

Hold On

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Rated: G

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Summary: The final part in the “*Shattered*” series. Lois and Clark both face up to their faults and have a long-awaited conversation. Set after the episode “*Resurrection*” in canon.

Story Size: 1,696 words (9Kb as text)

This story is the last in a trilogy, following “[Shattered](#)” and “[Fragments](#).”

‘How did we get here?’

That was the question that had been running through Lois Lane’s mind for the last hour and a half as she struggled to pay attention to the comedy of Adam Sandler on the silver screen. It probably would have been an enjoyable movie had she not spent the last hour and a half stealing glances at Clark, trying to read between the lines of everything he said and did.

<< “*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...*”>>

‘*But what?*’ She wondered to herself. What was he trying to say before Dan showed up at her door. It felt like the weight of the world was pressing down on her as she tried to process everything over the last few weeks.

How long was too long? When did the distance and the loneliness become more than just him grieving Mayson’s death? Had it really only been a few weeks? It felt like so much longer. Patience never was her strong suit.

<< “*What would you say if I asked you out sometime?*”

“*Are you asking me out?*”

“*I didn’t say that. I said what would you say if I did?*”

“*I don’t know.*”>>

<< “*Looks like you have some choices to make.*”>>

She still wasn’t sure what to do. She wasn’t even sure what tonight was supposed to be. Clark had been distant most of the evening and trying to read his mind was like trying to translate Greek. What she wouldn’t give for a chance to rewind back to that night of their first official date and change things. Had she not slammed the door in his face would they be in a different place here? Would he still be shutting her out?

She felt a wave of guilt wash over her as she realized how selfish she sounded right now. Mayson had literally died in his arms and she couldn’t wait more than two weeks to ask the dreaded ‘where is this going’ question.

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

<< “*I don’t know.*”>>

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

“*We’ll always be friends.*”>>

Something was broken and she had no idea how to fix it. The question Dan had asked her earlier kept pushing its way to the forefront of her mind making everything all that more complicated. She never in a million years would have thought she’d be in a situation like this. Two years of friendship and working together and all of a sudden everything that had made sense before vaporized into a dark cloud. She never would have thought there would ever be a time when she’d dread seeing Clark,

but now here she was facing the reality that what had been there for two years might have faded into nothingness the night Mayson died.

The movie—if you could even call it that—had been a waste of time. Clark Kent knew from the moment he sat down next to Lois in the dark theater there was something off. She seemed distant. The normal things she’d typically laugh at had barely cracked a smile from her.

How had things become so broken in just a few weeks?

He wanted more than anything to rewind everything back to two weeks ago. If he could have just gotten to Mayson in time maybe things wouldn’t be so fragmented. He certainly wouldn’t have been trapped inside the prison of his own guilt and depression that kept him from doing anything but his job at the Planet and constantly patrolling the city to make sure he didn’t make the same mistake again.

He’d been too late.

He’d been too late and Mayson had lost her life because of that.

Now everything was falling apart at the seams. He felt stuck—frozen in place, unable to go forward and unable to go backward. Apparently Lois felt the same way. She told Agent-Call-Me-Dan-Scardino she didn’t know what she would say if the DEA Agent asked her out. With everything on the line, she didn’t know.

Though, given the current state of their relationship, he couldn’t really argue the point. What was she supposed to think when he had yet to do anything more than bury himself in the task of finding Mayson’s killer. Lois had helped him. She hadn’t exactly been friendly with Mayson but she’d helped him because she knew it was important to him.

Thinking back, he couldn’t recall the last time he and Lois had spent any time together other than for work. The evening he’d come over to review Sean McCarthy’s letters with Lois she’d tried to start a conversation about how she was feeling but, like always, Dan Scardino showed up—interrupting them like he always seemed to since his arrival in Metropolis three days ago.

<< “*What would you say if I asked you out sometime?*”

“*Are you asking me out?*”

“*I didn’t say that. I said what would you say if I did?*”

“*I don’t know.*”>>

A bitter bile rose in his throat as the realization of just how close he was to losing everything became more and more apparent. If he didn’t do something drastic soon when Scardino did ask Lois that question her question could change from ‘*I don’t know*’ to ‘*yes*.’

<< “*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...*”>>

‘*But what?*’ Lois’ mind screamed as she walked out of the theater with Clark a few feet behind her. She could feel the lump in her throat threaten to become too much for her. She wanted an answer—she needed an answer. Not an hour from now. Not a week or a month from now. She needed to know. She couldn’t afford to get drawn into another relationship that was doomed from the start. She had to know.

She reached the double doors leading out into the front of the theater and took a deep breath, steadying herself as she mentally prepared herself for the possibility that she might not like the answer when she asked her question.

What if the answer was ‘*but I can’t do this?*’ What would she do? She’d become painstakingly aware just how strong her feelings for Clark were over the last few months. Even more so two weeks ago when they’d shared their first *real* kiss.

Two weeks ago she would have found an excuse to linger outside the theater or made an excuse to touch him. Two weeks ago she wouldn't be wondering if she was slowly losing her best friend to a relationship that was doomed to fail. Two weeks ago...

Finally mustering up the courage, she slowed down her pace, coming to a stop by one of the round columns next to the poster advertising butter popcorn and coca cola. Was she really going to do this next to an ad for soda and popcorn?

His eyes met hers and she felt her insides flutter, recalling how close they'd been just two short weeks ago. Now things were fragmented and she had no idea how to get back to where they'd been. She wasn't even sure what tonight was. Was it a date? Was it a friendly outing?

"Lois," she heard Clark say at the same time she said his name.

She bit her lower-lip, suppressing the urge to laugh at the familiarity of the moment. She had suspected Clark had lied when he'd taken back his confession in front of the Planet for some time but she never called him on it. At the time it was something she needed desperately—a chance to return things to how they'd been with as little damage as possible.

"You never answered my question," she said, clearing her throat. "From the other day." At his confused expression she elaborated with a tremble to her voice. "What are we doing here? What is this? I am trying to be patient and I just...I'm at the point I need to know. Am I yesterday's news? I mean, what is this?"

His eyes shifted down uncomfortably and for a split-second she thought she was would fall apart right there. Then he looked up at her with a tender expression and whispered, "I know, things have been strained lately. I'm sorry,"

"You didn't answer the question," she pointed out.

"You're not yesterday's news, Lois," he let out a heavy sigh

Relief flooded through her and she looked back at him for confirmation, "Really?"

"Really," he repeated, hanging his head in defeat, "I'm sorry. I've just had a really hard time working through everything."

Lois twisted her mouth for a split-second uncertain what to make of his still defeated expression. She sighed, taking a step toward him, "You can't expect to get over something like that overnight, Clark. Losing someone like that is...traumatizing."

"So I've been told," he replied solemnly.

"You know you can talk to me," she cleared her throat. "I was there. I get it, but what I don't get is why you keep pushing me away. We're supposed to be friends and lately it feels..." His hand moved the cup her cheek and she felt her voice tremble as she let out a whimper.

"I didn't think you wanted to hear about it," he said, looking back at her with a sympathetic look.

"If it makes this," she motioned between the two of them, "feel less strained then yeah. I want to talk about it."

A smile crossed his face and he nodded, "You want to get some coffee," he pointed to the coffee shop across the street. "and talk?"

A pained smile crossed her face, "Yeah."

THE END