.

"No!" Lois moaned. "This is my wine, go get your own."

"No it's mine and no one can take it now," he laughed. Clark was trying to contain his amusement but it was getting more difficult with each exchange.

Finally complying she remembered Bob's gift card. "Ah ha. Gimme!"

This time Bob just broke out laughing and handed it over without complaint. Deciding he had liked the result with the tiny gift bag he chose another one and found box seats to the Apricot Bowl. "Wow, I can't believe this. Even as a sports writer, I've never had seats like this before. This is great!"

Perry was smiling from where he sat, happy to have made someone's day.

"Lois turned to Clark. See everyone is happy."

Gill stood up and said yes I am Lois. I'll take that gift card now."

"What gift card?" she said innocently.

"The one in the little bag on your lap."

"Oh you mean this little bag? She rolled her eyes. "Here take it."

Gill took the bag but before he sat down he frowned. "Hey, where's the gift card. There's nothing in here but the tissue paper."

Clark smirked. "The gigs up, hand it over."

She took a deep breath and pulled the card out from where she had hidden in the top of her blouse finally handing it over. She was once again forced to pick a wrapped gift since anything she really wanted was frozen. She looked at the choices and decided that perhaps there were some good ones left and the small gift bags had been particularly good so far. Taking one she was delighted to find a gift card to Alexandra's Surprise. She loved that place. It was where she had gotten that little black number Clark liked so much. She went back to her seat happy hoping no one else would steal her gift. She was really starting to get tired of all the exchanges.

Several more people took their turns and Lois was starting to feel safe. There were only a few more people to go. That was when Cat the gossip columnist got up smiling heading right for her. Resigned Lois just handed the bag over. She went to the tree and picked up the first gift she came to not even caring any more. Opening it up she found a box that showed a picture of a glass tea pot with a flower inside. It actually looked pretty interesting. The bag also had a separate container containing a variety of flowering teas. Hmmmm. This does look interesting and Clark loves tea. She wouldn't be disappointed if she got to keep this gift. She forgot it technically wasn't hers yet and opened up one of the pouches to smell the flower. She smiled taking in the aroma. Clark noticed and smiled at her happy that she seemed to be

satisfied. She handed him the little pouch to smell.

"That smells really good." He took the box and was reading it when Polly announced. "Clark, you're up next."

He looked at Lois and her Flowering Tea pot. No need to steal that. Besides he had a better idea. He got up and walked over to the water cooler where Cat was waving the Alexandra's Surprise gift card around as she cooed to Brad, a sales rep from somewhere, telling him how he could help her pick out some special lingerie. She stopped speaking as Clark approached them.

"Since Lois and I are the only newlyweds here, I'll just take that if you don't mind." He pushed up his glasses and looked her directly in the eye.

Cat was surprised, she had always seen the potential in Clark but she had to admit Lois had really brought Clark into his own. Darn he was to die for. Too bad she hadn't been his type. She put the card back in the little bag and handed it to him. Besides she didn't really need it she figured. The way Brad was eyeing her he would gladly buy her half the store if she asked.

Clark went back and sat down next to Lois who was literally beaming with her hand out expecting him to hand over the card. Instead he smirked as he pulled the card out of the bag and put it in his inside suit pocket. "Sorry, but this is my gift and it's frozen."

The whole office had been watching and broke out laughing.

The rest of the people got their gifts and everyone as the party ended everyone was jovial and laughing. They all agreed it had been the best Christmas party ever and they hadn't even missed the booze that was no longer allowed at company functions.