

Just a Little Too Far

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Rated PG

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Description: Clark visits Lois in jail after returning from New Krypton. The story is set after Season 3, replaces the beginning of Season 4. (Titled on the Boards as “Just a Little too Far — Fantasy Ending”. The beginning of this story is the same as “Just a Little Too Much”).

Clark handed the guard his ID and then stood back for a pat down by another guard. The metal detector / body scanner was broken. When he was deemed weapon-free, Clark returned to the window. The first guard handed him back his ID, had him sign the log, and then allowed Clark to pass through to the next checkpoint. He was supposed to cool his heels for five minutes while the prisoner was brought up from the bowels, but he had too much nervous energy. He spent that time pacing.

Finally, another guard took him into a barebones room with a metal table bolted to the floor, a couple of chairs, and bars on both of the windows. It was impossible to forget one was at the prison. But at least this was better than the alternative — the cubicles with Plexiglas windows and the telephone handsets.

The door opened and Lois was led inside. She looked tired and defeated, like the prison had already stolen her drive. It had stolen her hair. Gone was her pretty pixie. She was down to a buzz cut.

As soon as the guard left, Clark rushed to hug her, but she held up her hand. “Don’t.”

He nodded and backed away. They both knew he could return within a fraction of a second.

Lois spoke first. “I heard you had returned.”

“I would have been here sooner, but...” Clark started to apologize.

“I know,” she interrupted. “I heard that Nor and the New Kryptonians took over Smallville. You needed to save your parents. I understand.”

“I went to your apartment first, but you never came home,” he told her. She had to know that she had been his first priority.

“This is my home now,” she replied, resigned. He could still hear the defeat in her voice. She sat down at the table.

Clark sat down opposite her and took her hands in his. “I’ve joined your defense team. We’ll get you out of this...”

Lois looked up from their joined hands and into his eyes. Her eyes seemed dead. “I pled guilty, Clark. The trial’s over.”

“What?!” he gasped. Why would she do such a thing? “Lois, no!”

Her voice was eerily calm. “Why not? I am guilty. I did kill him.”

Clark tried to hide the horror from his expression, but he guessed a little must have seeped through from what he saw reflected in her eyes. Lois pulled her hands away from his and sighed. Clark realized he had stopped holding her hands. His hands had become dead weights on hers.

“I have a confession to make, Clark,” Lois told him. “While you were gone I told two people...” She stopped speaking.

“It’s okay, Lois. As I told you, I’m on your defense team. Anything we say to each other falls under the realm of attorney/client privilege since I work for your lawyer. They aren’t allowed to record us. You told two people... what?” he coaxed her on.

She looked around the room again. She seemed to have picked up that nervous energy he had been plagued with before she had come into the room. She lowered her voice. “Could you double check?”

He smiled indulgently. “If it would make you feel better...” “It would,” she admitted.

Clark scanned the room with his x-ray and telescopic vision, but he found no bugs. The guard stood outside the door, but if they spoke softly he wouldn’t hear them. “It’s clean, Lois. Now speak freely. You know you can say anything to me. What really happened?”

Lois flipped up her hand, brushing aside his question. “Clark, I have to tell you... let you know. I told both Jimmy and Perry that you’re Superman.”

He gulped, jumping out of his chair and starting to pace. “Why? Does this have something to do with...?”

She came to him and rested her hands on his arms. “I *had* to, Clark. Jimmy needed to know. And then I told Perry, when I confessed all to him...” She crumpled to the floor at his feet as her tears choked her. “I finally found the one thing that would stop the Chief from standing by me.”

Clark pulled Lois off the floor and held her in his arms. “I’ll stand by you, Lois. I still love you and I want us to be married.”

Lois made a sobbing noise against his chest. “No. No. No. Clark, you of all people cannot be married to a convicted murderer.” She grabbed tightly onto his shirt and he could feel her tears seeping through to his skin. “You’re too good for me.”

He ran his fingers over what was left of her hair. It felt fuzzy against his palm. How he had missed her embrace. This was not the reunion for which he had hoped. “Lois, good or bad, it doesn’t matter. I am not going to let you raise that baby in here. Marry me and at least let me care for our child until we can get you out of here. Then we’ll discuss the future after that.”

“You don’t understand!” Lois screamed at him, pushing herself out of his arms. “There is no baby, Clark. There never was!”

Clark’s jaw dropped. He could not speak, only to stare at her. “It was all a big joke,” she said, throwing up her arms.

Finally, he found his voice. “You’re not pregnant?”

“No!” she yelled at him.

He fell into his chair. It felt like the room was tipping. “You and Lex never...” he stammered.

The guard knocked on the door, then stuck his head inside, reminding them of what little privacy they had. “Everything all right in here?”

“Yes, fine. Sorry,” Lois admitted, backing away from the door and the table where Clark sat at the same time.

The guard nodded and shut the door again.

Lois ran her shaking hands over her head. “I don’t know, Clark,” she continued their conversation as if it hadn’t been interrupted. Her voice was calmer, not so loud. “That whole time I was with Lex as Wanda Detroit is a blur. I’m not sure what happened. I have all my memories back except for those. He might have been drugging me for all I know.”

“But the blood test? From the hospital?” Clark asked, his eyes wide with disbelief. “It was proof positive that you were pregnant. Why did you lie to me about that? Was it a ploy to stop me from going to New Krypton?” His heart ached at the thought that Lois would deceive him so.

She stopped pacing. “I never lied to you, Clark. *They* lied to me!”

He gulped. “*Who?* Who would do that to you?”

Lois starting pacing again. “It was all a joke. A TV show where they scare people for other people’s entertainment.”

Clark’s chair scraped against the floor as he stood. “A TV show?”

“Isn’t it funny? Ha-ha. They aren’t laughing now,” she

scoffed.

He wrapped his arms around her. “Lois, what are you saying?”

“Jimmy set it up. I told him once that nothing scared me, and he was trying to prove me wrong. He told them what had happened to me — the kidnapping, the clone, Wanda Detroit, and the amnesia, and the producers came up with this brilliant idea.”

“Oh, Lois,” he sympathized. It sounded along the lines of the type of joke Jimmy would pull.

“They didn’t know that I had missed a period due to all the stress. That I’d fall for it... hook, line, and sinker.” Lois scoffed again. “Jimmy even said, he thought it would be the catalyst that would finally get us to the altar.”

Clark winced as he pulled her tighter. “Jimmy knew I would never abandon you.”

“That’s why I *had* to tell him, Clark. After you left with Zara and Ching. I had to tell him that you were Superman and that you might never return.”

“Lois, did you doubt me?” The words killed him. She didn’t trust in him, in his love?

She tried to push her way out of his embrace, but he would not let her go. “You thought I was carrying the devil’s spawn, Clark. Of course, I would have understood if you consummated your marriage to Zara and never looked back.”

“I made a promise to you, Lois. And I won’t back out of it, even now,” he told her. “I love you.”

Lois sighed. “You didn’t see your face when I told you I was pregnant with Lex’s child, Clark. I could see it was a promise you no longer wanted to keep.”

“Maybe for a second, Lois. But then I knew that I would love that child as my own because it was a part of you. That’s why I told you that I would still come back for you.” Clark pulled the chain with her wedding ring on it out from around his neck. “Why I still wear this close to my heart.”

“I love you, too, Clark. But I can’t hold you to your promise. Not now. Not after what I’ve done. You need to move on with your life.” He could hear the catch in her voice. “Forget about me.”

“That’s not going to happen, Lois. We’ll be together again, someday. Until then, we’ll get married. At least that will get us conjugal visits.”

Lois slapped his arm with a chortle. “Still trying to get in my pants, Kent?”

“I can wait,” he lied. “I’ve waited this long. What’s another five...” He groaned again; only this time he could not hide it. “... or ten years?” He placed a weak smile on his lips.

“It isn’t fair to you. I did the crime. You don’t deserve to serve my sentence with me.”

He caressed her cheek. “There is no other place I’d rather be.”

Lois melted into his palm. “There will be no Utopia if you marry me. Superman and his convict bride won’t change the world for the better.”

“Frankly, I don’t care about Utopia,” he told her. “That ship has sailed, anyway. Wells will be disappointed and Tempus will be thrilled. Maybe it will mean that we won’t be plagued by them again.”

“Ah. A bright spot in our dismal future.” She sighed and pulled out of his arms, far enough to look him in the eye. “Are you sure you can forgive me, Clark? If you can’t, you should be honest and tell me now. I don’t want any false hopes.”

“It was an accident, right?” he asked her, knowing it was the only answer.

Lois looked down. “No.”

“No?” Clark’s heart was beating fast now. “No?” he repeated. That couldn’t be the correct answer.

“I was really mad,” she admitted. “You were gone. And in my

heart-of-hearts I knew it was forever. I had just given you a get-out-of-jail-free card — no pun intended — and each day you were gone was a day closer to the realization that you were never coming back to be a father to Lex’s child. And that’s when Jimmy confessed about the TV show thing. I saw red and I slugged him. He fell and crashed into my glass coffee table.”

Clark’s brow furrowed. “I thought he fell from your living room window.”

“The coffee table didn’t *kill him* kill him. But it was the fatal blow. Jimmy got up and called for you.” She looked away from him. Clark knew Lois didn’t want to think about the events that landed her in jail, but she knew he deserved the truth — if they were ever going to move past this.

“Superman?” he whispered.

“No, Clark. He had asked that we both meet with him. You and I. After I told him you weren’t there, that you weren’t coming back, he staggered to my windows threw them open and called, ‘Help, Superman!’”

Clark winced. His friend’s final words had been a plea for him to help. When he was no longer around.

“That’s when I told him you were Superman and that you weren’t coming back because you thought I had been knocked up by Lex. That you had gone off with the New Kryptonians and married Zara.” Lois closed her eyes painfully as if she was picturing the moment again. “Then he called to Superman again and did a swan dive out the window.”

Clark’s jaw fell open once more.

“So you see, Clark, I killed him. I might not have given him that final push out the window, but I might as well have. I wanted to. I was tempted to. But I did the crime, so now I’m doing the time.”

“Lois, there is a lot of wiggle room there. Maybe Jimmy committed suicide with the guilt,” Clark suggested, not believing one word of it.

“He had a concussion. He was not responsible for his actions, Clark. I’m still guilty.”

“It was accidental, Lois. You did not mean to kill him!” he argued.

“Not like that, no. I was trying to kill him with my fist. But if he had continued to stand there by the open window, I probably would have pushed him out. I was that angry.”

“Lo-is!”

“What? You want me to lie to you, Smallville? Tell you I wasn’t distraught with grief over your leaving to New Krypton with another woman and the fact I had inadvertently cheated on you with Lex? And that if you ever did come back, you’d feel pressured into marrying me because of your promise? So, yes, I did want to kill him in that instant that he confessed about lying about the baby and the show. He’s dead and I did it. I’m not going to change my plea.”

“And I’m not going to change my promise, Lois. I loved you then. And I still love you now. I only wish...” Clark gulped. A pipe dream. “I wish I had been man enough to stay and marry you then instead of going off with them. I shouldn’t have left you with any doubts about me... about us.”

“This isn’t about what you did or didn’t do, Clark. It’s about what I did.” Lois had tears dotting her eyelashes. He knew she was going to try and break his heart. For his own good. “I can’t marry you, Clark.”

He knew what she was doing because he had done it to her too many times. “Because you’re too small?” he asked.

“Huh?”

He had accomplished in throwing her off-course. “Or is it because I’m a jinx.”

“Clark.”

He thought she might be catching on. “Or is it because I might be hurt by association? People will come after me because

of you?”

“Clark,” her warning voice seemed harsher now.

“You might never forgive yourself for what you did to Jimmy, honey. But I know, *I know*, you didn’t really mean to kill him. And even if you refuse to marry me today or tomorrow or next week or next year, I will still be here for you because I love you and I’m not going anywhere.”

Lois pulled his face to hers and rested her head against his.

“Oh, Clark. What am I going to do with you?”

“Personally, I’d prefer some conjugal visits, but if you want to wait until you’ve served your time...” He swallowed. “I understand. Just remember, we both know you’re not getting time off for good behavior.”

“I can be good,” she tried to debate him. But they both knew the truth. Mad Dog Lane would do whatever it took to survive her time in prison and that would have nothing to do with being good.

Clark heard a sound outside their room. He scanned the door and saw two people, besides the guard, standing on the other side of the door. “I know you’re out there, gentlemen. You might as well come in.”

The door opened and Perry entered, pulling Jimmy inside by his ear. The younger man had a bandage across his forehead. “Look what I found wandering the streets of Metropolis,” the Chief announced. He released Jimmy’s ear and pushed him towards them.

Lois let go of Clark and hesitantly walked up to Jimmy, before embracing him. “You’re alive?” A second later, her knee collided with his crotch, knocking the wind out of him and dropping him to the floor.

Jimmy gasped. “Sorry, Lois. I don’t remember much. My memories have been kind of fuzzy since our argument in your apartment.”

Lois rolled her eyes not believing a word of it. “He was still trying to get me! I can’t believe it!”

Clark glanced at Perry. “He’s had amnesia?”

“Why not? If it’s good enough for you two, why not him?”

Clark grabbed Lois’s elbow before she could attack their boss and then asked, “How did he survive the dive out of Lois’s window?”

“I don’t know. He didn’t tell me.”

“There was a pretty blonde girl...” Jimmy said through his gasps. “A Kryptonian left over from Zara and Ching’s visit. She said that she was Superman’s cousin — Kara. She saved me.”

Lois, Clark, and Perry exchanged disbelieving expressions. They continued to stare at him, waiting for Jimmy to catch his breath.

“Okay. Okay,” Jimmy confessed, sitting up. “We figured Lois would attack me when I told her the truth about the pregnancy, so the producers had set up an air mattress — you know, the kind that stuntmen use — to catch me after I dove out the window.”

“Told ya!” Lois strained against Clark’s hands trying to break free. He was tempted to let her.

“You win, Lois. Nothing scares Mad Dog Lane.” He swallowed. “The producers would like you to sign off some liability papers, so that they can...”

“See me in court!” Lois growled.

“This isn’t going to air,” Clark told him. “Did they record any of your conversations with Lois?” Please, don’t say these TV producers knew he was Superman.

“No, video only.” Jimmy shook his head. “My head’s still kind of fuzzy. I don’t remember much after Lois slugged me.”

Clark looked at Perry and his boss nodded. Good, the Chief would find out exactly what Jimmy remembered. Maybe it wouldn’t be so bad having Perry know his secret.

“Get me out of here!” Lois screamed, still straining against Clark’s grip.

“You’ll be lucky if they don’t press charges, Olsen,” Perry said, grabbing Jimmy’s arm and dragging him out of the room. “Let’s go overturn her conviction.”

A stream of bright sunlight filtered through the windows and Lois seemed to relax as they were once more alone. “Clark?”

“Hmmm.” He was burying his face in her neck and going through the calculations on how fast he could get the two of them to Vegas.

“Would you mind terribly if I killed Jimmy?” she asked, wrapping her arms around his neck.

“Only if you let me help,” Clark replied, finally joining their lips together in their first reunion kiss.

A year later...

Lois pulled her Jeep Cherokee up in front of their townhouse. She stepped out and went around to the sidewalk to open the passenger side backseat door. From inside the car, she took baby Jonathan Jordan Kent, or Jo-Jo for short, out in his car seat basket and his all encompassing diaper bag. Throwing the bag over her shoulder and balancing the baby car-seat on her hip, she was able to shut the door with a bump of her other hip.

As she turned them towards the townhouse, she heard a loud baby screaming. It wasn’t Jo-Jo, but her maternal instincts kicked into overdrive anyway as she took a look around for the upset baby. The street was empty. That was weird. Where was that baby?

Lois followed the sound of the baby crying until she came to an old, blue sedan parked down the street from her Cherokee. The crying baby was certainly coming from that car. She looked in the windows of the car, wondering if some deadbeat parent had accidentally left junior in the car when they had gone inside. The car was empty. She took another glance up and down the street. Still empty. Lois felt a chill creep down her spine as she moved closer to the trunk of the car. The screaming baby was softer now, but it was definitely coming from the trunk of the car.

She tried to open sedan’s trunk but it was locked.

“Help! Super...! Damn!” Lois had forgotten that Clark was in Geneva this week meeting with world leaders. His hearing was good, but not that good.

Shifting the diaper bag in front of her, she reached inside for her cell phone. *It’s impossible to find anything in this pit of despair*, she thought as she dug around inside the bag. Binoculars. Camera. Baby wipes. Lighter. Magnifying glass. Rope. Diapers. Lock picks. Baby bottles. Cell phone. *Finally!* Auto lock picks!

Lois pulled both the cell phone and the lock picks out of the bag. She dialed 9-1-1 and propped the phone between her ear and her shoulder on the same side she was still holding Jo-Jo’s car-seat in the crook of her arm. With her hands now free she pulled out a couple of lock picks from their case and started in on the car’s trunk lock.

“Yes. I would like to report a baby locked in the trunk of a car,” Lois told the 9-1-1 operator and then told her name and address. “Of course not my baby!” She snorted in disgust. “Hold on.” Taking the cell phone from her shoulder and ear, she held it up to the trunk of the car so the 9-1-1 operator could hear it and then sandwiched her phone again to continue working. “Does that sound real enough for you?”

“Officers should be in your location momentarily,” replied the operator.

“Thanks!” Lois replied and hung up her phone.

“Momentarily? Ha!” she grumbled. She handed the cell phone to Jo-Jo. She set her baby and the diaper bag down at her feet to concentrate on that stubborn lock. The baby’s screaming was down to a soft whimpering whine now. Less than a minute later, she had popped the lock. “At last.”

She stuck her lock picks into her pocket as a patrol car pulled up beside her. Lois pushed the button to open the trunk. “It’s

okay, sweetie. I'll get you out," she called softly to the baby. She opened the trunk and a blinding flash engulfed her, causing her to stumble backwards. Blinking her eyes to focus them again, she stepped forward and looked down into the trunk.

There was no baby. Instead she saw a tape recorder and a camera with the flash.

"Jimmy Olsen!" Lois screamed as loud as thunder as the officers walked up. She saw a figure at the end of the block dash out from behind a car and run off. She ground her teeth as she pressed her lips together. Her guess had been correct.

"You Lois Lane?" one of the officers asked.

Lois glanced at him with a roll of her eyes. "What? You new on the force?" she snapped before reaching down and picking up Jo-Jo and the diaper bag. "If you'll excuse me, I have to call in a contract killing."

"Excuse me?" said the surprised officer.

She sighed. "Just a figure of speech, Officer." She pointed to her house. "You need to interview me, I'll be in there feeding my son."

Lois took the cell phone away from her son and dialed Clark's number. She was surprised that he picked up. "Clark, I need Superman to dangle Jimmy off a building for me. Preferably with two fingers."

"Oh, no. What'd he do now?" she heard her husband ask.

She explained what had happened as she walked up the front stoop of their townhome. "So, do you think you can convince Superman to do me a favor? I wouldn't mind much if he let go."

"Sorry, Lois, I'm all tied up with these meetings, actually I've got to run. Superman has a meeting in about ten minutes. And, honey, Superman doesn't torture people," he reminded her.

"Oh, I see how it is," she grouched at him. "He'll dangle bad guys off buildings for information but not for me!"

"Jimmy's not a bad guy, Lois. He's just an idiot," Clark clarified. "Tell you what, Lois. I'll call a friend of mine and have him give Jimmy a stern talking to."

Lois rolled her eyes. "Whatever," she said, switching shut her phone and opening the door to her townhome.

That night...

From the radio tower on the top of the tallest building in Metropolis, Jimmy dangled from a zip-line upside-down rocking gently in the wind. A dark figure crouched nearby on the edge of the roof, ignoring him.

"Please! Please! Batman, just tell me what it is that I did wrong!" Jimmy begged.

THE END

Gratitude: This story is in response to Tank's "Scare Tactics" Halloween challenge in which Jimmy put Lois on a TV Show and tried to scare her. I would like to thank Darth Michael for inspiring me with his idea of scaring Lois by telling her she was pregnant. I would also like to thank IolantheAlias for her Beta corrections and advice.

Disclaimer: Inspired by the characters created by Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster and portrayed on the *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* television series, developed by Deborah Joy LeVine. Many thanks to the writers on the show, especially Bryce Zabel from whom I quote directly. The character of Batman was created by Bob Kane and Bill Finger. This story is entirely my own (with a little inspiration from Darth Michael and Tank).