

Mostly Dead

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Summary: A vignette set during the episode "And The Answer Is..." A Plot Un-Twist story.

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Standard character disclaimers apply; they're not mine. The first lines are taken directly from "And The Answer Is..." by Tony Blake & Paul Jackson. Also, thanks to Kathy for the quick read-through.

"Freeze you?" Superman asked incredulously.

"Like cryogenics... people who fall in frozen lakes but get revived? You freeze me with your breath, fast — I've seen you do it a hundred times — then it looks like I'm dead, you bring the body and..."

"Lois," Superman interrupted. "Do you have any idea how dangerous that is? There could be arterial ruptures, permanent brain damage... you could die."

"Yes. I could die," she agreed calmly. "But Clark's parents will die unless we help."

When Superman hesitated, Lois began to plead, "Please, Superman. You haven't seen him..." Lois choked back a sob at the memory of Clark's tortured face. "You don't know what he's going through."

Superman opened his mouth to disagree, to tell Lois that he did understand what Clark was going through, but Lois acted before he got the chance.

Lois thought that Superman was going to argue some more, so she stepped in close to him to lay her heart bare. "He needs me and I've never needed you more than right now. You can't turn me down... you can't."

Clark felt torn. How was he supposed to choose between his parents and the woman that he loved? It was an impossible choice, made even harder by Lois' complicity. His mind grabbed her idea like a lifeline; he could do it. Freeze her quickly and fly her to the airbase. If he could free his parents from Mazik's prison within a few minutes, her brain wouldn't be permanently damaged from oxygen deprivation.

He played out the scenario quickly, but despaired at his chances. Mazik lied about his demands to have Superman steal for him. There was no guarantee that his parents would be freed if he brought Lois' seemingly dead body to him either. He thought of his parents, too. What must they be going through? He wished he could talk to them and ask their advice.

He didn't really need to, though. He could already envision his father's disapproving expression and his mother's lecture. They would never agree to a plan that put Lois' life in danger. They would rather choose to die together at the hands of a madman than for Lois to suffer for them.

Clark looked at Lois again, her eyes full of tears and pain. He couldn't believe that she was willing to do this for him. He knew beyond a doubt that Lois loved him. She was willing to sacrifice everything for him and he hadn't even been honest with her about himself. He'd done this to her, without even telling her who she was doing it for.

"No, Lois. I can't. It's too dangerous and there is no guarantee that Mazik would even keep his word. Your plan is too

risky."

"Please, Superman. There's no other way."

Clark turned away from her and started pacing, his hand rubbing the back of his neck. "There *has* to be another way to get my...Martha and Jonathan away from Mazik without endangering your life."

"It will work," Lois bit out, angered by the superhero's recalcitrance. "Besides you'll only give me the appearance of death. I won't be completely dead — only mostly dead."

"This isn't a joke, Lois! The only way to make you appear dead is to essentially kill you and pray that I revive you quickly enough. I can't do it!"

Lois noted the anguish in Superman's eyes and didn't immediately respond with another argument in favor of freezing her into a catatonic state. Something Superman had said had grabbed her attention. "Okay, so if freezing is out, what other ways can I appear to be dead? He'll want to verify that I'm at least not breathing and that he can't feel a pulse, right? Are there any other ways?"

Superman's forehead pinched together in concentration. "I met several healers and wise men in my travels throughout the world that could put their bodies into a trance, slowing their bodily functions to practically nothing. Without sophisticated equipment, it would be impossible to tell the difference. But, Lois, it took those men *years* of practice."

"Well, then how can we duplicate it in the next five minutes?"

"I don't know; maybe hypnosis?" Superman ventured. "Remember when those kids were being kidnapped and Constance hypnotized us? Dr. Novak is gone, but Romick might be able to duplicate a trance like that." Clark wasn't sure that Romick had the necessary skills, but Constance might. However, she was in a maximum-security prison and the red tape alone would take even Superman hours to penetrate. He shook his head and looked to Lois for advice. She had become suspiciously quiet.

"Lois, what...?" Uh-oh. He knew that look. "Lois, what are you thinking?"

"I need something that will give me the appearance of death, something that has been tested successfully with no long-lasting effects, right?"

They looked at each other with growing delight and said together, "Resurrection!"

"How did you know about..." Lois started suspiciously, but Clark cut her off, too excited by the idea to think about Lois' question.

"How in the world could we get some of the drug on such short notice?"

Lois shelved her suspicious questions about Superman's knowledge and reached for her cell phone. "Don't worry — I know guys who know guys. Let me call my contact at the DEA."

Superman's eyes narrowed and he crossed his arms defensively. "You have Scardino's number on speed dial?"

Lois paused as she lifted the phone to her ear. With the wrong tone of voice and his petulant expression, the truth dawned on Lois at the same time that Clark realized his danger. He turned and took a cowardly step toward the window when Lois' commanding voice froze him in his tracks.

"Don't take another step, Clark... Hi, Dan, it's Lois. Hang on a sec." Lois covered the mouthpiece with one hand and glowered at the sheepish superhero. "When all of this is over, you and I are going to have a serious talk."

THE END