

= Pilot ( Smallville ) =

The pilot episode of the television series Smallville premiered on The WB on October 16 , 2001 . It was written by series developers Alfred Gough and Miles Millar , and directed by David Nutter . The Smallville pilot introduces the characters of Clark Kent , an orphaned alien with superhuman abilities , and his friends and family who live in the fictional town of Smallville , Kansas . It follows Clark as he first learns of his alien origins , and attempts to stop a vengeful student from killing Smallville High School students . The episode introduces many themes that were designed to run either the course of the season or the entire series , such as the triangular relationships of the main characters .

Production was set in Vancouver , Canada , used for its " middle America " landscape , with five months devoted to casting the right actors in the lead roles . Filming for the pilot officially began four days after the last actor was cast for the series . When time constraints would not allow the production crew to physically create the sets , computer @-@ generated imagery was used to digitally insert set pieces into a scene . When the series premiere was broadcast , it broke several of The WB 's viewership records . It was generally well received by critics , and was nominated for various awards , winning two .

= = Plot and themes introduced = =

The episode begins in 1989 when a meteor shower hits Smallville ; at the same time a small spacecraft , containing an alien boy , crashes in front of Jonathan and Martha Kent 's ( played by John Schneider and Annette O 'Toole ) truck . They adopt the superhumanly powerful child and name him Clark . Gough and Millar use this opening scene to establish that the three lead characters of the series , Clark , Lana and Lex , share a common bond ? they are all without one or both parents : Clark is the only survivor of his homeworld ; Lana 's parents are killed in the meteor shower ; and Lex is alienated from his father , Lionel Luthor ( John Glover ) , after being rendered bald by the meteor blast .

The episode jumps forward twelve years to when Clark ( Tom Welling ) is trying to find his identity . He is unable to handle being told of his alien origins and runs away from home . Although he is attracted to Lana Lang ( Kristin Kreuk ) , he cannot get close to her without falling over in pain because she wears a necklace made of meteor rock ( kryptonite ) , which is a radioactive fragment of Clark 's destroyed homeworld . This was a concept Gough and Millar devised to establish a reason for Clark 's clumsiness . In other media , it is usually portrayed as an act he puts on to deceive people of his true identity . But Clark and Lana do share an intimate moment at a cemetery , where Lana is visiting the grave of her parents . In such scenes , Gough and Millar created a theme of loneliness through the life stories of Clark and Lana . Lana 's boyfriend , Whitney Fordman ( Eric Johnson ) , becomes jealous of Clark and Lana 's friendship and ties Clark to a scarecrow pole , using Lana 's necklace , indirectly , to subdue Clark . This image of Clark , in just his underwear and a red " S " painted on his chest , stretches back to Gough and Millar 's foundation for the series , which was about taking Clark down to the basic elements of the Superman character .

In the second strand of the story , Lex Luthor ( Michael Rosenbaum ) and Clark develop a " yin and yang " relationship . Clark first saves Lex from drowning when they get into a car accident ; at the end of the episode , Lex saves Clark when he is strung up in the cornfield and immobilized by kryptonite . Jeremy Creek ( Adrian McMorran ) ? who was mutated by the meteor rocks , gaining special powers ? puts the three former jocks , who tied him to a scarecrow pole during the meteor shower , into comas . He sets out to kill everyone attending the school 's dance , after witnessing Clark experience the same hazing he did , but Clark is able to arrive in time to stop him .

= = Production = =

= = = Casting = = =

Gough and Millar had five months for casting , but their primary focus was on finding an actor to play Clark Kent . They received Kristin Kreuk 's audition tape for the role of Lana Lang and liked it so much that they immediately showed her to the network . Tom Welling , after twice turning down the producers ' attempts to get him to audition for the role of Clark Kent , eventually accepted the opportunity to be part of the show . It was David Nutter who finally convinced Welling to read the script for the pilot , after finding Welling 's picture in a photo album at the casting director 's office . Welling 's manager did not want him to take the role because it could hurt his feature film career , but Welling liked the script and agreed to come in for an audition . Welling 's reason for turning down the role was because the producers were keeping quiet on what the show was really about , which left him with the impression the show was going to be " Superman in high school " , something he did not want to do . Nutter promised to let Welling read the script if he came in and auditioned . After auditioning , Welling was given the script to read , which he thought was " amazing " . For one of his auditions , he read the graveyard scene , from the pilot , with Kristin Kreuk ; the network thought they had " great chemistry " . No one could agree on which actors had the best audition for Lex Luthor . Michael Rosenbaum auditioned twice , and , believing he did not take his first audition seriously , outlined a two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ page scene from the pilot . He indicated all the places to be funny , charismatic , or menacing , and performed so well that everyone agreed he was " the guy " .

John Schneider was brought in to play Jonathan Kent . Schneider was already well known as Bo Duke from The Dukes of Hazzard , and Gough believed Schneider 's experience from The Dukes of Hazzard added believability to the idea that he could have grown up running a farm . Cynthia Ettinger was originally cast as Martha Kent , but during filming it was generally agreed ? Ettinger included ? that she was not right for the role . Annette O 'Toole , who previously portrayed Lana Lang in Superman III , and who was fresh off the recent cancellation of her television series The Huntress , was cast in Ettinger 's place , reshooting the scenes Ettinger had filmed .

Eric Johnson , after auditioning for the roles of Lex and Clark , was cast as Lana Lang 's boyfriend Whitney Fordman . Johnson only spent one day filming his scenes for the pilot . Allison Mack toyed with the idea of auditioning for the role of Lana Lang but chose instead to audition for the role of Chloe Sullivan . The character was created just for the series and was intended to add ethnic diversity to the cast , but part of the reason Gough and Millar chose to cast Mack , against their initial intentions to give the character an ethnic background , was because they were impressed with Allison Mack 's " rare ability to deliver large chunks of expository [ sic ] dialogue conversationally " . Sam Jones III , who plays Pete Ross , was the last of the series regulars to be cast . Gough and Millar saw Jones four days before they began filming for the pilot . In the comics , Pete Ross is Caucasian , and the producers chose to cast Jones , who is African @-@ American , against the mythology .

= = = Filming = = =

Once Warner Bros. Television secured the rights to the show , Gough and Millar set out to write the script and find a director for the pilot . Gough and Millar were fans of director David Nutter 's previous work ; they considered him to be a " preeminent pilot director " . David Nutter joined the project because he wanted to make a pilot that respected the audience but that was still fun and smart . Nutter also believes in creating shows that appeal to a wide variety of audiences . He wanted the final scene for the pilot , in which Clark fantasizes about dancing with Lana , to express the show 's essence . According to Welling , " It brings them close ? not as close as Clark would like , but at the end of [ this ] episode , he imagines that he 's with her and can really see it happening . "

Production was initially slated to take place in Australia , but Vancouver , British Columbia , Canada had more of the " middle America " feel for which the creators were looking . The area offered a site for the Kent farm , including their barn , and the city itself doubled as Metropolis . Vancouver provided a cheaper shooting location , and was in the same time zone as Los Angeles . Filming began in March 2001 ; Nutter spent sixteen days on main unit filming and an additional five days for second unit filming . Time constraints forced Nutter to film strictly from Adrien Van Viersen 's 150 ?

page storyboard when filming the opening meteor shower scene . Much of the look for Smallville came from Millar , who wanted the epitome of " Smalltown , USA " . Construction coordinator Rob Maier explained , " It had to be cleaner than clean , nicer than nice , more beautiful than it would be in the real world . All of the people in Smallville are beautiful ; all of the colors are bright and sharp . " For the Kent farm , Nutter wanted to have " an old world sensibility and tone " . For the pilot , the production crew only built a kitchen and dining room to represent the Kent home . All the exterior shots of the farm were taken at the Andalinis farm , owned by a local couple who also gave the crew permission to paint their forest green house yellow . Since the Vancouver farm already had a barn , the production crew only had to build a loft with stairs leading up to it .

Exterior shots of the Luthor Mansion were shot at the Hatley Castle in Victoria , two hours west of Vancouver by ferry . Time constraints forced scenes , which were shot from multiple angles , to sometimes be shot at separate locations . A scene involving Whitney ( Eric Johnson ) and Lana ( Kristin Kreuk ) sitting on her porch was shot at two different locations . Close @-@ ups of Whitney were shot under a football stadium , while close @-@ ups of Lana were shot in a potato @-@ processing factory . Unable to shoot at the house being used as the Lang residence , the crew built Lana 's front porch inside a sewage processing facility for the final scene of the episode where Lana walks up the stairs to her house . The local sewage treatment facility is also the site for the LuthorCorp pesticide plant , which Lex was sent to Smallville to manage . The crash site of Clark 's ship was shot at the sandpits where Mission to Mars was filmed . Smallville 's Main Street was filmed in both the town of Merritt , which is three hours east of Vancouver , and in the town of Cloverdale . Most of the filming took place in Cloverdale , since the town had a long stretch of vacant buildings that could double as Smallville 's Main Street . When the production crew came to film the opening teaser , they had to decorate the town with ribbons and balloons , as well as paint some of the buildings to attain Millar 's idea of " Smalltown , USA " . Two sets were built just for the pilot . The Kent storm cellar was built as a cover set inside the farm 's barn . For the cemetery scene between Clark and Lana , production designer Bernard Hides built the entire cemetery from scratch in an empty field .

= = = Effects = = =

On @-@ set computer @-@ generated effects for the pilot were done by Thomas Special Effects . Certain scenes , because of time and money , had to be created digitally . The opening sequence showing the destruction of the water tower by a meteor was created on the computer . A persistent problem during production was the lack of cornfields . As realistic corn was a necessity for a show based in Kansas , this became a problem for the filmmakers . Over 10 @,@ 000 stalks of corn were grown in a greenhouse for the pilot , but they only grew two feet high , which was not usable to the crew . The day the crew was filming the scene for Clark 's landing there were no cornfields in the surrounding area . The cornfields had to be digitally added . Digital corn was a common substitute for the undersized corn that was grown , but for scenes where digital corn was not an option , six hundred stalks of fake corn were flown in from a manufacturer in Arizona . Other digital effects include the flattened cornfield where Lex was caught in a meteorite blast . Some scenes required physical effects , instead of computer imagery . When Lex drives his car off a bridge and hits Clark , the stunt performer , who doubled as Wolverine in the film X @-@ Men , was literally hit by the car as it went over the bridge .

= = Release and reception = =

" Pilot " premiered on The WB on October 16 , 2001 . 8 @.@ 4 million viewers watched the pilot 's debut , breaking The WB 's record for highest ratings for a new series . The pilot broke The WB 's ratings record for the 18 ? 49 male demographic , with 3 @.@ 9 million viewers ; it became the third @-@ highest rated debut for the overall adult 18 ? 49 demographic , with an average 3 @.@ 8 million viewers . The premiere also finished first with viewers age 12 ? 34 , leading Warner Bros. President of Entertainment Jordan Levin to credit the series with invigorating the network 's Tuesday

night lineup . The pilot won an Emmy Award for Sound Editing ; it had also been nominated for Visual Effects but lost to UPN 's Star Trek : Enterprise . The special effects team won a Leo Award for Best Visual Effects in a Dramatic Series . Casting directors Deedee Bradley , Coreen Mayrs , and Barbara Miller were nominated for an Artios Award for their work on the pilot . The pilot was nominated for two Golden Reel Awards , one for Effects & Foley Sound Editing and one for Music Sound Editing . Peter Wunstorf was also nominated for an American Society of Cinematographers Award for his work on the pilot . The pilot , along with the second episode " Metamorphosis " , was released in Canada as a special pilot movie . The episodes were altered on the DVD ; formatted in 1 @. @ 78 widescreen , and presented with no opening segment and an alternate closing . It also contained the same special features present in the DVD box set of the first season .

The pilot received favorable reviews upon its release . Rob Owen of the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette thought it was a " respectful addition to Superman lore " and had " all the markings of a super series " . Owen noted the Christ @-@ like imagery of the scene , stating , " Is it any wonder Clark gets tied up there since Superman , too , was ' sent to save us ' ? " Echoing Owen , DVD Verdict noted the same symbolism :

Superman is , in a way , the secular pop culture stand @-@ in for Jesus Christ , a messiah figure for our generation . The series makes this theme explicit in its pilot episode , in which Clark is symbolically ' crucified ' in a cornfield . That striking bit of symbolism becomes the central preoccupation of the series ; Clark is the savior who sacrifices all for the greater good of humanity , and Smallville shows us how he comes to accept and embrace that role .

Elizabeth White of Media Life believed the show had potential to be a big hit for The WB but felt it needed to survive not only its time slot ? Tuesdays at 9 : 00 p.m. ( EST ) ? but also the audience 's expectations of " what Superman should be " . USA Today 's Robert Bianco was a bit more mixed in his criticism . Bianco stated , " For all its innovations , there 's also something rehashed and repetitive about Smallville ... shows often look more familiar at the outset than they do as they progress . There 's talent and intelligence at work in Smallville . Given time , maybe they 'll find a more distinctive voice . " Jeremy Conrad , from IGN , swore to himself that he would never watch Smallville , because he was a " huge Superman fan " and he did not like the idea the creators would be making changes to the Superman mythology . After viewing the pilot , Conrad stated , " It 's a very solid start to the series , and one of the better pilot episodes I 've seen in a while . " In The Futon Critic 's 50 best episodes of 2001 rankings , the pilot was placed 31st , with Brian Ford Sullivan stating , " Smallville opened us to a surprisingly fresh take on the Superman myth @-@ this time showing us the humble beginnings of a young Clark Kent . "

The CW re @-@ aired the pilot on Friday , April 8 , 2011 in preparation for the series finale . The episode was watched by 1 @. @ 55 million viewers and achieved a 0 @. @ 5 Adults 18 @-@ 49 rating , despite only 92 % coverage .