

# Lois Lane: Assassin — An Alt-World View Story

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Summary: When Lois finds H.G. Well's futuristic viewing device, she can't help spying on another Lois and Clark. But the Lois and Clark in that alternate world give Lois quite a surprise. Will it keep her from her sneaky ways once and for all?

A while back I posted a little ficlet called the Set-Up. This is a story using that as the take off point. The first bit of this story will be a repeat of that piece (it will be obvious) and then we take off from there.

I don't expect anyone to actually like this.

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Clark Kent opened his front door and entered the brownstone he shared with his wife. It had been her day off and even though it had only been a little over eight hours since he saw her last, he'd missed her.

"Lois? Are you home?"

The dynamo that was Lois Lane burst into the living room from the kitchen. She launched herself at her husband, her lips hungrily seeking fulfillment after an entire day of abstinence.

"I've missed you."

Once the need for oxygen forced them to break their lip lock, Clark found himself chuckling. Lois swatted him across the chest.

"Don't make fun of me? I can't help it if I'm a woman in love."

"I'm not laughing at you, Lois. I just find the situation funny. When I came in, I was thinking about how much I had missed you too."

Lois joined him in more mild laughter. She shook her head in amusement. "What a pair we make now. From a couple of loners, to a pair of needy, middle-aged teenagers who can't get enough of each other."

Clark played with Lois' hair. "So what can we do about it?"

Lois pretended to think hard. "Well, I guess there is only one solution. We can't take different days off any more."

"Sounds like a good solution to me." He deeply kissed his wife again.

He picked her up and brought her over to the couch. As he sat down, Lois stayed in his arms and wound up on his lap. "So, besides, missing me terribly, what did you do with your day off?"

Lois' look suddenly turned coy. "Well... I did have a visitor." Clark raised his brow. "Herb came by to visit."

Clark's look became one of alarm. "Herb? As in Herbert George Wells?"

"That's the one." She giggled. "But he wasn't here because he needed our help with any great catastrophe or anything. He just dropped in to say hello."

"Just dropped by to say hello?" Lois nodded, but the telltale smirk on her face made Clark suspicious. "Lo-is, why do I think there is more to it than a simple social call?"

Lois leaned back and placed her head on Clark's chest. "Have you ever wondered how Herb knows so much about all those different worlds, and the Lois and Clarks on them?"

"Not really, but I get the impression that you have."

She swatted him again. "Well, of course I have. I mean it's not possible for him to physically visit all those worlds, yet he knows so much about... us, in all those different incarnations."

"And...?"

Lois started to get animated. "As it turns out, he has this futuristic viewer thingy. It looks sort of like a laptop but it lets him tune into the different vibratory frequencies of the different dimensions." Clark frowned at her. "Hey, I'm only telling you what he told me."

"So, he tunes into these different worlds and, what, waits until he happens to see our counterparts walk by?"

"No... apparently this viewer is somehow attuned to the Lois and Clark on each world." She saw the look on Clark's face. "Hey, who are we to say anything? The man built a time machine nearly a century ago."

Clark shrugged, and grinned at Lois. "I suppose you're right. So, did you and Herb spend the day spying on Lois and Clark's of other dimensions?"

Lois shook her head. "Not really. When I asked, he just showed me the viewer and how it worked. We took a quick look in on the Clark I met back when we had those run-ins with Tempus. He's fine by the way."

Clark rubbed her back. "I'm surprised you're not a little more disappointed. I imagine you'd enjoy checking up on many different Lois and Clark's."

Lois started using her fingertip to draw little circles on Clark's chest. "Well, Herb couldn't stay. He said he had someplace to be." The fingertip moved a little faster. "But I thought it might be more fun if... you and I cuddled up on this sofa and checked out a few different worlds." She looked up and gave Clark a sly smile. "Just the two of us, er, well, I guess the four of us."

"Lois?"

She jumped up, out of his lap, and ran into the other room. She was back within moments holding what did indeed look like a simple laptop. The only difference was a strange antenna that jutted out from the back of the machine.

"Lois, you didn't!"

Lois rolled her eyes. "Who are you talking to? Of course I did." She laughed at the frown on his face. "Oh, get over it. It's not like I stole it."

"Of course it is."

"Pish tosh. I only borrowed it. You know that Herb will figure out where he lost the viewer soon enough and come back for it. But until then we can have some fun checking out our counter parts on some other worlds."

Clark could only shake his head in amused defeat as he scooted over a bit as Lois planted herself next to him and opened up the viewer. He put his arm around her as he watched her press a small red button. Suddenly the screen lit up. Lois turned to Clark, a conspiratorial smile on her face.

"Where shall we go first?"

"Do you know how to find any particular universe to view with that thing?" Clark pointed to the machine in her lap.

Lois shrugged. "I watched Herb when we looked in on that other Clark that we met, but I don't know how to find anything specifically." She began to type in some numbers. "Let's just see where it takes us. Herb said it was calibrated to us, so it should pick up on one or both of us."

The screen fuzzed over, and then suddenly cleared to show a room that looked an awful lot like Lois' old place. The door to the hallway opened, and Lois, or at least a Lois, entered the tidy apartment.

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Lois Lane kicked the door shut behind her and carried her two bags of groceries over to the kitchen table. She hadn't spent more than a minute putting them away when the ringing of the

phone grabbed her attention. She quickly picked up the receiver.

“Hello? Oh hi, Lucy.” Lois pulled a chair over and sat down.

“How are things with you? ... Good, I hope to meet him the next time you visit, if he’s still around by then. ... I didn’t mean that as a knock, but you have to admit that you tend to go through boyfriends faster than you do shoes.” Lois twisted the cord around her finger.

“Welllll, there’s no one special, but I do have my eye on this new guy at work. He’s really a hunk, and he’s so nice I almost had a hard time believing he wasn’t putting me on. Apparently it has something to do with being raised in a small town out in the middle of nowhere. Someplace called Smallville, Kansas.” Lois’ laugh was obviously in reaction to what she heard on the other end of the conversation. “I know, I didn’t believe it was real either, but I looked it up.”

Lois listened silently for a few moments. “His name is Clark Kent, and he’s so square it’s actually cute. I think he kind of likes me too. I kept my interaction with him very professional. Can’t let guys think that have the upper hand you know. But this guy just might be different. I may have to let my guard down a bit and see where it might lead.” Lois listened some more. “Perry teamed us up on that shuttle story... yeah, the one where that Superman character showed up... I don’t know what to think, he was pretty formal and not very forthcoming with any details about himself. ‘I’m a friend’ was all he would say. A friend? Not so sure about that. I find it hard to believe that anyone with that kind of power doesn’t have some sort of ulterior motive. You can bet I’ll be watching him. Heck, Perry’s got everybody watching for him.”

Just then a loud knock on the door interrupted her conversation. “Hey, Luce, got to go... someone’s at the door. Talk to ya later.”

Lois took her time walking over to the door and placed her eye to the peep hole. A heavy sigh escaped from her as she opened the door. In the hallway stood a nice looking fellow, thirty something, with an unruly mop of dark hair, and a nice smile.

Lois stepped back and allowed him to enter. “Agent Scardino.”

“Please, I’ve asked you to call me Daniel.”

“I know.”

The pair strolled into the living room, each taking a different chair as if they had rehearsed the action several times in the past. Lois stared at her hands before she raised her head to meet his eyes.

“I told you to tell them that I was done with all this. I don’t want to do this anymore. I’ve got a good job, and hope for a real life, with a husband and a home with a white picket fence. I can’t have that if I’m running around the world doing the governments dirty work.”

Scardino gave her a compassionate look. “I know, Lois, and I told them, but you know how the government is... they’re not very anxious to give up on such a valued asset as you are.”

“Asset? Is that what they call me?” Lois voice rose in response to her anger. “Why don’t they call a spade a spade? I eliminate those individuals who are problematic to our way of life. I exterminate people who my government tells me need extermination. Does that make me an asset? Or am I just a killer.”

“Now, Lois...”

“Don’t start with me Scardino. When I was first recruited, I was young a full of misguided patriotism. I felt that by doing these despicable deeds that I was somehow helping out my country. Well, I’m not so sure anymore. Yesterday’s friend is today’s enemy, but will probably be tomorrow’s friend again. I just can’t take the hypocrisy anymore.”

“Look, Lois, I know where you’re coming from, and I sympathize, I really do.” He leaned forward and fixed her with a hard stare. “Look, this is a big one. It’s really important, and they feel you have the best chance of pulling it off.”

Lois rolled her eyes. “I’ve heard that before.”

“I promise, if you do this one last job, I’ll guarantee that you can get out from under. Free and clear, you won’t have to see me ever again.” He allowed himself a small grin. “And, besides, this one is double the money.”

That got Lois’ attention. “Double the money?” He nodded. She sighed. “Okay, let me see the dossier.”

“I don’t have one.”

“What?”

“I don’t have one. We don’t really have any information on the target. Not any that you don’t already know. In fact, you’ve had as much contact with him as anyone, which is why they want you for the job.”

A frown wrinkled Lois’ forehead. “I don’t understand.”

“It’s simple, the target is... Superman.”

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“What!” Lois turned and looked at her husband, her face easily conveying the shock and disbelief she felt. “I’m some sort of government assassin and they want me to kill Superman! That’s insane. Why would the government want to kill Superman?”

Clark frowned as he shrugged. “Maybe there are more people like Trask in that Lois’ world. And you’re not an assassin, she is. Remember, just because these are our counter parts in another universe doesn’t mean that their actions and reactions would be the same as ours would be.”

Lois just shook her head as the two of them turned their attention back to the screen.

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Lois stared, open mouthed, at Agent Scardino. It took a couple of false starts before she was able to finally make words come out of her mouth. “Are you crazy? I can’t say that I’ve entirely made up my mind about the guy yet, but why would he be a target? He hasn’t done anything against... anyone.”

Scardino looked up at the ceiling and sighed. “Think about it Lois. The man has unbelievable powers; we have no idea as to what his limits might be. If he should ever decide that he wants more than just running around ‘helping people’.” He used his fingers to make the quotation marks. “Who would be able to stop him?”

“Which brings up a very good point. From what I’ve been able to find out, the man is invulnerable, he can’t be hurt. How do you expect to be able to eliminate someone who is invincible?”

Scardino reached into his pocket and pulled out a magazine for a rifle. “With these.” He set the magazine on her coffee table. “The green glow you see peeking out from the edges of the clip is from a very rare crystal that our scientists have been able to ascertain can do the Man of Steel physical harm. They think that the unique radiation the crystal gives off can negate his vast powers and even given a long enough exposure... kill him.”

Lois shook her head. “How do you know this stuff?”

“Let’s just say that we’ve had a very zealous bureau working around the clock for years to make sure the United States is safe from aliens and their unknown agendas.”

“Are you trying to tell me that... Superman, is an alien?”

“Fraid so. The government has his space capsule in its possession and has been able to find out several interesting facts about our resident hero.”

“Like what?”

“Like he’s from some planet called Krypton and he’s been here for some time, but has just come out publicly in the last couple of months.”

“This is all very interesting, but it still doesn’t justify you putting a target on his chest.”

Scardino stood up and began to pace back and forth in front of Lois. “I would think that you of all people would understand. You know more than anyone that no one can wield that sort of power and remain uncorrupted by it. Do the names, Attila,

Caesar, Machiavelli, Hitler, or Stalin ring any bells? How about Lex Luthor? “

Lois frowned. “You’re reaching. There is no evidence that Superman would use his physical powers to impose his will on others.”

“Isn’t there? Why is it that we know that the man has been on this planet for years, but he’s only just showing his true self to the world now? Why the wait? And why hasn’t he come and explained himself to the authorities? He flies around dealing out his own brand of super-vigilante justice. He’s not a member of any police force that I’m aware of.”

Lois slumped back into the back of the couch she was sitting on. “He’s done nothing but good, as far as I’ve seen. You’re sounding paranoid.”

“Of course we’re paranoid. Suppose someone angers him, or just annoys him. He could squash them like a bug without a thought.”

“But he never has. You are convicting the man before he commits the crime.”

“That’s because we can’t afford to wait for that to happen. His negative response to something could be the total destruction of a town, or even a city the size of Metropolis. Would you want that on your conscience, Lois?”

“Don’t you put this on me. This is your scenario, not mine. I’ve had a few contacts with the man. He may be a bit stiff and formal, but he definitely seems to have high moral standards.”

Scardino grimaced at Lois. “I’m glad you seem to know him so well. Okay, so let’s say you’re right, he does have a high moral standard. God knows that we don’t exactly live in a perfect world. Suppose Superman decides that we aren’t doing a good enough job of providing the perfect society... as he sees it. Do you think that we have the capability of resisting him if he decides that we should live by his rules?”

Lois pointed to the magazine on her table. “You’ve always got your magic bullets.”

Scardino shook his head. “Aside from the fact that this clip holds nearly eighty percent of the entire supply of the crystal that we’ve ever found, don’t you think that once he knows that we have this that he won’t find a way to protect himself or destroy what little we have. No, our only chance is a surprise, pre-emptive, strike. An attack when he won’t expect it, from someone he won’t expect it from.”

“Ah, now I see why you’re coming so hard at me, instead of just sending someone who believes the way you do. You think that I can get closer, easier, than any of your other people.”

Scardino spread his hands in a gesture of defeat. “Look, if you won’t do it, we will send someone else. Their chance of success will probably be much less than yours would be, but it’s been decided. The Man of Steel is going down.” He reached out and grasped one of Lois’ hands. “This is going to be done. If you do it, I promise it will be your ticket out.”

Lois bit her lower lip. “I don’t know. It still seems wrong. What you say could happen, but how can we condemn him before he deserves it.”

Scardino sighed. “Because we can’t afford not to. It is possible that he could become everything you’re saying he could be. There is a slight chance that he could become some sort of world savior, and public hero. But history says the odds are stacked the other way, and the government is not willing to bet on him with the world at stake... are you?”

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There were tears in Lois’ eyes as she turned to look at her husband. “She’s going to do it, isn’t she.” It wasn’t a question.

Clark grimaced. “It looks that way. But in all fairness, you can see the government’s dilemma. They are afraid of someone with that much power who doesn’t answer to them or even to their laws if he doesn’t want to. They really have no way to force

him to do anything he doesn’t want. Their fear is making the decision for them.”

Lois shook her head. “No, I don’t buy it. All the same arguments could have been made when you appeared on the scene here.”

Clark gave Lois and a wry smile. “They were. Does Bureau 39 ring a bell?”

“Yeah, but that was just a rouge agency being run by a crazy man.”

“True, but there had to have been high level support for it to come into existence in the first place. We are only seeing a peep hole view of this world. We don’t really know what kind of conditions they live under. Didn’t you tell me that the alternate dimension Clark that we met lived in a pretty paranoid society?”

“That’s true, but Tempest was behind a lot of that.”

“Even so. Maybe this Lois lives in a world where trust is at a premium and suspicion is the norm.” Clark put his arm around his distraught wife. “Besides, she hasn’t actually done anything yet.”

Lois turned to meet Clark’s compassionate gaze. “But I have to know if she does.”

Turning her attention back to the little viewer Lois began to roll the thumbwheel on the side of the machine upward.

Clark gave her a puzzled look. “You mean that thing can jump ahead in that world’s time?”

“Well, duh, Herb is a time traveler after all. You don’t think that he’d be restricted by real time in his viewing habits do you?”

Clark grinned weakly as he watched his wife move the wheel, check the scene, then move the wheel some more. She seemed to instinctively know where she needed to go. Finally she was satisfied and they settled in to watch what unfolded.

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Lois hunched her shoulders against the cool breeze that blew in from the north. A chill was evident in the air. She leaned against a far parapet and looked out toward the harbor, which could be seen from her vantage point on the roof of the Daily Planet. The confusion she felt was clearly etched onto her face.

Suddenly a ‘whooshing’ sound caught her attention. She turned back toward the small blockhouse that held the door back into the building. She was currently opposite the door, behind the small shack like structure, but there were definitely sounds of someone on the other side.

She approached cautiously and, hugging herself close to the wall of the blockhouse peered around the edge. She just managed to see a whirling blur of color, then Clark Kent, her new sometime partner stood there. He adjusted his tie and made a move toward the door.

“Clark?” Lois stepped out from around the structure.

He looked surprised. “Lois, what are you doing up here?”

She gave a wave back toward the edge where she had been gazing out over the city. “I have some... things, on my mind so I came up here to try and think them through.” She came closer. “What are you doing up here?”

“Ah,” he stammered for a moment. “I needed some air, so I came up here. Well, I suppose we’d best get back before the Chief wonders what happened to us.” He moved toward the door. “Are you coming?”

Lois nodded, but made no move to follow him. “In a minute... I’ll be down in a minute.”

Once the door had closed behind Clark, Lois went over to where he’d been standing when she first saw him. There were impressions in the loose gravel right next to where she’d seen him, but they were different than the ones that led to the door. The first set was a bit larger and had a different sole pattern from the ones that had been obviously made by Clark’s wingtips. She looked up into the sky, and then allowed her gaze to drift toward the doorway leading into the Planet building.

Tears began to roll down her cheeks.

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Tears were in Lois' eyes when she turned to Clark. "She knows."

Clark nodded. "Yeah, and it doesn't look like she's taking finding out any better than you did."

Lois punched Clark in the arm and quickly rolled the thumbwheel upward.

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The building across the street from Clark's apartment was a small three story apartment complex in bad need of repair. It wasn't yet condemned, but it should have been. It was night, and there were only three windows showing any light coming from them. Lois adjusted her position on the roof as she watched the entrance to Clark's walk up. There was a short wall that surrounded the top of the building and Lois had her rifle propped up against the worn, crumbling stone.

She watched as, finally, Clark walked up the street and turned toward his front door. She lined up her shot, but hesitated. Her hands shook ever so slightly as she focused her gaze through the scope.

Suddenly, Clark stopped and turned his head slightly, as if looking over his shoulder. He looked like a man who was spooked by something. He quickly moved up the steps and made his way into his apartment. Lois had missed her shot.

She shifted the gun's barrel to cover the large front window as she waited for a silhouette to give her a target. The apartment lights were never turned on.

Just then, the loose gravel and sand on the roof was kicked up by a sudden breeze, and she heard that familiar whooshing sound again. She turned to confront the large man-shaped shadow that came down from the sky.

"Lois?" She heard him say, as he stumbled a tiny bit upon his landing. He quickly stepped back several feet from where she was crouched next to the outer wall. "What are you doing up here?"

"Hello, Clark. Funny, we seem to keep meeting on rooftops." He'd moved into a part of the roof where a street light was able to illuminate most of his face and upper body. He looked confused.

"Lois, why do you have a gun?"

"You know, it's sort of funny," she continued, completely ignoring his question. At least he didn't try to deny that he was Clark. "I argued with them. I said that there was no reason why we shouldn't trust you. That you'd only shown us that you wanted to help. But, I can't quite get past the part of where you feel you have to hide who you are. I have to wonder why you are pretending to be someone you aren't. Why the secrecy?"

"Lois, you have to realize that if everyone knew who I really was I'd never have a moment's privacy."

"Who you really are? Are we talking about the mild-mannered reporter from Smallville, Kansas; or are we talking about the super-powered alien from the planet Krypton? You need some privacy? Couldn't you just fly to some remote corner of the world and have all the privacy that you want?"

He took a step toward her, grimaced, then stepped back again. "Lois, it's not what you think."

"Isn't it? How do you know what I'm thinking? Are you telepathic? Even the most popular celebrities have their down times. It's not like any one is forcing you to save the world 24/7." Lois snorted. "It's not like anyone can force you to do anything." She shifted her position so that she was sitting up and had the rifle pointed at him. "I just keep coming back to, why the need for a Clark Kent."

"Lois, Clark Kent is who I am. Superman is just what I can do."

Lois' brow rose. "Really? I thought you were from the planet Krypton?"

"I am, but I came to earth as a child and was found by a kindly farm couple. They raised me as their own."

Lois nodded. "Yes, I know, Jonathan and Martha Kent of Smallville. I did some research. They died when you were about ten didn't they?" He nodded. "I supposed you spent the next several years being bounced around the foster care system. Probably wasn't too pleasant for you, especially if you felt you had to hide the fact that you were different. How'd that make you feel? Were you bitter?"

Superman frowned. "Look, Lois, I'm not in the mood to be psychoanalyzed by you, or have my adolescence trotted out for you to speculate on. I want to know what you're doing up here, and what is it about that rifle?"

Lois stroked the rifle. "You know, it's really a shame. I was beginning to really like Clark. I even thought there might be a chance for him and me. I don't let men into my heart very easily, but I thought Clark might be someone who could slip past my defenses. Silly me. What do I find out instead? Clark is just another lying bastard with some secret personal agenda."

Superman's look became hard. "Lois, answer my questions."

"Okay, but I don't think you're going to like my answers." She held up the rifle for emphasis. "This weapon has been equipped with some very special ammunition. Ammunition that is made with a core of some sort of green crystal that scientists think can do you harm. The government is afraid of you. They don't trust your supposed 'I'm just here to help' motivation. They don't feel that they can take the risk that a person with such unlimited power can, and will, stay on the side of the angels."

"Why?"

Lois shrugged. "They're the government, it's the way they are. As for what am I doing up here? I work for the government... part time. I eliminate those that they perceive as threats. You are perceived as a threat."

"So, you are going to kill me, just like that? No crime, no trial. No chance to defend myself."

A tear snuck its way out of the corner of Lois' eye. "I don't want to. Really, I don't, but it's not my call. The decision has been made. I'm just a soldier, Clark. I follow orders."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Lois."

She screamed as suddenly the rifle got extremely hot, and then exploded. She clutched her badly burned hands to her chest. There wasn't any sign of the rifle anywhere. Superman strode up to her and grabbed her face in his hand.

"I am sorry, Lois, that I had to do this; that I will have to kill you. But I am grateful to know that your government is suspicious. It just means that I'll have to move up my timetable. I had hoped to have built up enough good will so that the conquest would be relatively bloodless, but apparently the gauntlet has been thrown."

He released her, turned and strode to the edge of the building. "Conquest?" Her voice was weak.

He turned back and fixed her with a barracuda like smile. "Contrary to what most people think, I'm not the Last Son of Krypton. I was contacted by a colony of my people several years back. They live on a cold, barren rock of a planet. Life is hard, but there is no reason for them to suffer much longer. Not when there is a perfectly good planet, whose current inhabitants don't deserve it, available for the taking." His smile got wider. "My superiors will be grateful to find out that you humans have a substance that is possibly harmful to us. Forewarned is forearmed you know."

Lois glared at the former hero. "So, what about all the people that already call this planet their home?"

"That's entirely up to them. There will be a need for workers, and a servant class."

"And you expect people to just roll over and let you and your kind come in and become the rulers of the entire planet?"

He shrugged. "Only if they wish to live."

He came back to stand over Lois. "I am sorry that I'll have to kill you, Lois, but I'm not quite ready for my plans to be known just yet. I really was becoming quite fond of you. Any last words?"

One corner of Lois' mouth quirked up into a slight, mocking smile. "Do you know why the government considers me one of their best operatives?"

"No."

"It's because I always have a back-up plan. Lucy?"

A younger version of Lois stepped out from the deep shadows at the back of the building's roof. Superman turned in time to see the muzzle flash of the rifle the younger Lane was holding. The force of the impact knocked the Man of Steel off his feet. He lay writhing in pain near Lois, blood pouring from a wound in his stomach.

Lucy Lane quickly walked over and helped her sister to her feet. Lois' hands were cracked and blackened from when the other rifle had exploded in her hands. Lucy supported her, and guided her over to the roof's edge, where she could sit on the low wall.

"Do you have your phone?" Lucy nodded, then pulled it out of her pocket. "Dial, 555 — 911-5647, then hold it up to my ear." The sister did as requested. Lois waited until someone answered on the other end. "Hello, Scardino? I've got your package for you. No, it's still viable if you hurry. I think you are going to want to take possession as soon as possible. I think we all have some troubles ahead." She listened for a few moments. "Yeah, I'll wait."

Lucy shut off her phone, put it back into her pocket, then sat down next to her sister and waited with her. They both stared off into the night, conspicuously avoiding looking at the bleeding former hero lying nearby.

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Lois pushed the viewing device away from her as if it were on fire. Tears poured down her cheeks. Clark picked up the device, closed the lid, and set it on the coffee table. He gathered his distraught wife into his arms and rocked her like a child. The crying was intense, but it only lasted a couple of minutes.

Lois gently untangled herself from her husband's arms and sank back into the cushions of the comfortable sofa. She shook her head in denial.

"That was horrible. How could those people be other versions of us?"

Clark reached out and used his thumb to wipe the tears off her cheek. "Because they aren't us. I told you, Lois, it doesn't matter that they have our names, and look like us; they aren't us. We don't know the conditions that they live under, nor how their individual life experiences have shaped them. They are different people. We can't let their actions reflect on us in any way."

Lois pouted, then leaned against Clark's chest. "Yeah, I know you're right, I just was looking forward to seeing another couple as happy and in love as we are. It hurts to see a world where that isn't the case, where their lives were so, so... awful."

Clark put his arm around Lois. "I'm sure that this was just a rare case. There are probably many worlds where their Lois and Clark's are together and as madly in love as we are." He placed a finger under her chin and tilted her face up toward his. "Do you want to try another?"

Lois shook her head. "No, I'm too afraid I'll find another horrible universe. Maybe I'll have the courage to take a look some other day. But not now." She shrugged. "Maybe I'll put the viewer in a box at the back of the closet and never bring it out again."

Clark reached down and lifted his wife into his arms. "Why don't we go upstairs and find some way to take our minds off what we've just seen."

Lois smiled. "I think that would be a great idea."

Fin.  
THE END