

= Tempest (Smallville) =

" Tempest " is the twenty @-@ first episode and season finale of the first season of the WB original series Smallville . The episode originally aired on May 21 , 2002 ; Alfred Gough and Miles Millar wrote the script , and Greg Beeman directed . In the episode 's narrative , Lex attempts to forge his own destiny away from LuthorCorp ; Whitney leaves Smallville for the Marines ; Roger Nixon discovers Clark 's secret and attempts to expose him to the world ; and Lana is pulled into a tornado .

Director Greg Beeman attempted to create a visual theme among the characters that would parallel the approaching storm . The episode would mark the departure of Eric Johnson as Whitney Fordman , though he would return as a special guest in seasons two and four . Although the Smallville finale pulled in just over half of the viewership attained by the pilot episode , it was still favorably received by critics . It was also nominated for two awards .

= = Plot = =

Lionel Luthor (John Glover) shows up at the Smallville LuthorCorp plant , and announces that " management failure " has forced him to shut the plant down . Effectively blaming the problem on Lex (Michael Rosenbaum) , Lionel informs his son he wants him to return to Metropolis . Clark (Tom Welling) , Pete (Sam Jones III) , Chloe (Allison Mack) , and Lana (Kristin Kreuk) make plans for the spring formal . Whitney (Eric Johnson) informs Lana that he is enlisting in the Marine Corps , and he leaves for basic training the day of the dance .

Lex tries to initiate an employee buyout , and convinces the employees to mortgage their homes to help provide the financial resources to complete the buyout . Lionel learns of Lex 's plans and buys the Smallville Savings & Loan , so that he may immediately foreclose on all the property when Lex 's employees miss their payments . Roger Nixon (Tom O 'Brien) tests Clark 's abilities by setting off a bomb in his truck , while he is inside . Nixon confronts Clark in the Talon coffee shop , but Lex intervenes on Clark 's behalf . Nixon follows Clark home and overhears a conversation about Clark 's ship being in the storm cellar , and that Lex has the missing piece from the ship . Nixon goes to the Luthor mansion and steals the octagonal key , and immediately returns to the storm cellar with a video camera .

Clark , Chloe , and Pete arrive at the dance , and say their goodbyes to Whitney before he leaves for training . The weather begins to deteriorate , and a storm picks up , as Lana takes Whitney to the bus stop . Jonathan (John Schneider) and Martha (Annette O 'Toole) decide to head to the storm cellar to seek cover from the storm , and they discover Nixon just as the octagonal disk activates the ship . Nixon attempts to escape with the videotape , and Jonathan chases out into the storm after him . The ship levitates off the ground and flies out of the storm cellar . Lana says goodbye to Whitney and drives home . On her way , storm winds force her off the road , right next to three tornadoes that have touched down . The students at the dance are alerted to the tornadoes that have been sighted , and Clark races off to make sure Lana is all right . The three tornadoes merge into one large tornado and move in Lana 's direction . Clark arrives just as Lana , in the truck , is sucked into the tornado 's vortex ; Clark speeds into the tornado to rescue her .

= = Production = =

When thinking of how to end the first season , two things were clear to Alfred Gough and Miles Millar : the final episode would have the school prom , and there would be tornadoes . Although Jeph Loeb 's Superman For All Seasons , which inspired Gough and Millar when they created the show , contains an event where a tornado hits Smallville , the pair insist that the tornado idea came from a story they overheard on the radio about a tornado that hit a high school during their prom night . The episode would mark the departure of Eric Johnson as series star Whitney Fordman , though he would return as a special guest in seasons two and four .

=== Filming ===

Director Greg Beeman filmed the episode with a tone that was thematically similar to a " rising storm ". According to Beeman , the episode would start very calm and then begin to build upon itself . As he explains :

" I began with Lex being blasted by the wind from the helicopter landing as Lionel arrives to shut the plant down . I wanted to set the mood for the storm which was coming . Then everything settles down , and the show starts calmly , but then as it builds the camera starts to move more and circle more , until the storm arrives and it builds to this fever pitch . The whole episode had this steady , graceful arc to chaos , which I really tried to control . "

The hard part of filming was controlling the buildup ; Beeman wanted to build the drama , visuals , and the wind from the storm up together . Mike Walls brought in " jet @-@ powered wind machines " , which had been used for the movie Twister , to simulate the high velocity winds for the storm that was going to blow through Smallville . The " wind " is first introduced when Chloe arrives to pick Clark up for the prom . What begins as a " gentle " introduction is built upon , little by little , with each progressing scene . By the time Lana drops Whitney off at the bus station , the wind has become very strong .

Another dilemma Beeman faced was keeping the performances realistic , and not " over @-@ the @-@ top " . Beeman believes that " Tempest " proves exactly what he thought about Smallville , that the show is " seen and experienced from the point of view of a teenager " . Beeman explains , " If you ? re in love , you ? re head over heels in love . If you ? re scared , you ? re terrified . If you ? re sad , you ? re in grief . The emotions are strong , but it doesn ? t mean that the performances are over @-@ the @-@ top . "

For " Tempest " , this boils down to : the departure of Whitney , which causes distress in Lana ; the experimental relationship between Clark and Chloe , who are trying to figure out whether or not " they ? ll be in love " ; the evilness of Roger Nixon , and how Jonathan fights to protect his family ; and the battle between father and son (Lionel and Lex) . Beeman saw these events as if they were part of an opera , and that the performances needed to match that tone without going over @-@ the @-@ top .

Rob Maier , construction coordinator and production designer for " Tempest " was very busy for this episode , as scenes were filmed at the Andalinis farm , and Zero Avenue (which is the name of the road that runs along the US / Canadian border) for the scene where the three tornadoes touch down beside Lana . He also had to work on shattering the windows at the Luthor Mansion for Lex and Lionel ? s final confrontation . The band Remy Zero , whose single " Save Me " is the opening theme for the show , was asked to perform for the episode . The band quickly learned that filming a live performance for a television show is not as straight forward as its sounds . In order to be able to film everything , Beeman could not have the band playing full volume throughout the scene . There were times when everyone had to be quiet and pretend to play , or dance , while the actors exchanged their dialogue . There were other times when they had to be as loud as they could .

=== Effects ===

Mike Walsh was worried about filming the moment when a beam breaks inside the Luthor mansion , from the wind generated by the storm , and lands on top of Lionel . His crew already knew which beam was going to fall , but they did not know where to cut the beam because they were not sure how Beeman intended to shoot the scene . When the day of shooting came around everything worked out well . They used a stunt double for the initial impact of the beam , and then John Glover stepped back into the scene and fell down with the beam on top of him . The wind effects also created potential danger for the cast and crew . As Eric Johnson recalls , even the smallest piece of debris flying around at such high speeds can cause damage . Annette O ? Toole had a similar experience for her scenes in the storm cellar . When Jonathan races into the storm after Nixon , the special effects crew used one of their jet fans and some dry leaves to simulate the winds that were coming from outside ; the dry leaves were smacking O ? Toole in the face , smothering her .

= = Character development = =

This episode featured a lot of character development that many of the actors had been waiting for . Lana 's jealousy over Clark and Chloe going to the prom begins to come out ; although Kristin Kreuk believes that Lana does not want to be jealous , and wants to be able to support Clark with his newfound feelings for Chloe . According to Eric Johnson , Whitney finally gets to show a side of himself that Johnson wishes the audience would have been able to see sooner , as Whitney gives Lana a private dance before the prom knowing that she will not be able to go because he is leaving town . To add further depth to his character not previously seen , Millar and Gough decided to send Whitney off to war , instead of killing the character outright . The idea of sending Whitney off to war was something that came to Millar and Gough midway through the season . They knew they did not want to kill him , because they wanted the ability to bring him back at some point in the future , so they came up with this " noble , heroic , send @-@ off " for the character . For Lex , this episode featured the moment when he finally began to contemplate what his life would be like if his father was no longer a part of it . As Rosenbaum sees it , the moment that Lex hesitates to free his father from the support beam that collapses on him is the moment that the audience gets to see a hint of the evil man they know Lex will one day become . This is a brief moment where Lex forgets who he is , and if he had let his father die he would have certainly made his " turn to the dark side " .

= = Reception = =

" Tempest " premiered on The WB on May 21 , 2002 . " Tempest " achieved a Nielsen rating of 3 @. @ 8 , meaning that approximately 3 @. @ 8 percent of all television @-@ equipped households were tuned in to the episode , putting the episode 68th in viewership for the week of May 20 ? 26 . The episode went on to be nominated for two awards , although it did not win either . The first was a 2003 Golden Reel award for " Best Sound Editing in Television Episodic " . Attila Szalay also received a nomination by the Canadian Society of Cinematographers for his work .

Reviews for " Tempest " were mostly positive . The Futon Critic 's Brian Ford Sullivan felt that the season finale gave every element the " four @-@ star treatment " , and that the cliffhanger ending was " riveting " enough to leave the reviewer in anticipation all summer long of the season two premiere . Sullivan would go on to rank " Tempest " as the fifteenth best television episode of 2002 . Jonathan Boudreaux , a reviewer for TVDVDReviews.com , felt the episode was one of the season 's strongest , thanks to the focus on characters , with " kryptonite taking a backseat " ; he referred to " Tempest " as the " slam bang season ending cliffhanger " . Eric Moro of Mania.com believed that " Tempest " proved Smallville could " utilize the supernatural as a metaphor for teenage life " , and that the finale managed to " recap the theme of the entire season , brought every dangling plot point to a head and closed with an ending sure to bring viewers back for a second season of super @-@ entertainment " . Author Neal Bailey was little more mixed in his opinion . He felt that for all the episode accomplished , it was not better than any previous episode that had aired that season ; the episode lacked anticipation , based on the predictability of each character 's actions .