

Lex's Best Day

By bobbart — Bob Bartholomew <bobbart_99@yahoo.com>

Rated: PG13

Submitted: February 2009

Summary: As Lex is preparing for his wedding to Lois, he takes some time to have an unexpectedly frank and open discussion about the future with a stranger from out of town.

Story Size: 4,895 words (27Kb as text)

Disclaimer: This is a fanfic based on the television show, Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman. I have no claim on the pre-existing characters whatsoever, nor am I profiting by their use. The new story elements are mine. No infringement is intended by this work.

Time frame: Season 1: Just before the wedding in "The House of Luthor."

Again, I have to thank Dandelio for the beta read and some good suggestions on how to deal with some rough spots.

Content Wanting: Lex is a very bad person. I have attempted to explore some more evil aspects of his personality. I don't like him at all. For what it's worth, I don't think he likes me very much either.

Lex Luthor was on top of the world. As he sat in his office and looked out over his domain that was the city of Metropolis, he couldn't help but think, 'This is as good as it gets!'

His single greatest enemy was in a deadly cage in the basement. A woman that he truly desired, one with which he felt the potential for a real long-term relationship, possibly the only female about whom that phrase would ever apply, was about to marry him. The fact that there was an obvious connection between this same woman and the enemy made this victory all the sweeter.

For now, Lex was just enjoying being absolute master of his domain. His wedding was a few hours away and the death of his enemy would follow only hours after that. He had once told Lois that his goal was pleasure. Today he was achieving that goal beyond even his wildest expectations.

However, Lex had one unrelated piece of business to which he had to attend today. Several weeks ago he had been contacted by his lead Asian operative about a business associate that was going to be in Metropolis. This man was based in Hong Kong and was heir to a multi-billion dollar criminal empire. From what Lex's operative had told him, which he had verified through other channels, this man was not interested in the family business and had been convinced to, for a nominal remuneration, pass control of his empire to Lex.

If this were anything of lesser importance, he would not hold a business meeting today. But this had the potential to double the size of his empire. If this meeting went well, it could lead to his gaining control of the largest criminal organization in Asia.

The man was waiting patiently for Lex to give him his attention. Even though this meeting was important enough for Lex to interrupt his wedding preparations, it was still proper that this Mr. Smith understand which of them was in control here. After another moment, Lex decided that he had adequately demonstrated his authority. He turned away from the window to

face the somewhat nondescript man seated on the other side of his desk.

"Mr. Smith, while I look forward to our future business prospects, I hope you understand my desire to keep this meeting brief."

"Yes, Mr. Luthor. I believe we can keep this meeting short. There are really only a few issues that we need to discuss today."

Lex decided that he would see where this Mr. Smith would take their conversation. His opening direction would provide insight into the man. Lex had found repeatedly over the years that the simple act of appearing to be gracious could easily lead to strategic advantage. "Mr. Smith, you are my guest, what would you like to talk about first?"

Smith smiled at this. "Mr. Luthor, I have always found it valuable to understand the origins of my business associates. Would you honor me by sharing some information about how you came to be involved in our particular line of business?"

This was so forward a question that Lex almost frowned. This man was looking for insights into Lex that he would allow no person to see — at least, not if they were to continue breathing. This was not the first time that he had been asked a question of this type and his reply was well rehearsed. "Mr. Smith, I'm sure that you understand that I value a certain amount of personal privacy. My humble origins cannot possibly be of interest to someone of your importance. Now, please, we are short of time and should get to the business that brought you here."

Smith sneezed. "Pardon me," he said as he reached into his jacket, pulled out a handkerchief, rubbed his nose and returned the handkerchief to his jacket.

Lex felt an odd lassitude fall over him. For only the briefest instant Lex wondered about the feeling but then he realized that he felt more comfortable and relaxed than at any time in his memory.

Then Smith continued, "Now, Mr. Luthor, I've come a great distance to meet with you. I would really appreciate it if you would tell me what led you to become the criminal lord that you are."

At the phrase, 'criminal lord', Lex was slightly surprised. This wasn't the manner of speech he expected. Nevertheless, he felt so comfortable that he decided to ignore it for now. He would humor this Smith. There would almost certainly be many opportunities to work this to his advantage later.

Lex started in an almost boastful tone. "At an early age I learned that success is there for those willing to reach out and take it. I was only a young man when I realized that I was far more capable and intelligent than those around me. I learned that as long as I was careful to control perception, I could get away with absolutely anything and still have those simpletons that are the so-called pillars of our society view me with favor. Once I understood that it was all a game, it became much clearer. Then, when I realized that morals were the impediments that others put in their own way, the game became easy."

"Mr. Luthor, your activities have often resulted in the deaths of others. You view that as a game?"

Lex continued in an enthusiastic tone. "Of course! Being able to determine who lives and who dies is the ultimate game." Then Lex continued in a more somber tone. "It's the *only* game."

Somewhere in the back of his mind, Lex realized that he had just shared some insights into his philosophies that he was normally very careful to keep private. Somehow, the idea of speaking openly to Smith just didn't worry him. As he struggled with the idea of being open, it occurred to him that if he did say anything that might prove dangerous, he could place a single call and Nigel would very efficiently erase any problem, along with Mr. Smith. With the realization that any possible error from being too forthright could be so easily corrected, Lex relaxed again.

Smith spoke up. "Now, Lex, today is your wedding day. Tell

me about Lois.”

Something felt slightly off about being called by his first name but somehow it was all right. It also felt wrong that this man was asking about Lois. However, that strange feeling of comfort was irresistible and Lex knew it was okay to speak openly to Mr. Smith about anything. As he prepared to answer, his thoughts turned briefly again to Nigel and the possibility of having to order a clean up after this meeting.

He leaned back in his chair. “Lois is... Well, my Lois is one woman among millions. She’s beautiful and intelligent. It took an enormous commitment of my personal time and resources to bring her into my orbit. Even then, it is a constant challenge to make sure she doesn’t suspect that the majority of my empire is based on illegal activities. For me, that was part of the attraction. Could I keep someone of her abilities oblivious to my true nature long enough to convince her to marry me? Of course, there was the added benefit that she was the woman that Superman desired. By possessing her, I have won a substantial victory over my greatest adversary. Now that I’ve won that particular contest, I fear that some of the zest will be gone from our relationship.”

“But Lex, if she is as capable as you say, isn’t she likely to eventually find out the truth about you?”

“Almost certainly. But by then I will have had enough time to see if she can be turned to accept, and possibly even embrace, my approach to life.”

“From what I know about Lois Lane, that doesn’t seem likely.”

Lex responded with enthusiasm. “But what a challenge! I understand that this will not be a quick or easy undertaking. However, I know from experience that there are ways to introduce ideas slowly so that each in turn seems necessary. Over time, things that once might have seemed repugnant, can be perceived as reasonable. I’ve done this sort of ‘molding of perception’ before. I’ll admit that these were people of lesser capability than my Lois. But what a prize for winning that contest! The idea of a Lois whose approach to life has been totally remade in my image is... well, I lack the words. At the very least, she would be a partner that could help me rule over my empire. Together we could easily destroy anyone that dared oppose me. Imagining the day when Lois will personally order the death of an enemy is truly exciting. That will be a fabulous day indeed!”

“But Lex, what if she won’t turn?”

The look of elation that had dominated Lex’s face fell away. What replaced it was one of cold calculation. “I hope it doesn’t come to that. However, if that unfortunate eventuality does develop, it shouldn’t present too much of a problem.” Then a smile crept into Lex’s features. “There would even be some sport if it becomes necessary to deal with that possible development. Lois’s mother is an alcoholic after all. There would be a certain amusement if Lois could be led down that path. Yes, if she chooses not to join me completely, I’m certain that I would eventually tire of her. At that point, before disposing of her, it would be useful, as well as amusing, to destroy her self-esteem. That would also serve as insurance that she would be in no position to be a threat later. With a little encouragement, I’m confident that she could be induced to use alcohol as a crutch. Over time, with my ‘loving’ help as her husband, she could be manipulated to become dependent on alcohol just like her mother. As a final act before I throw her out, it would be entertaining to remind her of what she was before we married and what she had become.”

Smith took a moment to digest this. After only a short time, he took a deep breath and continued. “Lex, what do you plan to do about Superman?”

Even through the feeling of contentment, Lex felt a surge of concern. “What do you mean?”

“I know that you have him in a Kryptonite cage in the wine cellar. What are your plans for him?”

Lex couldn’t help but think that he should be shocked as well as worried that this stranger knew of the presence of Superman. But somehow, he just wasn’t concerned at all. At some level he was thinking that a call to Nigel was definitely going to be necessary. With this thought, he relaxed again. There is no reason to be concerned about talking to a dead man. Lex leaned forward and his voice took on a note of intensity.

“I’m afraid there are only short term plans for Superman. I’ve watched him around Lois and I certainly remember when he kissed her under the influence of that pheromone drug. As I’ve said, his interest in her is much of what caused me to be attracted to Lois in the first place.”

Then Lex’s voice took on a very sarcastic tone. “As for my plans... Well, as his host, I was worried that he might become bored in his cage. To help keep him entertained I’ve arranged to have a live audio feed from my wedding night bedroom. I’m certain that he’ll appreciate the sounds of Lois and me consummating our marriage. Of course, shortly after that I’ll excuse myself from my happy bride for just long enough to pay him a visit. Once there, I’ll make sure he’s conscious and replay the tape. I’m sure he’ll be interested in my commentary on how enthusiastic and responsive Lois had been while those sounds were being produced.”

Lex paused for a second and a huge smile developed on his face. “In fact, I may share some of the same long-term plans for Lois that I was just relating to you. I’m sure he’ll be glad to know that Lois is going to be in such good hands.”

At this, Lex leaned back with that huge smile still dominating his face. “Then I’ll kill him. I know that the Kryptonite cage has made him vulnerable. I’m sure a few bullets in his brain and a few more in his heart for good measure will do the trick. I actually considered killing him before today, but the opportunities that arise from his being kept alive until tonight simply could not be ignored.”

Lex paused for only a second or two and then continued. “Of course, I’ll record his execution.”

“Why? Wouldn’t the existence of such a recording be very risky for you?”

“My dear Mr. Smith, a certain amount of risk is all part of the game. That recording will serve as a challenge. Can I so change Lois’s view of the world that she comes to despise Superman and everything for which he stands as much as I do? I’m betting that I can! I see a day, a few years from now, when I can show it to her and she wouldn’t just accept that I killed him but she would relish the idea. Over the years, I’ve noticed that witnessing the death of an enemy can often lead to a certain feeling of... arousal. If Lois responds the same way... well, that raises some intriguing potentials.”

Lex paused thoughtfully and again the smile faded just a bit. “Of course, if she ever were to disappoint or turn against me, it would be highly amusing to see her reaction when she learns that I had gone immediately from our wedding night bed to the cellar where I killed her hero.”

Smith looked thoughtful. “I have to admit that you seem to have considered most of the possible contingencies for the future.”

“That has always been a hallmark of my success. I leave very little to chance and always have plans in place for different possible outcomes. And I never let moral considerations affect my judgment.”

“Lex, I have only one more question to ask. Do you have any plans for Clark Kent?”

“Now that’s an interesting question. I hadn’t given Kent any real thought until Lois made such a fuss about him attending our wedding. After creating that kind of concern in my future bride, I

can't let him be completely left out of my joyful new life with Lois. I don't have all the plans in place now but I have an outline. Before very long Mr. Kent will find himself arrested on drug possession charges. I strongly suspect that the evidence will be convincing enough to get him about a year in prison. When he does get out, he'll discover that the terms of his parole prevent him from leaving Metropolis. Unfortunately, he'll find that it will be impossible for him to get a job. I think it would be entertaining for Lois and I to go for an early evening stroll in about a year and a half and discover that the dirty, smelly beggar on the street is all that's left of her partner."

Smith seemed to consider this for a minute. Then he reached into his jacket to the same place that he had placed his handkerchief and pulled out a small device with two colored lights on top. One was red and the other was green. The red light was dark and the green one was illuminated. He set the box on Lex's desk and pressed a button that caused the red light to illuminate. As the red light came on, Lex felt a shiver run through his body.

"Lex, please stand up," Smith asked.

He tried to stand up but couldn't move his arms or legs. "I'm trying but I can't move."

"Good," Smith said. Then he pressed the box again and the green light went out.

Lex felt that strange sense of contentment, that had been with him for most of the interview, suddenly disappear. His mind jumped back over the conversation of the past few minutes and his rage burst forth. Who is this Smith and how does he know so much? Moreover, what did he do to get me to speak so openly? Lex tried to get out of his chair but found that he couldn't move any part of his body below his neck.

"Who are you? What do you want?" Lex shouted.

"Now, Mr. Luthor, please calm yourself. You're in an interrogation field. Where I come from, police use it to contain criminals. We have very little of that kind of problem, but we possess very effective tools to deal with them. You might as well try to relax while we finish this. You won't be able to move and we're almost done."

Lex could see that, for the moment at least, struggling was not going to gain him an advantage. He continued in a calmer tone. "Are you going to answer my questions?"

"That's better," Smith said. "Well, as to who I am, that isn't as important as what I am. What really matters is that I'm a historian."

Lex could feel his anger continue to grow as he responded. "That's doesn't make any sense. You expect me to believe that a historian has access to the tools to do this to me? Besides, if you are a historian, how do you know so much about me? Why would you care?"

Smith smiled at this. "You probably won't believe this but I'm a historian from several hundred years in your future."

Smith paused briefly at the look of pure disbelief on Lex's face, and then continued. "You wouldn't know this, but the day of your wedding to Lois is one of the pivotal points in human history. For many years, people have wondered just what was going through your mind as you approached this wedding ceremony. There have always been questions about your plans for Superman and your expectations for Lois. Our conversation over the past few minutes will answer questions that have intrigued people for hundreds of years."

Lex was surprised at how calm this man was. "So, how do you plan to use this information? Are you here to stop me and try to fix history in some way?"

"No, Mr. Luthor. I'll take no action to disrupt your plans. I'm not a criminal and I am completely against what you are doing. However, this part of the time line is too important to risk the introduction of a change as substantive as that. So, while I would

personally like to release Superman from that cage, I have to let events play out as they are destined. This interview was timed very carefully to introduce no disruption to the time line."

Lex considered that for a moment. "Won't my knowing that this is a historic moment be a risk to changing the future?"

"No. I have a few more devices similar to the one that... how should I say it... encouraged you to speak so freely. I have a device that will wipe all memory of my presence and our discussion. All that you will remember is that you came to your office and contemplated your future before getting ready for your wedding."

Lex replied with anger, "You're wrong! My operatives know that we had an appointment today. When they follow up there will be a discrepancy."

"Lex, Lex, Lex. You don't understand. There was no meeting today. You really did just come up here to contemplate the future prior to your wedding ceremony. I used my memory device to plant the idea that this was a business meeting. That's a false memory, which I will remove when we're finished. Its only purpose was to start the interview in an environment that would render you more comfortable. No one has any record of an expected meeting or of any person from Hong Kong. Once your memory of my presence is gone, it will truly be as if I never existed."

Lex considered this for a moment. "So Mr. Historian, what is so important about today?"

"Lex, today you shape the future."

"By marrying Lois and killing Superman?"

"No. By not marrying Lois and failing to kill Superman."

"What are you saying? You told me that you weren't going to interfere!"

"I'm not. But once your wedding ceremony begins, everything you know — your entire basis for living — will collapse around you."

Lex was genuinely angry now. "You're lying!"

"Lex, why should I lie? I'm here to document your thoughts and feelings on this historic day. I've pretty much already achieved that. I just wanted you to know what was going on before I erased your memory of our talk."

"So tell me, if I don't marry Lois and don't kill Superman, why is today important?"

Smith paused for a moment as if considering these words with extra care. "You could almost say that the future of the world begins with Lois reaching the altar and then refusing to marry you. It's staggering to think that so much hinges on one woman changing her mind. Or, as she is to say later, coming to her senses. Even as we speak, she's questioning her decision and thinking that she'd rather be with someone other than you."

"That's ridiculous. I know that she was interested in Superman, but I'm sure she gave up on him."

"In a way you're right. The man she's thinking of is Clark Kent."

Now Lex went from angry to livid. "That's ridiculous! I know she likes him but he's not in her league."

Smith laughed at this. "Clark Kent is a man of hidden capabilities and depth. Eventually Lois will marry Clark and their offspring will play a central role in shaping a utopian future."

"You aren't making any sense. How can Kent be so important?"

"As a newspaper reporter that works to help the community, Clark Kent is far more important than most people realize. But it's his other role that's really central for the future."

"What do you mean by his other role?"

"Lex, with your gifts of insight and perception, it's amazing that you, of all people, never saw this. You're holding Clark Kent in that cage in your cellar right now. Clark Kent is Superman."

For just a second, Lex was quiet. Then he let loose with a

screaming torrent of curses. "I'll kill him! I'll remember and stop everything!"

Smith was calm and waited for Lex's rant to run down. "No, you won't. We have considered every aspect of this interview very carefully. In fact, the basic time travel apparatus and other devices that I have used have been available for more than fifty years before my native time. This portion of the time line has been analyzed for every possible contingency. Once you stepped through the door to your office, every outcome of every possible time line ends with you not marrying Lois and Superman surviving the day."

Lex's mind was spinning. This couldn't be happening. "Why should I believe you? You may have some technologies that I've never seen but that doesn't mean you're from the future."

Smith responded in a dismissive, almost arrogant tone. "What you believe or not is irrelevant. What matters is that I'm here and I've collected the data that I was sent to get." Smith paused for a few seconds. He had the look of someone that was struggling to maintain control of his anger. "Think about the capabilities that are inherent in the technologies that you've seen. If such was my intent, I could kill you very easily. However, as I said, in these circumstances you have nothing to fear from me. Your fate is already sealed with an outcome appropriate for your deeds."

Something about the way Smith spoke sent a cold chill through Lex. He had always excelled at discerning truth from falsehoods when others spoke to him. To his great dismay, Smith's words rang of truth. In that moment, Lex felt more at a loss than he had known his entire adult life. In a deflated and defeated tone, he asked, "If you are going to erase my memory, why are you telling me this?"

"Luthor, even in the short time that you were involved with the people of the world in general and these two individuals in particular, you've caused pain and suffering almost beyond belief. Before I met you, I had my doubts about this part of our interview. However, now that I've heard your plans for my... those people, I understand that portion of my mission. Making you aware of your pending failure has turned out to be disturbingly easy. As it is, simply speaking with you will leave me soul-sick for quite some time."

Then Smith took a deep breath and seemed to steel himself. He stood up and leaned over the desk to stare directly into Lex's eyes. "On this day that was to be your great victory, we wanted to make sure that you truly knew the magnitude of your failure and the utter pointlessness of your existence."

Lex sat in silence for a minute. Finally, Smith raised a cylindrical black object and said, "Look at this and it won't even be a memory."

Lex spoke up quickly. "Wait! You said Lois turns me down. I'm sure that my first thought will be to go immediately to the cage and kill Superman. What could possibly prevent that from happening?"

Smith's face was rigid. "At that very moment, your criminal activities will finally catch up to you. You will flee the wedding ceremony with police right behind. Before the sun sets this evening, you will jump from this building and plummet to your death on the street below. You will spend tonight on a slab in the city morgue."

There was a note of cold truth in those words that Lex could not ignore or deny. It was as if a cold wave engulfed his soul. In the most fundamental and important competition of all, he had lost. This day would end with the most complete defeat imaginable. Lex had always felt a self-confidence that had enabled him to obliterate all that stood in his path. In that moment, it was as if a bubble burst in the very core of his being. He felt small, weak and cold... so very cold.

As Lex sat with a blank stare that seemed devoid of thought, Smith raised the black cylinder before those stunned eyes. There

was a bright flash...

The next thing Lex remembered was staring out the window of his office. He had come here to enjoy the view on this perfect day. He noticed the clock and realized he needed to prepare for the wedding. As he left his office, he thought to himself once more, 'Yes, this is indeed going to be my best day ever.'

As the door closed behind Lex, there was a shimmering in a far corner of the office. When the cloaking field dissipated, the man who had presented himself as Smith stepped toward the center of the room. This interview had been both more challenging and less satisfying than he had expected.

People who were far more expert than he had determined that for reasons that he did not fully understand, only a descendant of Lois and Clark could perform this interview without introducing the possibility of a disruption to the time line.

With one final glance through the wall, Smith watched as Luthor hurried off and into the waiting arms of fate. He then activated one last piece of technology. With only a brief look around the office, Smith, whose real name was Clark Kent, the twenty-first family member to carry that most famous of names, stepped through the time window to return home.

THE END