

# Suddenly I See

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Rated: PG

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Summary: When Superman is almost too late to save the day, Lois is badly injured. Later in the hospital she starts making connections. Post Season 1.

Author's Notes: I recently rediscovered "Lois and Clark -- The New Adventures of Superman" via Netflix with my daughter. After I finished watching Season 1, I felt the urge to play with these characters. Secret identities are so much fun.

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[Hang in there, Lois.]

In the murky haze surrounding her, she clung to the sound of that voice.

[I've got you. You're gonna be okay. ]

[You've got to be.]

[I can't lose you.]

Powerful arms lifted her into the air, holding her tightly.

Superman was with her. He'd saved her after all.

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Her head ached, the slightest motion nauseating her. Trying to remain still, she struggled to orient herself. Slowly she opened her eyes. An IV drip was attached to her right arm, the machinery of the pump softly humming. Her left forearm was enclosed by a plaster cast. A gauze dressing covered her left thigh. When she tilted her head to attempt to see farther, a sharp twinge in her ribs caused her to gasp.

"How are you feeling?" a middle-aged black nurse clad in bright lavender scrubs asked.

"I'm not sure. It hurts." Lois' voice was weak. She'd always been a lousy patient. She couldn't stand staying still.

"You're lucky to be alive. Get some rest."

Feeling woozy, Lois needed no further encouragement. Her eyes closed of their own volition.

She continued to drift in and out of consciousness. At one point the voice returned, keeping her company. A strong hand firmly gripped hers. She was too out of it to squeeze it back yet the warmth it provided was reassuring. It kept her anchored to this realm.

[Lois, you're gonna be alright.]

Superman was here.

It was starting to come back to her.

She and Clark had been investigating the theft of enough plutonium to assemble a powerful nuclear device. They'd been shocked when their research of a terrorist group had led them directly to Jack Tamerain, the billionaire, who was renowned for his charitable organizations. Despite her recent experience with Lex Luther, Lois had been reluctant to believe it. In fact, she and Clark had even argued about it. With much persuading, Clark had finally convinced her to infiltrate his office only to discover the allegations were true.

That's when things had gotten a little crazy.

They'd been caught raiding Tamerain's office. It had all happened so quickly. Clark had valiantly tried to protect her, stepping between her and the two thugs. He'd been caught off guard, hit soundly in the head with the butt of a rifle. The sound had sickened her. They'd roughly shoved aside Clark's unconscious body. Then they'd dragged her, kicking and screaming, to Jack Tamerain's secret lair where he'd proudly announced his intentions of starting World War III with an errant nuclear detonation conveniently blamed on some other country.

When Superman had finally arrived, Tamerain had gloated that the device had already been launched and would take out Los Angeles within minutes.

Superman had turned to Lois.

"Go Superman! Go!" she'd urged.

Even though she feared Tamerain planned to dispose of her, the lives of millions of people trumped hers. Besides, she could take care of herself.

Right.

It was a little embarrassing how much she counted on Superman. Priding herself to be an independent woman, it bothered her that she couldn't always get herself out of these predicaments. Luckily she'd noticed Tamerain removing his pistol from his jacket so she'd started to run. She hadn't gotten very far. She'd collapsed when the bullet hit her thigh, causing an explosion of agony. Yet she could handle that.

Then Tamerain informed her that he was blowing up the evidence of his illicit laboratory and her along with it. "And your nosy partner too."

With that, Tamerain took off, leaving her behind. Lois had been panicked. Clark was nowhere to be seen. Superman was racing a nuclear missile aimed towards millions of people living in Los Angeles. She could barely crawl due to the intense throbbing of the bullet wound. She had to get out of there. By the time she'd frantically pulled herself several feet along the ground, the bomb had detonated, bringing the building down on top of her.

[You have to be alright.]

[I can't lose you.]

[I love you.]

Had Superman really said that? That sounded more like her desires were shading the truth. But the rest, she was sure of. She'd felt his sturdy arms about her as he'd lifted her out of the wreckage. He'd been her lifeline. He'd guided her

back to reality.

Later, she opened her eyes, fully expecting to see the Man of Steel.

Where was he?

She chided herself for being naïve. Superman didn't have time to camp by her bedside. Perhaps he'd been flying in to check on her between jobs? That must be it.

The only other person in the room with her was Clark Kent.

She was deeply relieved to see him. She'd been terrified that they'd stashed his unconscious body in the secret laboratory, only to be buried by debris after the bomb detonated. He was slouched in a high backed chair close to her bedside, slightly snoring with his head leaning precariously against the side of the chair. His glasses were starting to slide down his nose. She was relieved that rifle butt hadn't badly bruised his face. Yet Clark still didn't look like himself. He was wearing the same dark suit he'd donned the day of their latest caper. Yet it was badly wrinkled. The jacket had been tossed over the back of the chair with the edges of his brightly patterned tie sticking out of a pocket. His shirt collar was undone with the sleeves rolled back. A faint hint of beard framed his jawline.

She was dying to wake him up to pester him about Superman. Surely he'd been here. She'd heard his voice. Yet Clark looked so pathetic, so worn out that she didn't have the heart to bother him.

The nurse in the lavender scrubs came by.

"Excuse me," Lois croaked, trying to rise. A sharp pain held her back.

"Settle down. You're in pretty bad shape." The woman spoke in an authoritative but kindly tone that brooked no nonsense.

Uncharacteristically, Lois backed down. She wasn't feeling that well anyway. "Okay...just...you have to tell me -- was Superman here?"

"You've had some visitors but he wasn't one of them."

What?

She'd been so sure.

"Are you sure? Maybe it wasn't during your shift?"

The woman smiled. "Honey, if Superman had been here, believe me, the whole hospital would've been talking. He brought you to the ER but no one has seen him since."

Superman hadn't been here? At all?

It didn't make sense.

"Between you and me, you got your own Superman right here." She nodded towards Clark. "This one's a keeper. That man hasn't left your side in days. Since you arrived."

That sounded like Clark. He certainly was dependable.

Moments later, after the nurse had left, Clark began to stir.

"Lois!" He rose from the chair. "Are you alright?"

"I'll be okay."

Leaning over the bed, he pulled her close to his chest to engulf her in his arms.

"Well...thanks."

She wished he wouldn't hold her so tightly as her bruised ribs were starting to protest. About to complain, she

realized that Clark was trembling ever so slightly. He wasn't releasing his hold on her either. This was getting awkward.

"Clark?"

Something was off.

Good old reliable Clark. Not that he'd always backed her up. She remembered his stubborn refusal to attend her ill-fated nuptials with Lex Luther or even consider a job at his network. Even though it annoyed her to no end, she admired that he stood by what he believed. That he didn't back down like many others due to the sheer force of her personality. Clark Kent wasn't Superman, but he had her back in other ways.

He still hadn't budged. She wished she could see his face but her head was pressed against his chest. He continued to tremble. Maybe his former declaration of love hadn't been a ploy to keep her from marrying Luther as Clark had claimed. The thought unexpectedly warmed her heart.

"I let you down," Clark mumbled.

She resisted the urge to tell him he was being an idiot. Something was really wrong. She'd never seen Clark this frail, this vulnerable.

"What are you talking about? You didn't do anything wrong."

This was weird. Clark was always so level headed despite the sticky situations she'd always managed to get them into. He didn't have emotional breakdowns.

"I should've gotten there sooner. I should've figured it out faster."

Clark sounded guilty, almost tortured. It wasn't like he'd had anything to do with what happened to her. He'd been knocked unconscious trying to protect her. Why was he being so foolish?

"I should've been there sooner. I'm so sorry. I can't lose you."

There was something about his voice.

[I can't lose you.]

Clark's and Superman's voices were blending together in her mind. Superman had said the same thing when he'd retrieved her from the wreckage. Exactly. The same inflections. Even the same hint of desperation. She'd bet her life on that.

Yet, for the most part, when she'd heard that deep supportive voice, it had only been Clark speaking to her. The nurse had confirmed that Superman had never entered her room. He'd spoken to her when he'd rescued her but that had been days ago. The rest had all been Clark.

Why would she confuse Clark with Superman?

[...there are things about me you don't know, that you may never know.]

Under ordinary circumstances she might've convinced herself that she'd wanted Superman to be the man by her side so her mind made it so. It would've been a persuasive argument too. But Lois' brain wasn't firing on all cylinders at the moment. Soreness, fatigue and an anguished Clark in her arms brought to mind what the nurse had said.

[Between you and me, you got your own Superman right here.]

Clark and Superman's voices blending in her mind

wasn't due to the medication streaming through her veins or any mental games going on in Lois' brain. In that instant she knew. They were identical because they belonged to the same man. Her heart had recognized that Clark Kent and Superman were one and the same.

[It doesn't matter. I know you. And I don't mean you the celebrity or you the 'superhero.' 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?]

She was stunned. No wonder Superman had been so upset weeks before when she'd told him that she'd love him even if he were an ordinary man. Only hours before she'd rebuffed Clark's confession of love.

She nestled closer to him, feeling the uncharacteristic need to take care of him.

"You did the best you could. No one could've done more under the circumstances. It's gonna be okay -- right?"

"I'm so sorry," he mumbled.

"Clark, there's nothing to be sorry about. If you hadn't returned, I would've died. There's nothing to forgive."

She hated seeing him so distraught. As much as she appreciated his company, she worried about his physical well-being. "Maybe you should go home and take a shower? Then get some rest."

He didn't relinquish his hold on her.

Lois was running out of energy. "Look, you're exhausted. I'm exhausted. Why don't you sit beside me on the bed?"

Clark finally glanced at her. "I can't do that...I'd hurt you. Besides, Crystal wouldn't like it."

That must be the nurse in the lavender scrubs. Lois grinned. "I don't know about that. I think you made a pretty good impression on her. C'mon."

He complied, carefully positioning himself, gingerly sitting on the edge of the mattress beside her. She leaned her head against his chest as he cautiously draped his arm across her abdomen.

Lois winced.

"Sorry."

How like Clark to always think of her.

He moved his arm to a different location and then placed his hand over hers.

"How's this?"

"Wonderful." Resting against Clark was...nice. She could get used to this.

The tension in his body began to lessen, the trembling gradually stopping. Within minutes, she could feel his breathing grow more even. She was relieved he was getting some sleep.

Before she drifted off as well, there was something she had to do. She reached up to remove Clark's glasses. She studied his face while running the tip of her finger along his jawline.

How silly that she'd never noticed before.

THE END