

# Technology Is Killing Us

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Rated PG

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Summary: Lois and Clark take a moment to ponder how the world turns and times change.

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Lois was standing at the bedroom window of the Hyperion Avenue townhouse, gazing pensively out at the night sky when she felt her husband’s arms slip around her. She leaned back into his embrace, her head resting on his cool, slightly damp chest.

A small breeze wafted through the open window, stirring the air in their bedroom and filling her nostrils with Clark’s scent.

“How did it go?” she asked him, lovingly rubbing his wind-chilled forearms. Clark had been out all day in his other persona trying to help clean up a huge chemical spill in Hobb’s Bay. A tanker full of hazardous waste had run aground, leaking its contents into the surrounding ecosystem.

“Not as bad as it could have been,” he replied, “but bad enough. There is so little that I can actually do in that kind of disaster. I can’t just fly in and fix the problem. Superstrength means nothing when you’re trying to remove toxic chemicals from a bird’s plumage, or from the gut of a fish. I could only make the jobs of the people who were already there easier.”

“Clark,” Lois said, reaching back to touch his cheek. “Do you really think that they could have cleaned up such a huge spill in a single day without Superman’s assistance? It would have taken them weeks. Weeks. The damage could have been so much more extensive before it was contained. Yes, animals suffered and died from the exposure to all those chemicals. But so many more are safe tonight — because of you. Even Superman can’t save everyone. You did everything you could, and that’s enough.”

“Thank you,” he breathed. He had known that what she was saying was true. Hadn’t he been trying to convince himself the entire flight home? But he had needed to hear her say it. To give him absolution for all the lives he hadn’t been able to save today.

They stood in comfortable silence for several moments, looking out the window into the velvety black sky, her head tucked under his.

“I saw that article you wrote today.” His words rumbled in her ear.

That story was why she had been standing here by the window, thinking about the passage of time.

It was exceedingly increasingly unusual to see the world-renown ‘Lois Lane’ byline on anything but a page one expose revealing international corruption or the breaking of a major crime syndicate. Certainly not on such a small story — worthy of page seven or eight at best. There was no extortion, no intrigue, no governmental perfidy. But Lois had felt that it was a telling moment in history.

“World’s Last Human Telephone Operator Replaced by Automated System,” read the story’s lead-in.

Lois rarely slowed down enough to notice the passage of time. She lived her life on overdrive, always chasing the next story. Each new innovation was just another tool to add to her impressive reporting repertoire. It wasn’t often that a story made her feel old. But this one did.

“Who would have ever thought it would happen?” she murmured softly.

They were silent for a moment, each simply enjoying the other’s presence as their memories brought forth images from a simpler time not that long ago, when telephone operators had been as common as snow in winter.

“Remember your old friend, Molly Flynn?” Clark asked, an apparent non sequitur. However, she wasn’t surprised. Her mind had been walking down the same path.

Molly had been one of Lois’s closest friends in college, despite their differing interests. Molly had been a computer genius; Lois, a headstrong, brilliant journalism major. When their paths crossed again a few years later, Lois was understandably surprised to find that Molly had entirely renounced technology. She had even written a book, “Technology Is Killing Us!” Lois hadn’t agreed with her at the time. She and Clark had even argued about it, Lois staunchly defending technological advancements as indispensable. Now...

Clark continued. “Sometimes I can really see Molly’s point about technology. It has made such a difference in our lives. Search engines make research so much easier. Smart phones are so addictive I can’t imagine living without one. It’s even easier to stay in contact with people through social networking sites.”

He paused. “But you’ve got to admit, technology is also separating us. These days, between e-mails, texts, blogs, and IMs, you could seriously go the rest of your life without talking to a single human being.”

Stung, Lois retorted, “I talk to people. I talk to people all the time!” She spun around within the circle of his arms until they faced each other. He looked incredibly tired, but a spark of humor flared in his gaze. It warmed her.

“Lois, you aren’t exactly the most garrulous person who’s ever lived.” He paused for a moment. “Except when you’re in babble-mode,” he added thoughtfully.

At her pointed glare, he quirked his right eyebrow. “Fine. Name *one* person you actually talked to in the last twenty-four hours,” he challenged her.

That was easy. “You,” she replied succinctly, answering the grin that he was trying (and failing) to suppress.

Clark rolled his eyes. “I mean before I got home.”

Lois considered for several moments, mentally ticking through all of the people she talked to the most.

Clark. Clark had been out all day as Superman helping clean up the chemical spill out in Hobb’s Bay. No help there.

Her coworkers. To better cover for Clark’s absence, she had telecommuted to work today, communicating with all her colleagues exclusively through e-mail and text messages from both her and Clark’s Planet accounts. Nothing there, either.

Her children. L.J. and Marta, their two teenage daughters, were spending the week in Smallville, and hadn’t had time to check in. She was batting zero for three.

But surely she had spoken to *someone* today. A coffee boy, a mailman, her cable repairman...someone???

Finally, she had her answer. Lois grinned in triumph.

“Well,” she said, “I talked to Siri!”

THE END