

In Too Deep

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Summary: After the late night stakeout in the episode “Target Jimmy Olsen,” Clark Kent does some soul-searching and has a long overdue conversation with a certain reporter. Is it too late to mend what’s already been broken?

Clark Kent stared at the night sky, crystal clear in the brutal arctic air. He had responded to a call for help early this morning after Lois had dropped him off at his apartment. He was supposed to be sleeping, but sleep was the last thing on his mind.

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“But that would have to mean that I found you... Clark, you were sprayed. How come you didn’t fall for me?”

“I guess I’m just not attracted to you, Lois.”

“Liar! You are so attracted to me.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“You don’t **need** a partner, Lois. You never did.”

“Maybe not, but I was starting to like having one.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“I have been in love with you...for a long time. You had to have known.”>>

<<“If you had no powers, if you were just an ordinary man leading an ordinary life, I’d love you just the same. Can’t you believe that?”

“I wish I could Lois but under the circumstances I don’t see how I can.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Where’s Clark?”

“Right here.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

What a difference a year had made for him and Lois. A year ago, it took an act of God and the threat of losing everything for her to admit she cared about him as anything more than a colleague. Their friendship had been tested through the trials of misunderstandings, suspicions, near-miss revelations and, most of all, his distaste toward Lex Luthor.

Her engagement to the criminal mastermind had nearly broken them. With the Planet gone and all his friends and former co-workers out of work and floundering, trying to find where the next step was, he had become consumed with bringing Lex Luthor down so he could keep Lois from making the biggest mistake of her life. It was no longer about hurt feelings, or bruised ego but rather keeping her safe.

“That’s what it’s always been about,” his mind reminded him. As far back as he could remember he’d taken on the role of protector, doing what he could to keep her out of harm’s way...as Superman and as Clark.

For the longest time, it was only Superman she showed any gratitude toward. That had changed in the past year, though.

A lot had changed.

<<“I don’t want to die.”

“Lois, I would never let that happen.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“I know our relationship has always been ...difficult to define. But, when I thought about how much I missed you, how much I was going to miss you for the rest of my life...well, I

started to think maybe there’s more to our relationship than just friendship.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Oh, Clark, I don’t care if he used Crazy Glue! You’re back!”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Clark, that’s not what attracts me. It’s his intelligence and caring. He has integrity and innate goodness. I mean...he’s a lot like you.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Lois, yesterday you saved my life. I want you to know... I’ll never forget that.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<“I want you to know that I think what you did for Clark took incredible bravery.”

“It was nothing.”

“Was it?”

“No, I guess not. I guess there isn’t anything I wouldn’t do for him.”

“I think you two are very lucky to have each other.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

He’d spent months, balancing the line of friend and confidant to something more. The memory of her rejection of him had kept him at arm’s length for the longest time until he finally had summed up the courage to try again.

He’d felt the connection from their first meeting and with every touch, laugh, and smile they’d shared. He knew Lois Lane was the one for him. The question was, would she ever look at Clark Kent the way she did Superman? Would she ever see him for who he really was?

The only way to find out was to try.

<<“A date? You mean a real date? Like where I take out my best perfume, the one I bought after seeing Love Affair, the good one not the remake, and put a dab behind my knee, and I don’t know why?”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“It’s not that easy. I mean it’s easy for you because you’ve already had time to think about it. You’ve had a chance to plan what you wanted to say...and what you’d say depending on what I’d say back...and...”

“Lois...I’m asking you out, not to negotiate a nuclear arms treaty.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Lois, I’m asking **you** out.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“I mean, we work together. What happens if...you know...it bombs?”

“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“But everything seemed to just... ‘work.’ That’s why I can never see you again.”

“Lois?”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Lois, this isn’t the best time, but I’ve always wanted to tell you something—”

“I like you too, Clark. I’m sorry what I did on our date.”>>

<<“We’ll always be friends.”>>

<<“Lois, I really don’t know how to say this, but...why did you come back for me at the factory tonight? I mean, you were running back into an atomic explosion.”

“It doesn’t make sense, does it? I just knew...I couldn’t leave you.”

“You slammed the door in my face last night.”

“That was a...mistake.”

“Don’t let it happen again...Fortunately, there’re no doors now.”

“Fortunately...”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

One date.

One almost date.

One kiss.

That was all he had to show for the months of waiting and hoping. Finally, Lois Lane was seeing him—Clark Kent—as someone more than just a friend or colleague. Finally, they were on the way to begin taking the steps in building something more.

It had been amazing. Seeing Lois look at him that way had been the answer to prayers and dreams that had plagued him for nearly two years. Everything they’d been through, every trial and fight and heartache had been worth it to see her look back at him like that. He remembered how perfect the world seemed the night he’d kissed her.

‘Perfect.’ That’s what he had thought when his lips had touched hers. He had only meant to share a brief kiss with her, afraid of scaring her off with how powerful the yearning and desire he felt for her was. He’d only meant it to be brief, but the spark he’d felt, fueled with the way she’d responded to him made it so much more. He knew in that moment that the feelings he’d been harboring and desires he’d felt from their first meeting were not unrequited.

It was a victory short-lived; however, due to the tragedy that came a few milliseconds afterward. He still couldn’t think of that night without being reminded of the devastating sound of the car bomb a few blocks away. He couldn’t think about anything other than the guilt he’d felt over Mayson’s death.

<< “The last thing she said was ‘Resurrection.’ What was she trying to tell me?”

“Maybe you’d like a few minutes alone...to say goodbye.”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

<< “I need to know...if I’m yesterday’s news?”

“What?”

“You know. Stale, old. It’s been over a week since our first date...and...our first kiss. And...you haven’t said a word about it. It’s like...it never happened.”

“Lois, I’m sorry if it feels like I’ve been ignoring you lately, but...”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

<< “Chief, I’m not really sure I’m comfortable talking about this.”

“Well, I don’t wanna sound like an alarmist, but it just seems like to me that this Scardino character has already got one paw in the chicken coop.”

“Chief, there’s nothing more for me to do. She knows how I feel. I thought I knew how she felt.”

“If you ask me you’re doing too much thinking and not enough doing.”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

Anything and everything since Mayson’s death had been the wrong thing it felt like. He was stuck. He knew it, and Lois knew it too. Crippled by his whole consuming guilt that prevented him from moving forward or daring to take a chance.

He didn’t know what to do.

That was the problem. That had been the problem for the last few weeks. Now, even Perry felt the need to weigh in on the relationship—or what was left of it—of his top reporters. That had been a punch to the gut.

<< “Another late-night stakeout.”

“You know, it seems like a stakeout is the only way we can spend any time alone together these days.”

“You think it means something? Like, on a cosmic level?”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

<< “I know that there are things that I’d like to get clear about us and our relationship.”

“I’m glad you said that. I’ve been having feelings lately...”

“Help me!”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

<< “Scardino, if you wanna chase Lois, that’s your business. When you start doing it on my time, that’s my business. So I’d appreciate it if you’d let us do our job...Alone.”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

<< “I guess he’s starting to get on my nerves a bit.”

“Really? At least he doesn’t run out on me every time I have something important to say.”>>

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

He was losing his best friend.

The promise he’d made to her when he’d started down this road weighed heavily on his mind. He’d promised they’d always be friends, but as of lately he didn’t feel like either of them had acted like friends to one another. That, coupled with the complications life threw their way, and a certain DEA Agent that didn’t understand the word boundary was a recipe for disaster.

He could sit back and do nothing, watch everything he’d worked for slip away or he could do something about it. Determination crossed his face as he levitated off the cold ice he’d been sitting on for the last few hours. He had to fix things before they got any worse. His decision made, he propelled himself into the early morning sky, heading back to Metropolis, ready to embark on a long overdue conversation.

Lois Lane stared at the red digits on her clock for the umpteenth time. She couldn’t sleep. For the first time, she actually felt uncomfortable being around her partner. They’d spent the entire night not talking to one another while staking out Dr. Katherine Wilder’s office.

<< “We’ll always be friends.”>>

That promise from months ago seemed like a pipe dream now. The two people that made that promise were idiots. This was precisely what she didn’t want to happen. This was why every time she got close to admitting how she felt—how she really felt—she pulled away. Now it was too late. Everything seemed to be falling apart around her.

No more late night movies.

No more showing up at one another’s apartment with a pizza because they just wanted to hang out.

No more talking into the night about whatever was on her mind.

It was gone.

<< “Chocolate will always be there.”>>

The bad advice from her new temporary roommate weighed heavily on her. She wasn’t sure how to react when Sarah had had the nerve to compare the men in her life to ice cream of all things. Clark was her safety net as Sarah had put it and Dan was the mysterious new flavor. It wasn’t too far from the truth, but it felt like an insult to quantify her relationship with Clark as a simple flavor of ice cream.

He was more. Truth be told, he had been more for a long time now, she just hadn’t had the nerve to take the plunge and open her heart to the possibility of more. Oh, how she wanted more. She wanted so much more.

She sighed, deciding that sleep just wasn’t meant to come despite the late night stakeout. She made her way to the bathroom, preparing to take a shower and get ready for the day. Maybe she’d go into the Planet and see if she could make some headway on their investigation into Project Valhalla. At least it was something she could do something about.

Clark landed outside Lois’ apartment with a bag of croissants and coffee from his favorite bakery in Bordeaux. He quickly spun into his suit and tie, turning the corner to where her apartment building was. For the most part, the block was quiet. A few vendors on the corner were cleaning up from their early morning rush. He glanced at the time, reading ‘10:03’ on his watch and

sighed. Hopefully, she was still at home and hadn't decided to go in early.

He stopped short when he saw the familiar DEA Agent at one of the coffee carts across the street. *'Not now.'* he thought to himself. He really didn't want to have to deal with Daniel Scardino so soon after last night.

He took a deep breath, preparing himself for the conversation he was about to have. His heart grew heavy with each step, knowing if this conversation didn't go well he could risk losing everything. A quick trip up the stairs later, he was face to face with the numbers '503' as he prepared himself to knock on the door.

He lifted his arm to knock on the door just as it swung open, "Hi," He quickly dropped his arm, coming face to face with Lois dressed in a sweatshirt and shorts. He could smell the cucumber melon scent from her hair that was still partially damp from her shower.

"Hi," Her eyes met his briefly before she looked down, "I was just heading out to grab a cup of..." He stopped her, handing her the cup of coffee he'd brought. She took it, offering a half-smile, "Thanks,"

"I thought we could..." He said, meeting her gaze as she took a sip of her coffee, holding it with one hand as she pulled the door open for him, motioning for him to come inside.

"Talk?" She guessed as he stepped inside, closing the door behind him.

"Yeah," He said quietly, cracking a smile at her.

'Just say it.' his mind screamed at him as she stared back at him expectantly. Her dark brown eyes stared back at him from over the rim of her coffee cup, and he continued.

"Last night...the last several weeks really things have been strained to put it mildly." He took a breath as he paced nervously in front of her, feeling his emotions threaten to overtake him. "...and I know a lot of that's my fault. I promised we would always be friends and then..."

"I think we're both guilty of that," Lois admitted sheepishly, taking a step toward him. "It's been a rough few weeks."

"Yeah, it has," He heard a hitch in his voice and cleared his throat, continuing with what he desperately needed to say before fear overtook him. "But that's no excuse."

"I know, but I'm trying to offer you an out." She flashed a weak smile.

"I don't want an out." He took another step toward her, closing the distance between them. "I want my best friend back."

"I want mine back too." She admitted, the corners of her eyes glistened with the unshed tears she was holding back, and he hung his head, reaching out to cup her cheek. "God, you have no idea..." she swatted his chest. "I don't want to lose you. I don't know what happened. It was like all of a sudden we stopped being friends. You just cut me out and won't talk to me. I know Mayson's death was hard," she reached up to put a hand on his cheek, and he thought he would crumble right there.

<<"Resurrection.">>

<<"So, that's what you've been hiding...">>

<<"Yesterday's news.">>

"It was," he admitted, feeling the guilt begin to build up once more. 'No.' he squashed it down, choosing his words carefully as he looked back at her. "I guess, in a way I blamed myself. I thought if I'd been a little faster I might have been able to save her...I shouldn't have pushed you away. I'm so sorry."

"Oh, Clark," she ran the outside of her index and middle fingers against his jaw. "There is nothing you could have done. You read the report. The minute she put her key in that car..."

"I know," he cut her off, not wanting to revisit the painful details that surrounded Mayson's death. That wasn't why he was here. "You're not yesterday's news. You mean everything to me, Lois." He allowed his arm to move around her waist. "I'm sorry I ever let you feel that way or think that. You're my best friend and I

know I haven't acted like that these past few weeks. If you can forgive me I promise I will make it up to you." He could hear the strain in his own voice as he spoke and swallowed the hard lump in his throat. No going back. No more hiding.

A single tear fell from her eyes, and he felt like he'd been punched in the gut. She pulled her hand back, wiping the tear away, "So where do we go from here?"

"I don't know." He admitted, brushing his thumb against her cheek, unsure of what to do next. "I guess we figure out how to..." He could hear her heart rate pick up as he stood there with his hand on her cheek and her breath close enough for him to make out the mocha scent. It would be so easy to throw caution to the wind and give into the desires he'd been suppressing.

<<"If you ask me you're doing too much thinking and not enough doing.">>

"Figure out what?" she asked, looking back at him expectantly.

"Figure out what?"

Lois let out a low moan as Clark's hands moved to both sides of her face and his lips found hers. She murmured her approval, dropping the cup of coffee to allow her the freedom to run her hands through his hair and give this kiss the attention it so desperately needed.

"Oh!" She let out a sharp gasp, feeling his body lean into hers. His hand moved to catch the cup at the last second, setting it on the counter behind her. She sighed against him, running her hands through his dark, silky hair.

"I love you, Lois," he murmured against her lips. His hands moved down the side of her face, outlining her neck with one hand and the frame of her face with the other as his lips devoured hers. His hand cupped her cheek, running his hand through her hair. "I've always loved you."

"I love you too," she sighed happily, running her hands up and down the front of his cotton shirt, toying with the red and black silk tie.

There it was. The Confession. She couldn't hide from her feelings any longer any more than he could his. No more running. No more hiding. No more lying to herself. No more...

"Really?" His hands buried themselves in her hair as his lips grew more and more insistent against hers.

"Really," she whispered back to him and it felt like a floodgate had opened. The passion she'd felt from the time their lips first met moments ago multiplied tenfold as he poured his soul into the act of kissing her.

Every touch, every caress didn't seem to be able to satisfy her insatiable desire for more. She needed to be closer. She needed to kiss him deeper. She needed to hold him closer. She needed to feel him...

His hands roamed up and down her sides. Her hands moved up the back of his head, burying her fingers in his dark silky hair.

It was becoming increasingly hot and uncomfortable standing in the middle of her apartment like this. He seemed to read her mind, lifting her up, allowing her legs to wrap around his waist as he carried her toward the couch, never losing contact with her lips.

If Clark ever had the desire to kill anyone in his life it would have been in that moment he heard Jimmy's voice echo from the other side of Lois' door. "Lois? Are you home?"

"Oh, no, no, no, no," Lois whimpered against his lips, pulling away and resting her forehead against his shoulder.

Any other time he would have opted to ignore the knocks. It had been almost a month since his and Lois' first date. Almost a month since he'd last held her in his arms and kissed her. So much had happened since then and now all he wanted to do was hold her in his arms and never let go.

<<"I love you too.">>

She loved him.
Not Superman.
Clark.

Remorse and guilt threatened to overtake him at the realization that he still needed to tell her about his alter-ego. He couldn't continue lying to her...hurting her the way he had. He had to tell her.

"Don't move," Lois said, tapping him on the nose with her index finger playfully before she sprung up from the couch to answer the door. Despite the orders not to move, he followed her to the door. Jimmy's face was stern when she opened the door, "Jimmy, what're you doing here?" she asked.

He seemed startled to see Clark there but quickly recovered, "Oh, I left my wallet here last night."

Clark frowned, looking at his friend as Lois let him in. There was something off, but he just couldn't put his finger on it. Lois shrugged, "Really? I didn't see it." She motioned to the living room, "You're welcome to take a look."

"Thanks," Jimmy smiled, staring back at the couple. His tone still felt off.

"My patience is growing thin, Mrs. Wilder. If Mr. Olsen doesn't carry through with the assassination our business is done."

"Mr. Muunour, I assure you you won't be disappointed."

Realization dawned on Clark as he stared at his young friend. He moved toward him, keeping himself between Lois and Jimmy to protect her against whatever Jimmy had planned.

"You should get going, CK," Jimmy warned, tightening his hand on the belt that was wrapped around it.

"I'm not going anywhere." Clark responded, throwing a look at Lois and mouthed, *'Get out of here now.'*

Before he could react, Jimmy lunged toward Clark. He fell back a few feet and heard Lois yelp in surprise. "Jimmy, stop it!" he shouted as he struggled from beneath his friend's swinging fists. He struggled to keep up appearances in front of Lois, knowing he would have a lot of explaining to do if he were to give himself away. Having her find out about his alter-ego by accident wasn't how he wanted the revelation to come out.

"Leave him alone!" Lois attempted to pull Jimmy off Clark.

"Jimmy, you've been brainwashed," he attempted to plead with his friend.

A flash of red in Jimmy's eyes came and went before he responded, "As you wish,"

"No!" He grabbed Jimmy by the collar, preventing him from going after her, "Lois, run!" He remembered a trick an old Cantonese medicine man had taught him during his travels and reached up to apply pressure to the nerve behind his young friend's neck—just enough to render him unconscious.

"What did you do?" Lois asked, standing over him in surprise, helping him to his feet.

"He'll be fine. I just knocked him out. We need to get him to a hospital before he comes to." Clark said hurriedly, walking toward the kitchen where Lois' phone was.

"What have you done!?" a familiar voice accused and he turned to see Katherine Wilder standing in the doorway with her mother, Claudette Wilder, and an unknown middle eastern man.

"I have a feeling I should be asking you that question." A voice came from the hallway. They turned to see Dan Scardino holding his service weapon on the trio. The unknown man attempted to charge Scardino and found himself blocked with a swift punch to the gut, "Whoa there, cowboy!"

Clark sighed in relief. He never thought he'd be grateful to see the DEA Agent. Scardino looked at them, surprised to see Clark standing there with Lois. "I'm guessing these guys aren't Jehovah's Witnesses." He frowned when he spotted Jimmy on the floor. "What's up with Olsen?"

"I...knocked him out," Clark explained sheepishly.

"Those two brainwashed him to try and kill us," Lois explained before Scardino could ask why.

"You can't prove anything." Claudette sniffed.

"Mother, hush!" Katherine ordered.

"Ladies, please!" the unknown man groaned.

"Well, lucky me, I've got some matching accessories for all three of you until we sort all this out downtown," Scardino said, holding up the handcuffs, reaching over to slap the metal bracelets on the three of them. "Come on, we can catch up downtown."

Lois sighed in relief, looking around her apartment and the mess that had been left by the police. The EMTs had restrained Jimmy to ensure he wouldn't be a danger to himself. He was just starting to come to when they'd arrived.

The police had taken their statements and then followed Jimmy to the hospital. Clark had called Perry to let him know what had happened. After hearing about their ordeal, Perry had ordered them to take the rest of the day off and keep him posted on Jimmy's status.

Just another day. Another close call but, surprisingly, Superman had been nowhere in sight. It hadn't even occurred to her to call for him amidst the chaos of fighting Jimmy. Why was that?

"You okay?" Clark's voice came from behind her.

She nodded, turning to face him, "Just thinking I guess."

"Yeah," He looked down, reaching for her hand as he spoke.

"I guess there are some things we need to talk about."

"I guess there are," she agreed, a slow smile crossed her face.

"How about dinner tonight?" he offered. "I know this really great Italian restaurant and..."

"How about dinner and conversation with...less of an audience," she suggested, feeling bold after the recent revelation. There was a lot she wanted to talk to him about, but she'd rather not do it in the middle of a crowded restaurant.

"Anything you want," he promised.

"Anything?" she challenged.

"Anything," he leaned into her, sealing his promise with a kiss.

THE END

This story continues in "[Like a Wrecking Ball](#)."