

# ... One Step Back

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Rated: G

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Summary: Lois and Clark's relationship seems stuck in a holding pattern. Can they ever escape from it?

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Author's note: Set during 'Return of The Prankster' and #36 of the At First Sight series.

This story is part of a series that includes "[1. At First Sight](#)," "[2. A Matter of Time](#)," "[3. Evil Lurks](#)," "[4. Invisible](#)," "[5. Gratitude](#)," "[6. Unprofessional Behaviour](#)," "[7. But For the Grace of God](#)," "[8. Vulnerable](#)," "[9. Decisions](#)," "[10. A Terrible Mistake](#)," "[11. Facets](#)," "[12. Terrified](#)," "[13. A Remarkable Woman](#)," "[14. The Aftermath of Illusion](#)," "[15. Black, White and Shades of Grey](#)," "[16. Tainted](#)," "[17. Betrayal](#)," "[18. Brothers](#)," "[19. Saving the Enemy](#)," "[20. Aching](#)," "[21. Healing](#)," "[22. Defending Myself](#)," "[23. Euphoria](#)," "[24. Family Ties](#)," "[25. Two Steps Forward](#)," "[26. Vigilante](#)," "[27. Friendship](#)," "[28. Life Or Death](#)," "[29. Ramifications](#)," "[30. Christmas Magic](#)," "[31. Situational Ethics](#)," "[32. Expectations](#)," "[33. A Permanent Solution](#)," "[34. Success](#)," "[35. Dying](#)," "[36. ... One Step Back](#)," "[37. First Date](#)," and "[38. Rights and Responsibilities](#)."

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Are we cursed?  
Are we destined never to have anything beyond friendship?  
It feels like we're stuck—caught in emotional limbo.

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So much of our relationship has been like a dance—two steps forward, one step back. Only this time...this time, the steps were more like leaps. We moved forward—Lois agreed to a date with me, we had our 'almost first date'—and then the mess with Luthor happened and we took one leap back.

Now it feels like we're in a holding pattern. Every time it looks like we might actually have time in our admittedly intense schedules to devote to something that is purely personal, something occurs and we're back to circling around each other. First it was Diana Stride. Now it's Lois' interview with the President and Kyle Griffin's escape. It's annoying and frustrating.

The last time Kyle Griffin escaped and threatened Lois, I didn't hesitate to offer Lois a safe place to stay. This time, I offered—but it was with hesitation. And she couldn't accept. I knew that even before I made the offer. We've as good as admitted we have romantic feelings for each other. That awareness colours our dealings.

So instead of being able to watch over her and protect her, I had to rely on Jimmy.

Jimmy.

It's not that I don't trust Jimmy. I do. But he doesn't understand Lois the way I do. He doesn't understand that when she's feeling stressed and overwhelmed, she lets comparatively minor issues get to her. He doesn't understand that she needs at least the illusion of normality when she's in these situations. I don't let her anger get to me when she's stressed because I know it's her way of dealing with being overloaded. Jimmy doesn't get

that. I wish I could have helped her more. But I couldn't.

Being stuck in this strange limbo is affecting our friendship. There's a tension, an awkwardness that has never been there before. I know it's a product of having these feelings halfway in the open but not being able to act on them. It still worries me. I worry that the tensions between us are going to destroy our friendship before we even get this fledgling relationship off the ground and we'll be left with nothing.

I miss our friendship. I miss the ease between us. The way we could talk for hours about nothing and everything. The lack of self-consciousness that allowed Lois to turn up at my apartment in baggy sweats. I knew that things had to change if I was to get what I want, but I miss my friend. Now we second guess everything we say to each other, constantly worried that we'll somehow say or do the wrong thing.

I don't know how much longer we can survive like this.

THE END