

If Looks Could Kill

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Rated PG

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Summary: Did Clark cause Lois' death? A graveside rumination. (WHAM warning)

Warning: Deathfic ahead. Here be angst!

Disclaimer: I don't own Lois or Clark. This is a not-for-profit piece of fiction written solely for entertainment purposes.

Mark Twain once wrote, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." Many thanks to my BRs who changed a swarm of my lightning bugs into lightning, both with improvements in individual words and, on occasion, with the addition or major rewrite of entire sentences. Thanks, in alphabetical order, to DocJill, Female Hawk (Corrina), Iolanthe, Terry Leatherwood, and Sue S.

Clark stood at the graveside of his wife of ten years. "Lois, I am sorry. I am so sorry. If only I had known..." Clark murmured to her, as he had done countless times since her diagnosis of a grade IV astrocytoma in her spinal cord. The doctors told them that that type of tumor was rare but was more likely to occur in people who had been exposed to radiation.

Ironically, it was Clark's use of his X-ray vision that first revealed the tumor to be the cause of her back aches and numbness. It was inoperable because of its size and aggressive growth. So, again ironically, the doctors had tried radiation therapy. It had failed.

Clark thought back to all the times he had casually used his heat vision to warm Lois up. He thought wistfully of the very first time he had used it on her as Clark Kent, right after his marriage proposal. For a brief period, he had thought that Lois, after having revealed her knowledge of his alter ego, would agree to marry him. The pain of her subsequent rejection, which he had thought unbearable then, was as nothing compared to the agony of grief and guilt he now experienced.

He had used his heat vision on her so many times since then. So many times her extremities would be cold after the daily commute in the winter, and he had thought nothing of warming her with an eye zap. And then there were the myriad times over the years that he had used his X-ray vision on her, whether it be to check out an injury or simply to see how she was doing. How could he have been so careless and so lazy as to use his X-ray vision to look through the walls of their home instead of just getting up and walking into the next room to see what she was doing and to make sure everything was OK? Oh, sure, his vision didn't work exactly the same way that X-ray machines did, but they still called it "X-ray vision." Why hadn't the very name ever raised suspicions in his mind that repeated use of it on Lois might prove dangerous to her?

While it was true that Dr. Klein couldn't say with any certainty that exposure to Clark's special vision contributed to the creation or growth of Lois' tumor, it was also true that he could not rule out that possibility, either. Clark's finely honed sense of guilt insisted that Clark himself must surely have been the cause of it; after all, Lois had been in such vibrant health. And Clark

had promised himself he would never hurt her! How could he do this to her? How?!?

He had had these same thoughts too many times to count since that awful day when he had first seen the growth; the pain never lessened.

He sighed and placed on her grave the red roses he had brought with him.

"I love you Lois, and I always will. Happy anniversary, honey," he murmured before turning and shuffling away, hands in pockets and shoulders slumped.

THE END