

# Lights Out

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Set at the end of the episode "Target Jimmy Olsen": Lois and Clark end up trapped in an elevator when the power goes out. Clark can't leave to attend to rescues without revealing himself, and he's faced with the reality of finally talking to Lois.

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After dropping Jimmy Olsen off at the hospital and ensuring his friend would indeed be all right, Clark made his way to the Planet to check back in at work and hopefully catch up with Lois. Last night had been draining, to say the least. Sitting two feet away from one another and yet unable to even speak to one another after the incident with Scardino.

He knew he was equally responsible for the blow-up. He was the one that ran off after starting a conversation about their relationship. She'd been all ears. Ready to talk and of course with impeccable timing he got a call for help.

<< "I'm glad you said that. I've been having these feelings lately ... I think it would be good..." >>

It wasn't that he regretted coming to the rescue last night. He knew he needed to. The thugs that had attacked that older woman had knives and very well could have seriously hurt her had someone not intervened. He regretted the fact that once again, he was letting Lois down. He hated the fact that he was constantly having to lie and hide from her when what he wanted more than anything was to tell her how he really felt – what he was really doing when he ran off.

<< "I've been having these feelings lately ... I think it would be good..." >>

He landed in the alley behind the Planet and quickly spun into his suit and tie from earlier. He walked to the opening to the street and spotted Lois turning the corner from the parking garage. He let out a long breath, mentally preparing himself to pretend like he hadn't just rescued Jimmy from himself and spent the last half hour trying to get answers to burning questions they both had.

After all, Clark Kent wasn't the one at the hospital; it was *Superman*.

Lois spotted him, turning toward him and stopping just outside the doors to the Daily Planet. A mixture of relief and pain crossed her face, which struck him hard as he took the three steps to close the gap between them.

"Hi," Clark said, fighting the urge to reach out to her. In typical Lois Lane fashion, she appeared to be unfazed by the recent debacle of having her best friend try to kill her while under the influence of mind-control.

"Hi." Lois bit her lower lip as she looked back at him. "You just getting in?"

Clark shook his head. "No, uh, Perry made me accompany Sarah to the hospital earlier and get checked out."

'Liar.'

Lois nodded, tightening her lips into a thin line. "You okay?"

'Define, okay.'

"Fine." Clark shrugged his shoulders as he shifted his weight from one foot to the other. He stared back at her as a mixture of worry and relief crossed over her face. She let out a breath and then nodded, turning toward the rotating doors to the Daily Planet lobby.

"So," Lois let out a long sigh as they passed through the

rotating doors, "Sarah comes after you. Jimmy comes after me. I guess they thought we were getting too close."

"I guess," Clark said, hanging back as they approached the elevator. He reached over to press the call button, glancing back at Lois. "How are you doing?"

"I'm fine," Lois said. Her tone was a little higher than normal, which told him she was far from *fine*. "Superman got there in time, thankfully." Her face fell to a frown. "I need to call and check on Jimmy later."

"Yeah, it's crazy to think what could have happened ..." He found himself at a loss for words as he thought about how close he'd been to not getting there in time.

<< "No, Jimmy, you've been brainwashed!" >>

"Yeah." Lois readjusted her purse strap on her shoulder and looked back to him. "I guess we have a lot to be thankful for."

"I'm glad you're okay," Clark said, frowning when he heard the words escape his lips. It felt so underwhelming compared to the turmoil that raged inside him at the moment.

"I'm glad you're okay too, Clark." Lois let out a long breath. She gave him a joking smile and chuckled. "I'd really hate to have to train another partner."

He cocked an eyebrow at her and chuckled, feeling the weight from the last two days ease up as he stared back at her. "So, what happened, if you don't mind me asking?"

The elevator doors pinged, announcing the arrival of the elevator car. He turned just as the doors opened, motioning for Lois to step on first. There was a silent lull between them as he waited awkwardly for her to either respond with her version of events or shrug his question off.

"I don't know," Lois broke the silence with an uneasy smile. "One minute, Jimmy was standing there with a smile on his face claiming to have forgotten his wallet..."

"...and the next minute?"

"The next minute he's trying to choke me with the drawstring of my sweatshirt," Lois said uneasily. "Luckily Superman got there just in time to cut the cord with his heat vision."

"Lucky timing," Clark commented.

"Great timing," Lois responded uneasily as she ran her hands up and down her arms.

A look crossed between them, and Clark flashed back to last night's events. Someone had to bring it up. "Speaking of timing..."

Before he could finish, a loud crash echoed around them. The lights inside the elevator flickered until they finally dwindled out.

"Clark?"

"Right here," Clark called out to her. He reached out, taking her hand in his. His super-hearing picked up the sound of phones ringing and fax machines running, which meant the outage was restricted to the elevator.

"What happened?" Lois asked, her hand squeezed his. "Power outage?"

"That's what it looks like," Clark mumbled, looking around the darkened elevator car. He reached over for the emergency phone to call for help. "Phone line is down."

Lois pulled her hand back, reaching for the emergency call button. She let out an exasperated sigh. "Emergency signal seems to be off too."

"I guess we're stuck." Clark shrugged, unsure how to respond to the unique situation he was in with Lois. He squatted down on the floor of the elevator, accepting his fate for the moment when he caught a glimpse of a smirk cross her face. He prompted her with the nod of his head. "What?"

"Nothing," Lois said a little too quickly.

"No, that didn't sound like nothing. What is it?"

"Nothing," Lois replied defiantly. Her tone was harsh as she turned her head away from him, choosing instead to stare at the double doors that were locked closed.

"You can stare at the doors all you want, but they're not opening until someone turns the power back on," Clark muttered under his breath.

"And when do you suppose that will happen?" Lois muttered irritably. "The one time you should be trying to climb the walls to get us out of here you're sitting down on the job. Great."

"I am not sitting down on the job." Clark snorted back. "I'm sure the Planet has it under control."

"How would we know that?" Lois shot back. "We don't even know that they know the elevator is down."

"Someone will come."

"Sure." Lois snorted, crossing her arms as she paced in front of him. "Maybe we'll get out of here in time for the evening edition to go out."

"Would you quit overreacting?"

"Overreacting?" Lois scoffed in disbelief. She reached over to press the emergency call button again and again. "There is no power. There is no phone line. We're trapped in here."

"Yeah, I kinda figured that out," Clark grumbled under his breath.

"I can't just sit here. I...I have things to do," Lois snapped irritably.

"I'm sure Scardino will catch up on his tally of interruptions once we're out of here," Clark mumbled under his breath.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Lois growled back at him.

Clark shook his head in disbelief. "Forget it."

"No," Lois spat, stopping mid-pace in front of him. "You brought it up. Something you'd like to say?"

"Fine." Clark threw his hands up, determining he couldn't dig himself any deeper than he already had. "Dan Scardino acts like a lost stray that seems to show up every time I turn around. And I'm sick of him."

"Well, at least he sticks around long enough to have a conversation with. Unlike some people I know," she snapped back at him.

"I said I was sorry about that." Clark reminded her.

"Yes, I know." Lois huffed. "Right after you made sure to mark your territory like a possessive Doberman." She let out a short snort as she waved her hands at him. Her arms flailed around her head as she shouted, "You run off just when I'm..."

"Help! Help me!"

Clark stood up, shaking his head as he stared back at Lois with remorse. "Lois, I'm sorry. I really am...My timing could be a lot better."

"Help!"

He really needed to go, but he couldn't. Not with Lois here.

"You think?" Lois scoffed in disbelief. "You went to get food just as I was about to reveal my intimate feelings."

"Help! Help Me!"

"You have every right to be angry, Lois. I'm sorry." He reached over to take her hand in his. With a simple touch, her anger vanished, leaving behind fear and uncertainty on his partner's face.

"Well, I appreciate you saying that, Clark." Her tone softened, and she looked back at him in dismay. "Our relationship is very important, and I can't..."

"Help me! Help me!"

'Not now.'

"I...I need to go," he stammered out, uncertain how exactly he was going to do that.

"Go?" Lois rolled her eyes at him. "We're trapped in an elevator."

"I know, but I *need* to go," Clark said uneasily.

"Right, too personal of a conversation to continue?" Lois fumed, pulling away from him. "What are you going to do scale the elevator shaft to escape me?" Lois pointed toward the escape door on the roof of the elevator car.

"Maybe," Clark shrugged, wincing to himself at the slip of tongue.

"Are you *that* desperate to get away from me?" Lois snapped, jutting her jaw out as she glared back at him.

"What? No, it's not like that." Clark shook his head.

"Then what *is* it like?"

"I just...have to go."

"Why?"

"Lois..."

"No, what is it? You're the one that brought it up and yet the second things get real you're looking for the nearest exit. You want to call it quits then fine, but at least have the guts to tell me to my face rather than running away from me every chance you get."

"I'm *not* running away from you," Clark argued, reaching out to stroke her face. The moment his hand touched her cheek, she brushed him off.

"Then prove it. What are you so afraid of?" Lois challenged him to answer.

"I'm not running away from you, Lois," he repeated, hoping the repetition would get his message across. "I would *never* do that, and this means too much to me to ever call it quits. But sometimes I do have bad timing and need to leave without warning. For that, I'm sorry."

"Then why do you keep doing it?" Lois demanded, tears running down her cheek.

"Help!"

"I have to go," Clark said, feeling a hard lump in his throat as he stared back at her.

"Then go! Climb out of the elevator and *run away* like you always do." She pointed to the metal latch that prevented them from escaping the elevator car.

"Lois, I do *not* run away from *you*," Clark argued.

"Help!"

He had to go. There was no way he could sit back and do nothing. He also knew there would be no way he could leave without Lois finding out the truth. His hand had been forced, and it felt almost freeing as he stared back at her tear-filled eyes. Thirty years of fear and isolation crossed through his mind as he swallowed back the boulder-sized lump in his throat.

He reached his hand out to cup her cheek once more. This time she didn't push him away. He stroked her cheek, savoring the touch for one last moment before he had to shatter everything.

"We need to get out of here."

"Clark?"

Before he could lose his nerve, he stepped back, reaching above him to open the trap door above them, popping it open.

"What are you going to do now?" Lois asked. "Fly out of here?"

"As a matter of fact, yes," Clark said, closing the distance between them.

"What?"

Unwilling to waste another second, he scooped her up in his arms and flew them out of the elevator. He did his best to ignore the incoherent ramblings from Lois as they flew out of the elevator and to the roof of the Planet. He set her down, taking a moment to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation.

"I know you have a lot of questions, and I promise I will answer them, but right now I've got to go," Clark said, stepping back to change into his Superman suit.

"You're..."

"I have to go." He repeated, gesturing to the sky. "Someone needs help."

"Go," she nodded. A soft expression crossed her face, and she looked back at him. "I'm not going anywhere...Superman."

"Help!"

"I'll be back," he promised.

“I know.” She smiled back at him. “I’ll be waiting.”

THE END