

= Reckoning (Smallville) =

" Reckoning " is the twelfth episode of the fifth season of the superhero television series Smallville and the hundredth episode of the overall series . It originally aired on The WB in the United States on January 26 , 2006 , and on E4 in the United Kingdom on March 27 , 2006 . The episode was written by Kelly Souders and Brian Peterson , and directed by Greg Beeman . The series follows the adventures of the young Clark Kent (Tom Welling) in the town of Smallville , Kansas , before he becomes Superman . In this episode , Clark reveals his secret to Lana Lang (Kristin Kreuk) , but there are consequences . Jonathan Kent (John Schneider) and Lex Luthor (Michael Rosenbaum) learn the results of the senatorial election and the life of someone Clark loves is taken from him .

There were originally two potential plotlines for the episode before it was decided that one of the main characters would be killed . This concept was positively received by studio executives . Schneider compared his departure to that of John Wayne in The Cowboys . The theme of the episode was that Clark had to accept the consequences of his decisions . To keep the identity of the imminently deceased secret , the script was given to fewer people and the network issuing promotional trailers that featured the possible deaths of both Lana and Jonathan .

Upon its premiere , " Reckoning " earned a Nielsen household rating of 2 @. @ 2 , and was watched by approximately 6 @. @ 28 million viewers in the United States ; along with an estimated 375 @, @ 000 viewers in the United Kingdom . The episode received generally positive reviews from commentators , who felt that Jonathan 's death was both emotional and pivotal . One faction of fans was unhappy with the choice of Jonathan , preferring that Lana would have been killed instead .

= = Plot = =

Clark Kent (Tom Welling) sits in his loft holding a piece of coal , waiting for Lana Lang (Kristin Kreuk) to arrive . He then takes her to the Kawatche Caves , where they are transported to the Fortress of Solitude . Lana is in shock as she looks around at the Fortress . Clark expresses fear that Lana is drifting away because of his secret , so he decides to reveal his powers to her . Clark then uses the coal to make a diamond ring and proposes marriage . Afterward , Clark reveals what he did to his parents , Jonathan and Martha Kent (John Schneider and Annette O 'Toole) , who tell him that he is old enough to make decisions on his own without the advice of his father . After some initial doubt , Lana returns to the Kent farm to accept Clark 's proposal .

Lois Lane (Erica Durance) holds an election party for Jonathan at the Talon , where his supporters learn that he defeated Lex Luthor (Michael Rosenbaum) in the Kansas State Senate race . Lana gets a call from Lex and meets him at his mansion . After seeing Lana 's engagement ring , Lex realizes that Lana knows Clark 's secret and reacts aggressively . Lana leaves , but Lex follows in an attempt to apologize . Distracted , she does not see the school bus as it hits her car and she is killed . Clark realizes that Lana 's life is the price that Jor @- @ El (Terence Stamp) promised to collect when he resurrected Clark in " Hidden " . Jor @- @ El provides a crystal that will allow Clark to reset the day , but warns him that the universe will find someone else 's life to exchange for hers . When Clark takes the crystal , he is sent back to the moment that Lana appeared in his barn . This time , Clark decides not to reveal his secret , which causes Lana to break up with him . Upset , Clark goes to Metropolis and tells Chloe Sullivan (Allison Mack) everything , including how he had already lived the day , and his proposal to Lana . Chloe promises to keep an eye on Lana to prevent the accident .

At the election party , Lana arrives with Chloe , but she leaves again when Lex calls . This time Lex kisses her when he learns of her break up , which causes Lana to leave . Lex pursues Lana again , but this time Clark arrives in time to stop the bus . Jonathan goes to the farm after receiving a mysterious call during the party , and is greeted by Lionel Luthor (John Glover) . Lionel insinuates he knows Clark 's secret and shows a picture to Jonathan , which causes Jonathan to begin punching Lionel in anger . Jonathan dismisses Lionel and laboriously walks into the yard , breathing heavily . Martha and Clark drive up and catch him as he stumbles to the ground . After taking a final look at his family , Jonathan dies in the arms of Martha and Clark . At Jonathan 's funeral , all of

Clark 's close friends attend , as well as the Luthors . Clark is the last person at the grave site as everyone leaves . He picks up a handful of dirt to sprinkle into his father 's grave .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Originally , the writers developed two potential plotlines for the episode : Clark and Lana would get married and one of Clark 's parents would die . The producers eventually chose only to kill one of the parents . The producers also debated the idea of other characters dying , but realized that none would have as much resonance as one of Clark 's parents . Once the basic plot was decided , a group of Smallville writers used whiteboards to flesh out the story . The story went into development , and the details were arranged . After the main story line was developed , the supervising producers presented it to several of the executive vice presidents at The WB Television Network . The executives enjoyed the story : Michael Roberts , a senior executive , called the episode 's plot " great " and noted that " the conceit is really cool " .

Writers Kelly Souders and Brian Peterson explained that the title , " Reckoning " , had been decided on before the script was finalized . Peterson explained that the theme revolved around the idea that " you reap what you sow " . The idea was an expansion from " Hidden " , in which Clark was resurrected by his biological father Jor @-@ El , who also informed Clark that the life of someone he loves would be exchanged in the future as payment for bringing Clark back . Peterson expounded further that the plot of the episode would show that " Clark is not God " . Jonathan Kent 's death had been requested by executive producers Alfred Gough and Miles Millar at the " beginning of the season " according to Souders . The idea was specifically chosen to be featured in the show 's 100th episode .

Gough explained that the reason Jonathan Kent was chosen to die was because " going into season five , this is the year the boy becomes the man , so at some point the mentor / father figure has to die , in order for Clark to ultimately step up and really embrace his destiny . " Schneider was happy with the way Jonathan Kent was killed . He argued that his character exited the show " like a hero " . Furthermore , he drew comparisons to John Wayne , finding it " An empowering death . " Originally , a scene had been shot featuring Clark bringing his father 's dead body to the Fortress of Solitude . However , the scene was ultimately cut because , according to Gough , " It was something that sounded great on paper , but it felt like a bit of a stutter step in the episode . " Gough later called the scene " morbid " .

Once the rough script was formulated it was sent to Gough and Millar for additional notes . Next , drafts were sent to the production studio and the network , who also made notes . Finally , Souders and Peterson re @-@ wrote the episode ; the script went through 10 drafts . The final version was finished " two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half [to] three weeks " before production began . Normally a script for a Smallville episode would go to about 40 different people , including " sets , props , and wardrobe " , but because the episode featured the death , the production staff and writers kept it " top secret " . In fact , the script for the episode was printed on red paper in an attempt to keep it " under wraps " .

= = = Filming = = =

Director Greg Beeman found shooting the episode difficult , because his father had recently died . Beeman noted , " I left from his funeral to go to Vancouver to direct the episode , so the emotions were very poignant for me . " During filming , artificial snow had to be continuously shoveled on the sets because the cast and crew kept trampling through it . Steve Oben , the costume set supervisor for the series , jokingly called the Fortress of Solitude the " Fortress of Styrofoam " and explained that a huge hurdle for the scenes in the fortress was to make sure that the synthetic snow would not stick to the actors during filming .

Souders stated that the production staff wanted the climactic scene of Lana 's death to be a " big event " . Originally , staff wanted the car accident to be caused by a train . However , the show was not able to afford the special effects to pull the scene off , and so , the sequence was re @-@ written to feature a bus crash . Souders noted that if the show had been unable to afford the bus wreck , it would have been re @-@ written into a " little car wreck " . The Lana 's entire sequence death was choreographed by Christopher Sayour ? series stunt coordinator and Welling 's stunt double . Sayour described the scene as " important to me and important to a lot of people " . The car crash was a collage of several different shots . First , Kreuk was filmed driving a car on a process trailer with a mounted camera . A separate shot was filmed with a stunt double driving a lead car that was attached to a dummy car driving down a road at high speed . A bus was then driven in a perpendicular direction . The dummy car was attached with a detonator so that when the bus hit it , it would detach and not pull the lead car with it . The timing for the crash was practiced several times during rehearsals . After the car was smashed by the bus , Kreuk was positioned on the ground to give the effect that she was actually in the car wreck .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Reckoning " originally aired in the United States on January 26 , 2006 on The WB . The network promoted the episode with videos of " snowy coffins " suggesting that either Lana or Jonathan would die . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 2 @. @ 2 , meaning that roughly 2 @. @ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 6 @. @ 28 million viewers and ranked as the seventy @-@ first most ? watched episode of the week . The episode was the second @-@ most watched fifth season episode , after the earlier entry , " Aqua " , which was seen by 6 @. @ 40 million viewers . It aired in the United Kingdom on E4 on March 27 , 2006 and reached 375 @, @ 000 viewers , making it the fourth most ? watched program that week .

" Reckoning " received mostly positive reviews from commentators . Various critics felt that the death of Jonathan Kent was a poignantly emotional choice , although others expressed their preference that Lang would have died . This was especially true for fans , who angrily opined their views on various Smallville fan sites . Michael Ausiello from TV Guide wrote , " Watch [' Reckoning '] because it 's one of the best hours of TV this season ? and I 'm not even a big Smallville fan . " Vic Holtzman from Screenrant gave the episode a largely positive review and called it " a great episode overall " . He called the scenes leading up to the funeral " quite moving " and noted that the loss of Jonathan Kent was a blow , not only for the emotional state of the series ' main characters , but also for the audience . However , Holtzman mocked the " old moon @-@ pie eye ? d Clark / Lana situation " and the fact that " Lana didn 't die " . Omar Gallaga from Television Without Pity gave the episode a B ? and noted that the death of Jonathan Kent " still stings " . Chris Carabott from TV Fanatic named the episode the second best Smallville episode , coming after ninth season entry " Absolute Justice " . He wrote that " The death of Jonathan Kent is one of the most pivotal moments of Smallville . " Carabott noted that the ramifications of the episode helped to " shape [Clark into] the man he has become " . Michael Duffy , in the chapter " Sacrifice or Salvation ? Smallville 's Heroic Survival amid Changing Television Trends " of the book called The Smallville Chronicles : Critical Essays on the Television Series , called the episode " momentous " and noted that the presence of clips at Jonathan 's funeral from " Reckoning " in the eighth season premiere " Odyssey " helped to " subtly resituate and creatively reboot the Smallville universe " during the show 's later life .

The production staff for Smallville were very happy with the finished result . Gough and Millar wrote that the episode was a " tour de force of writing , directing , and acting . " They jokingly noted that if , by the end of the episode , the audience was not " weeping " , then " shame on you " . Allison Mack called the entry " thrilling and exciting " . Welling noted that Schneider 's departure from the series was " bittersweet " . Producer Rob Maier was particularly proud of the final cut , noting , " The highlight of season five was the hundredth episode [' Reckoning '] . It was a remarkable show . "