

# The Accident

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Rated: G

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Summary: In the episode "Green, Green Glow of Home," Clark temporarily loses his powers to Kryptonite. But what might have happened if those powers had been slow to recover? Suppose that the double dose had left him vulnerable just a bit longer ...

I've always felt that the episode Green Green Glow of Home represented the first real turning point in the relationship of Lois and Clark. It was where Lois began to see Clark as someone more than just the hick partner she'd been saddled with. She was still in denial, but she was able to believe in Clark as not only her partner, but as a friend, soon to become her best friend.

In this episode we are also introduced to kryptonite. Clark is exposed and loses his powers for a time. In typical storybook fashion he recovers them just in time to save his parents. But, he is exposed a second time and has to fight with Trask as a normal man. We all know that ultimately his bacon was saved by the timely appearance of Rachael.

At the end of the episode, we see the reporters back at the Daily Planet talking about the story. At the end, it is implied that Clark has once again regained his powers.

... But, supposing he wasn't quite so lucky. Suppose that the double dose had left him vulnerable just a bit longer ...

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"Ow!"

"Sorry, Ms. Lane. Please hold still. I'll be finished in a few moments."

Lois frowned at the nurse who was still working on putting stitches in her scalp.

"You're a lucky woman, Ms. Lane," said the woman as she pulled the thread through and tied off the last stitch. "It's a pretty nasty wound, but it wasn't deep, and I don't think you'll have to worry about any scarring."

Lois glanced down at the small pile of hair on the floor. "That's all well and good, but did you have to shave such a large bald spot?"

The nurse just smiled. "Ms. Lane, I had to use seventeen stitches to close your wound. It was a pretty long gash. We have to make sure that it will stay clean. We don't want to run the risk of infection."

Lois reached up to feel the wound, but the nurse's hand on hers stopped her. "I will never look right as it grows back," Lois grumbled. "I'll probably have to shave it all off anyway."

"I can do that for you right now, if you wish." The nurse set down her needle and reached over and picked the small electric clipper again.

"What!"

"I'm just saying, if you feel that you'll have to buzz off your hair anyway. I'll be happy to do it for you ... right now."

Lois gave the woman a wary look. "No ... that's okay. I'll deal with it somehow."

The nurse hid her grin from Lois as she applied the large dressing to the side of her head. "There, you now have a nice large bandage which covers up your bald spot and will have everyone feeling sorry for you. By the time the stitches are ready to come out, your hair will have grown back enough so that no one will notice."

"Yeah, right. Can I get dressed now?"

The woman smiled at her. "I think that would be okay."

Lois got down off the examination table and reached for her clothes. It was a little awkward getting dressed. Her left hand was bandaged where she had broken two of her fingers, and her left side was very sore to the touch. The doctor had told her that she had some bruised ribs, but fortunately none of them were broken.

Just before the nurse left the room, Lois called after her.

"Excuse me. My partner was with me in the car. I was pretty out of it when we were brought in. Do you know where he might be?"

It seemed as if a dark shadow had quickly passed over the face of the nurse. She quickly schooled her features into a placid mask. "Once you are finished dressing, just go out to the waiting area. The doctor will come to see you shortly. She should be able to answer any of your questions then." The woman quickly left, not allowing Lois any further questions.

Lois's brow creased in puzzlement, but she finished dressing and made her way back out to the waiting lobby.

She and Clark had been back from Smallville barely more than a day and things had already gotten crazy.

A smile snuck onto her face as she thought back on their trip to Clark's hometown. She had resisted, at first, when Clark had pitched the story to Perry, but now she was glad she'd went. Who would have thought that a nut bag like Trask would really think it was his patriotic duty to kill Superman? It had been touch and go for a time there. Trask had threatened her and had actually tried to kill Clark and his parents. She still wasn't sure what that had been all about. But if it hadn't been for Clark's old flame Rachael, who was now the Sheriff, Trask might have succeeded in killing Clark. She still remembered the fear she had felt when she saw Trask pull his gun and aim it at Clark. But they had prevailed and she had gotten a great story out of it.

Lois's smile grew a little wider. As much as she would have maintained that it couldn't happen, between the being tied up and being shot at, she'd had fun. There were the quiet times at the CornFest where she and Clark were just able to relax and have a good time. She saw her partner in a new light. He was really a pretty terrific guy. Not that she'd ever admit that to him. Not yet anyway. He still needed some training if he was going to be worthy of being her partner ... and her friend.

A frown quickly replaced her smile as the morning's incident intruded on her musings.

They had been going to meet a source. The meeting had been set up at a small restaurant on the other side of town, so Lois offered to drive. They were late, so Lois had to be a little more aggressive in her driving than normal. Clark never said anything, but she knew a couple of her manoeuvres unsettled him a bit.

They never made it to the meet.

Impatient with a particularly slow driver in front of her, Lois had looked for an opportunity to get by the fellow. She saw her chance as they approached a traffic light. They were nearly at the intersection when the light turned yellow. The fellow in front immediately hit his brakes. Not slowing down, Lois spun the steering wheel to the left, then back to the right and sped past the slowing vehicle. When she had entered the intersection the light had still been yellow.

Unfortunately, a driver coming from the other direction had been speeding. Anticipating the light change he never slowed down. The other fellow had T-boned them in the passenger side of her jeep. His vehicle was a larger, heavier, pick-up and so the collision pushed her jeep all the way across the intersection and into a parked car. It was when they hit the parked car that Lois was slammed against her driver's side window, which had caused the gash in the side of her head. She must have briefly lost consciousness then because she didn't remember anything after that until she was being led into the examining room.

She looked around and began to clench and unclench her

fists. Where was that doctor? She was beginning to get worried. She had fully expected to see Clark out there in the lobby waiting for her when she came out, but he wasn't there. Had he been hurt like she had? Was he currently being tended to, as she had been? Where was that doctor? She needed to know that Clark was okay.

She had begun to chew on her lower lip when she finally noticed a middle-aged woman, stereotypical stethoscope around her neck, walking toward her. Lois stood as the doctor came up to her.

“Are you Ms. Lane?”

“Yes, Doctor.” Lois took an extra breath. “I was wondering about my friend Clark Kent. He was in the car with me. I assume he came with me to the hospital.”

The doctor guided Lois back to her chair, then sat down next to her. “I’m afraid that Mr. Kent wasn’t quite as lucky as you were. He suffered several serious injuries; the most worrisome are the indications of internal bleeding. He’s being prepped for emergency surgery as we speak.”

Lois eyes grew wider as the doctor spoke. Her voice trembled. “But he’s going to be all right ... isn’t he?”

The doctor shrugged. “I won’t lie to you, Ms. Lane. His condition is critical. We will do what we can.” She reached out and squeezed Lois’s hand. “Keep positive thoughts.”

With that, the doctor rose and left Lois sitting there. Tears began to emerge from the corners of her eyes. Her voice was a tortured whisper. “Clark?”

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The waiting was agony. Shortly after the doctor left her, Lois was assaulted by some staff person who badgered her with several forms that needed filling out. Lois did the best she could, giving her what personal information on Clark she could, but when it came to any medical history she had no clue. Unfortunately, Lois knew that Jonathan and Martha had just left for a vacation and were probably on an airplane to Europe as they spoke. She had no idea as to how they might be contacted.

Once, while she was filling out the forms, an orderly came to Lois and asked if she was aware of any unusual medications or conditions that Clark might have been treated for. They’d been having a bit of trouble typing his blood and wondered if she knew why that might be. They asked her if he’d been taking any medication for his obvious anaemia. She just shook her head.

She had called Perry shortly after dealing with the hospital forms. He’d offered to come down, but she told him that there was nothing that he could do at the time. She told him that she’d be there waiting to see how Clark came out and when he could find the time he could come down and keep her company.

It had been over three hours since Clark had gone into surgery when Perry walked in. She was so happy to see him she stood up and rushed into his arms. He caught her and gave her the hug she so desperately needed. He then guided her back to her chair.

“Lois, are you all right?” He noted the bandage on her head and hand.

“I’m fine. Better than I have any right to be.” Tears began to flow once again. “Oh, Perry, if Clark dies it will be my fault. I will have killed my partner ... and best friend.”

If Perry was surprised by the turnabout in Lois’s attitude toward Clark he didn’t let on. He used his thumb to wipe the tears from her cheeks. “Now, don’t go making it worse than it is. It was an accident.” He glanced up as some sort of alarm went off down the hall and there were shouts of ‘code blue’. The two of them watched a team of orderlies pushing a crash cart at a run toward the end of the hall.

Lois looked up at Perry, her eyes wide with fear. “You don’t think ...”

Perry placed his finger on her lip. “Let’s not assume anything, Lois. Let’s just wait until they’re finished. The doctors

will tell us how it went. No sense imagining the worst. Instead just hold on to the idea that Clark will pull through. He’s a tough kid.”

Lois leaned her head against Perry’s shoulder. She knew he was right. There was no reason to assume that the crash cart had been for Clark. Nothing would be gained expecting the worse before actually knowing. But she couldn’t help herself. If Clark died she didn’t know what she’d do. Just then she had a, sort of, epiphany. She realized that not only would she feel a terrible guilt if Clark died or was permanently injured, but she would feel incredibly bereft if he was gone. She’d miss him. She’d miss him more than she probably ever missed anyone, even her sister. What did that mean? Unbidden, the tears came back.

They sat that way, in silence, for another two hours until the doctor was seen coming back down the hallway. They both stood up and waited anxiously for the doctor to arrive. She looked beat. She gave the two of them a tired smile as she reached them.

“Is he going to be okay?” Lois blurted out before the doctor could even speak.

She sighed. “It was touch and go for a while there. We thought we’d lost him a couple of times, but he was a fighter and he came through in the end.”

“So, he will be all right?”

The doctor shook her head. “He’s still in critical condition, but for the moment he’s stable. I know they say this on every hospital drama on television, but the next twenty-four hours are going to be crucial.” Her mouth drew into a hard line. “If he comes through that, I’d say his chances of a solid recovery are good.”

“Solid recovery?” Lois looked confused. “What the heck does that mean?”

“It means that we can’t be totally sure. He was torn up pretty bad inside, but we’re pretty sure we were able to repair all the serious damage and with time and rest, he should heal. But there are no guarantees that he won’t have some problems in the future. We had to make some guesses as we went along, since some of the blood chemistry seemed a bit off, but we’re confident that eventually he’ll be back to as close to 100% as anyone can be after such serious injuries.”

“Can I see him?” Lois practically pleaded.

The doctor shook her head. “No, I’m sorry, he’s in ICU and only family is allowed.”

“Well, I’m family ... sort of. We’re partners and ... best friends.” Lois could see the doctor beginning to shake her head. “We’re practically engaged!”

Perry’s brow rose, but he held any comment. The doctor frowned.

“Ms. Lane, Mr. Kent has been sedated. He needs rest. He wouldn’t even know you are there.”

“I don’t care; I just have to see him. I have to know that he’s alive.”

The doctor’s frown deepened, then released. “Okay, but only for a minute. Come with me.”

Lois followed the doctor down the hall to Intensive Care. The doctor led Lois to a corner bed, sectioned off with heavy curtains. Lois approached the bed hesitantly. She stopped a few feet from the edge of the bed. Tears began to flow once again.

There were tubes and needles stuck in his arms and shoved up his nose. There was even an oxygen mask hung on the corner of his bed within quick reach. She chewed on her lip. He looked so pale.

“I’m so sorry, Clark. Please get better so you can forgive me. If you come back to me I promise things will be different. I’ll never take you for granted again. You don’t know how important you are to me.” The tears flowed in earnest. “Please give me the chance to let you know just how much.”

The doctor tapped Lois on the shoulder. When she turned the

woman indicated that they should leave.

Walking back toward the waiting area, Lois voiced the question she knew that she and Perry wanted to know. “How long will Clark have to be here?”

The doctor shrugged. “That will be up to Mr. Kent and the speed of his healing. It will be several days before we can begin to assess that progress.”

Lois felt so helpless. “I don’t know what to do?”

The doctor gave her a compassionate look. “Go home, Ms. Lane. There is nothing you can do for Mr. Kent by wearing yourself out worrying and haunting the hospital waiting room. Go home and tend to your own injuries. You can come visit, but don’t put your own life on hold. I’m sure Mr. Kent wouldn’t want you to do that.”

Lois wiped at her tears with the back of her hand. “No, no he wouldn’t.”

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Lois dragged herself out of bed and went immediately to the medicine cabinet in the bathroom. She pulled down the aspirin bottle and shook out four tablets. She wished she didn’t wake up with a headache every morning, but she figured that when she smashed her head into the driver’s side window she must have suffered a mild concussion. Still, compared to Clark, she had gotten off real easy.

It had been two days since the accident and she had actually gone back to work yesterday. She wasn’t able to type very well. Broken fingers had a tendency to interfere with her speed. She also had a hard time focusing. She kept worrying about Clark, and would visit the hospital several times a day.

She hadn’t been able to visit him in person. The family only rules still applied and she was never able to get past the overly officious head nurse. Not that it mattered too much. Clark was rarely conscious. He needed the sleep to heal so they kept him sedated most of the time. No one knew how to get hold of the Kents, but Perry had left a message with Rachael Harris. She promised to get a message to them the first chance she got.

Now that she knew that Clark was going to live she didn’t cry herself to sleep at night, but the first night had been pretty rough. She still blamed herself for his injuries and she always would. It was her fault. She just prayed that he’d find it in his heart to forgive her ... some day.

“Lois, honey, you got anything on Councilman Harris’ votes for sale?” Perry came down the ramp and stopped at her desk.

Lois shook her head. “No, my source backed off so I don’t have any confirmation. I’ll have to try a different angle.”

“Well, you do what you have to.” He paused, then put his hand on her shoulder. “How are you doing, Lois. You feeling any better?”

Lois gave Perry a tired smile. “I’m doing okay. The headaches are annoying, and I really hate that I can’t type worth a crap, but I’ve got it easy compared to Clark.”

He patted her on the back. “They still won’t let you see him?”

Lois bit her lip. “No, and it’s driving me crazy. I want to see him so bad. I need to see him. I need to know that he’s getting better.”

“Don’t you worry too much, honey. Clark is going to be up and around before you know it.”

“I hope so.” Lois sighed. “I think I’m going to go home. There’s nothing more I can do here, and I want to change clothes before I go over to the hospital.”

“Maybe you should just go home and get some rest yourself, Lois. I’m sure the hospital will call you if there is any major change.”

She shook her head. “I want to be there when they take Clark out of the ICU. The minute they do, I’m going to go into his room and tell him how sorry I am, and beg him to forgive me.”

She could see Perry frown, but before he could say anything

she grabbed her purse and stood up. “I’ll see you tomorrow, Chief.” She moved quickly up the ramp and pushed the call button for the elevator.

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Lois hadn’t been back in her apartment more than ten minutes when the phone rang. She prayed that it wasn’t her mother as she approached the phone. She considered letting the machine pick up, but then took a deep breath and reached for the handset. If her mother wanted to lecture her again about her driving habits, well it was no worse than she deserved. Her recklessness had nearly gotten Clark killed.

“Hello?”

“Ms. Lane?” She answered in the affirmative. “This is Doctor Plouden. We met at the hospital. I was the one who led the surgical team for Mr. Kent.”

A chill washed over Lois. “Yes, Doctor, I remember you. What is it? Clark is okay isn’t he?”

She heard a definite change in the tone of the doctor’s voice. “I take it then that you haven’t seen, or had any contact with, Mr. Kent this evening?”

Lois was confused. “Of course not, Dr. Plouden, I still can’t get anyone to let me in to see him. Also, I haven’t had a chance to get over to the hospital this evening.”

“Well don’t bother coming over then.”

“Why?” Lois was more confused and a little scared.

“Mr. Kent is no longer here.”

“What!” Lois felt her heart begin to pound. “What are you saying?”

“Mr. Kent woke up this afternoon and promptly checked himself out of the hospital.”

Lois’s bewilderment was growing, and she was getting another headache. “I didn’t think he would be healed enough to leave for several days yet?”

She could hear the frustration in the voice of the doctor. “He isn’t. But once he came out of sedation, and was fully cognizant of his situation and his surroundings, he decided to leave.”

“Can he do that? Doesn’t he need a doctor’s permission?”

“This isn’t a prison, Ms. Lane; we can’t hold anyone against their will. As long as he was willing to sign a waiver stating that he had been fully apprised of his condition and that he was leaving against his doctor’s wishes, there was nothing we could do.”

“That idiot,” Lois mumbled under her breath.

“I’m calling to ask you a favour, Ms. Lane,” the doctor continued. “If you should see Mr. Kent, please convince him to return to the hospital. I’m afraid that without proper supervised treatment and rest he’ll run the risk of undoing all the work we did to save his life.”

Lois gasped. “Do you mean ... he could die?”

“That is one possibility. If the surgery doesn’t have time to properly heal he would be facing the same injuries he had when he came in. Mr. Kent was badly hurt when he was brought in, and he’s still badly hurt. He needs time to heal properly. I can’t guarantee his recovery if I’m not there to supervise it.”

“Thank you, Doctor. I’ll do what I can.”

Lois’s head was swimming as she hung up the phone. What was that lunthead thinking? She knew that Clark didn’t like hospitals and doctors ... who did? But to leave, while barely out of intensive care?

“How afraid does someone have to be?”

Since his folks were out of touch, there could only be one place he could be. Lois grabbed her purse, a coat, and took off out the door. She’d be furious if she wasn’t so scared for him. If Clark’s stupidity caused himself further serious injury, she’d kill him.

The door slammed behind her.

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With her jeep being not even remotely drivable, Lois had to call a cab to get to Clark's place. Still, it only took minutes to get to his apartment. She threw some bills at the driver and stormed up the steps to Clark's front door. She didn't bother to knock, she just tried the door, and finding it unlocked, pushed it open and stepped into his foyer.

Clark was sitting on his sofa, apparently reading some book. Seeing him there so complacent caused her fear for his well-being to change to anger over his foolishness.

"Clark Kent, you are an idiot."

He turned quickly and got up from the sofa. He seemed surprised to see her. "Lois, what are ... you're hurt!"

He rushed up and brushed his hand near her bandaged head and hand. "They wouldn't tell me what happened to you. They merely said you were seen and released that first day."

Lois slapped his hand away. "I'm fine. I've got a couple of broken fingers and a little gash on my head. Believe me, the haircut is worse than the wound." He smiled at her comment but she wouldn't be dissuaded from her righteous anger. "What were you thinking leaving the hospital like that?"

Clark turned back toward the living room. Lois followed. He shrugged. "I feel fine. I didn't think I needed to stay there any longer. I can get better rest at home."

Lois sat next to him after he plopped back down into his overstuffed couch. "You lunkhead, what are you trying to do? I got a bump on the head. You nearly died. They had to perform emergency surgery on you! The doctor told me that you flatlined on them a couple of times. When I heard that code blue announced over the intercom I thought my own heart was going to stop."

Clark grabbed Lois's hand and gave it a squeeze. "Well the surgery must have been successful because I'm fine now, Lois, really."

She could feel the sting of fresh tears starting to form behind her eyes. "You are not fine, Clark. The doctor called me; she's very worried. They need to monitor your healing for a few days yet. She wants you to go back to the hospital. I want you to go back to the hospital."

Clark stared at his feet. "I can't go back there, Lois."

"Oh, please, don't tell me this is some stupid male macho crap. I'm too tough to heed my doctor's orders and stay put and allow myself to get better."

Clark shook his head slowly. "Please believe me, Lois, I'll be fine."

Tears began to trickle down her cheeks. "Dammit, Clark, I nearly had a heart attack when Trask pulled his gun to shoot you. If it weren't for Rachael you'd be dead now." She was crying in earnest now. "Then, not two days later, I try to kill you myself by driving like a maniac."

Clark looked shocked. "Lois, it was an accident. You weren't to blame; the other guy ran a red light."

Lois clenched her hands into fists and shook them. "You still don't get it do you? If you had died yours would not have been the only life lost." Lois wiped at her tears with the back of hand. "I'm not always the sharpest knife in the drawer when it comes to relationships, but being put into this situation twice in such a short time has forced me to confront a few inescapable truths that I'd been ignoring."

Clark reached out and gently touched her cheek. "Lois, what are you trying to say?"

Lois grabbed his hand with both of hers. "I'm saying that seeing you almost ripped from my life twice in less than a week has made me realize that is not something I could deal with. Clark, you've become so much more than just my sometime partner. You are my best friend. I like having a best friend. I really like having you as part of my life. I don't want to have to imagine what that life would be like without you in it. I've just

gotten used to you being around and want that situation to continue."

Clark smiled at her. "I'm not going anywhere, Lois."

"Well, you certainly aren't acting like it. You're putting your life at risk, Clark." He opened his mouth to respond but she placed her finger over his lips. "Don't say you are fine. No one who has gone through what you have is fine in a couple of days."

She reached over and pulled up his T shirt, intent on revealing his surgical incisions. "Those are not the ... " Lois eyes grew wide as her voice failed. "Clark, where are your sutures?"

She stared at his exposed stomach; fully expecting to see his rock hard six-pack marred by an angry incision line and surgical staples. But they weren't there. She had to look really hard to even see the faint red line that marked the place where the doctor had to cut in order to save Clark's life.

Lois looked up, meeting Clark's eyes, her own betraying her astounded confusion. "How?"

A sigh escaped from Clark as he rose from the couch. "I think I'd better make us some coffee, Lois. I've got some things I need to tell you."

THE END