

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - VISUAL

PERFECT SILENCE as the sun shines down upon Earth. From this point of view everything looks peaceful and calm.

Suddenly, a satellite moves into frame. A silent reminder of life on the planet below. On the satellite is the logo for LexCorp.

WOMAN'S VOICE

It was nearly twenty-five go. I still can't believe it. We found you in a crater the size of this house, and not a bruise on you. At first I thought it was a miracle that you survived what I thought was a meteor landing right on top of you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KENT HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

MARTHA KENT stands next to the stove, looking off camera. She is a woman in her late 50's, but with a youthful energy about her. She looks as though she might cry. It is her voice that we are listening to.

MARTHA

But that was not the miracle.

CLARK (O.S.)

I know, Mom. The miracle is that my ship found its way to you and Dad and your family was complete and we all lived happily ever after.

MARTHA

You've heard this one before?

ANGLE ON : CLARK KENT

A tall, dark, well built man in his mid 20's. He is wearing jeans, a t-shirt and a warm smile on his face.

CLARK

Only six hundred times. No, wait...
Seven hundred.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTHA

And you couldn't humor an old woman
one last time.

Clark moves toward his mother. She looks up into his eyes.

CLARK

I'm only going to Metropolis. I'm
not dying.

MARTHA

I know.

CLARK

I'll call.

MARTHA

Every night?

CLARK

At least once a week.

Martha puts a hand on her heart and takes a deep breath. She
puts her other hand on her head and moans ever so slightly.

Clark rolls his eyes.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Twice a week. Final offer.

MARTHA

And you'll visit?

CLARK

I will visit.

MARTHA

You'd better. Not like that last
time you left. A full year and I
was lucky if I got an e-mail.

CLARK

I was in a jungle, Mom. I couldn't
exactly use my cell phone.

Martha shoots him an "oh, please" look.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Fine. I'm sorry. I will call. I
will visit. I will e-mail. I will
text message. I will--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTHA

Be careful.

Clark knows that she isn't talking about driving habits or turning the coffee pot off in the morning. This goes deeper.

CLARK

(beat)

I will.

MARTHA

You're going into a dangerous profession. You're putting yourself out there.

CLARK

I know how to behave.

MARTHA

No more speeding off to stop a bank robbery.

Clark looks down.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

There are cameras everywhere. One whoosh by a red light and your secret will be out there for everyone to see. Now, I don't mean to lecture and I don't mean to sound like I don't have faith in you, because I do. I have too much faith in you. I know that it's hard to let the world carry on its own business, but you have to.

Clark keeps his eyes on the floor, giving only a nod. Martha picks his head up and looks him in the eyes again.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I am so sorry that it has to be this way.

Clark hugs Martha.

CLARK

I love you, Mom.

MARTHA

I know you do, my baby. I love you too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

They hold the hug for a moment before letting go. They each take a step back. Martha wipes a tear from her eye and smiles.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Now, enough of this. Are you sure you have enough food for the trip?

CLARK

I'm fine.

MARTHA

And you're sure you don't want to take the car?

CLARK

I'm sure. The parking would be too much on my salary.

MARTHA

Okay then. If you change your mind, you just come back here and get it. I have the truck and your father wanted you to have that old car of his.

Clark nods.

CLARK

I should go.

Clark walks to the other side of the room and picks up a suitcase.

MARTHA

Call me when you get there.

Clark smiles and takes a look around the room. Finally, he opens the back door and walks out of the house.

Martha walks to the back door and looks out as we PULL BACK through the big, quiet, empty house.

After a few moments, THE PHONE RINGS.

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - METROPOLIS - DAY

Clark walks up the street in a cheap suit and stops in front of the Daily Planet. He looks up to the top of the building where he can see the giant Daily Planet globe. He takes a deep nervous breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

A year living with a tribe of
diseased cannibals and I'm scared
of a giant globe.

He takes a step toward the doors of the building, and then
stops short as a sudden realization rushes over him.

He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a pair of old
glasses. He looks down at them for a moment and then puts
them on. After another brief pause, he walks into the
building.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - LOBBY/ELEVATOR- CONTINUOUS

Clark walks into the lobby, and takes a look around the lobby
which features some impressive art deco architecture. He
walks to the receptionists desk where there is a RECEPTIONIST
talking on the phone.

RECEPTIONIST

No, I'm sorry I can't help you. He
doesn't work for the Daily Planet
anymore.

(beat)

I'll tell them you said so.

She presses a button on the phone as she looks up at Clark.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

CLARK

Yes. On what floor could I find
Perry White?

RECEPTIONIST

His office is on the 18th.

CLARK

Thanks.

Clark walks away from the desk, toward the elevators. He
steps inside the elevator and presses the button for the 18th
floor, causing the button to light up. The doors begin to
close. Before they fully close, a woman's arm reaches through
and opens them again.

LOIS LANE then walks into the elevator, carrying three large
coffee cups. She is about the same age as Clark, but looks a
lot more comfortable in the city environment. She looks him
up and down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS
Thanks for holding the elevator.

CLARK
I'm sorry. I didn't see you.

Lois pushes the button for the 18th floor, regardless of the fact that it's already been pushed. Clark smiles as the doors close.

The two of them stand in silence as the elevator makes its way up the building. Lois is watching the numbers tick by above the door. Clark is watching Lois' reflection in the doors.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

The elevator doors open and Lois walks out, quickly making her way toward her desk.

Clark walks out of the elevator and starts to walk through the room, which is a frenzy of REPORTERS and RINGING TELEPHONES.

As a MAN walks past, Clark stops him.

CLARK
I'm looking for Perry White's office.

The man points Clark in the right direction and continues to walk.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Clark heads for the office.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LEX'S OFFICE - DAY

LEX LUTHOR is in his early 40's and is dressed in a perfectly tailored designer suit. He has a bluetooth earpiece in his ear as he paces in front of his desk.

LEX
I understand, Senator. We've been making every effort possible to refine our filters. It will take some time.
(beat)
I am aware of that.
(beat)
I am aware of that.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEX (CONT'D)

(beat)

I assure you that the problem is being handled and will be resolved as we discussed.

(beat)

No. Thank you.

Lex taps the ear piece, turning it off. He walks to his desk and hits the intercom.

LEX (CONT'D)

Marie, get George Reyes on the phone.

(beat)

And cancel my two o'clock.

MARIE

Yessir. Sir, Professor Vale is waiting to see you.

LEX

Who?

MARIE

He says that you've been funding one of his projects.

(beat)

A cybernetic development project.

LEX

I suppose he knows I'm in my office?

MARIE

Yes, sir.

LEX

Send him in.

Lex walks behind his desk and takes a seat as his office door opens and PROFESSOR VALE enters. He is carrying a folder full of papers.

LEX (CONT'D)

What can I help you with, Professor?

PROFESSOR VALE

Well, it seems as though my funding has been cut in half.

LEX

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PROFESSOR VALE

I've come to see about changing that.

LEX

I don't think I'm the person to be talking to. Each branch of LexCorp has it's own department head. You should be--

PROFESSOR VALE

I know. And I have spoken with her. It's just... She's not very interested in what I'm doing.

LEX

Your cybernetic research.

PROFESSOR VALE

Yes, but it's not just that. I've developed an alloy to be used in my experiments.

Professor Vale reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small cube of metal. He places it in front of Lex. Lex picks it up and looks it over.

PROFESSOR VALE (CONT'D)

I call it metallo.

LEX

Nice name. What makes this "metallo" so special?

PROFESSOR VALE

It's strong. It's versatile.

LEX

I'm not hearing your selling point. There are a lot of alloys that are strong and versatile.

PROFESSOR VALE

But metallo is different. Metallo is alive.

LEX

Pardon?

PROFESSOR VALE

Or... Well, it will be. I've been experimenting with integrating new robotic technology into this alloy.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PROFESSOR VALE (CONT'D)

More to the point, making the robotics one with the alloy on a molecular level.

LEX

I've never heard of technology working in such a way.

PROFESSOR VALE

That's because I haven't perfected it yet. I'm still working on the finer details, like how to actually power the metallo. Once I do that, it's only a matter of baby steps before we accomplish the bigger task.

LEX

Which is?

Professor Vale is a little annoyed at having to explain all of this, but he will anyway. He opens his file and pulls out a photograph. He places it on Lex's desk and Lex takes a look.

The photo is of a corpse, riddled with bullet holes. When Lex sees this, he cringes ever so slightly and looks away.

PROFESSOR VALE

This is a picture of a Metropolis police office after a shooting last month. Dead.

LEX

Thank you. I see that.

PROFESSOR VALE

It's a meaningless death. This man didn't have to die.

LEX

To die a hero is considered an honor by some.

PROFESSOR VALE

My point is, this man didn't have to die because we have the ability to create officers capable of withstanding not just gunfire, but explosions, floods... The possibilities are endless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LEX

This is your project? Robots?

PROFESSOR VALE

Androids. Cybernetic beings capable of saving us from ourselves.

LEX

How poignant. But you haven't created one of these androids?

PROFESSOR VALE

No.

(beat)

But I'm well on my way, and I believe that with enough time and with the proper resources I can make this work.

LEX

Right. Well, I'll see what I can do.

PROFESSOR VALE

Forgive me for being so blunt, but if you're just saying that to get me out of your office, I wish you'd tell me. At least then I could pursue other options. I hear that Wa--

LEX

Professor, I told you that I would do what I can to help you. I am a man of my word.

Professor Vale nods.

PROFESSOR VALE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply that you weren't. Thank you.

LEX

It's fine. Now, if you'll excuse me.

PROFESSOR VALE

Of course.

Professor Vale smiles and turns to walk out.

LEX

Professor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Vale turns around. Lex picks up the photo of the corpse and holds it out for the Professor to take.

LEX (CONT'D)

I don't think I'll be needing this.

Professor Vale quickly grabs the picture from Lex and then walks out of the room.

Once Lex is alone, he looks down at the sample of metallo in his hand. He is intrigued.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - PERRY WHITE'S OFFICE - DAY

Clark is now sitting in front of PERRY WHITE. Perry has a mess of papers on his desk, and another paper in his hand which he is scanning.

PERRY

Where did you go to college?

CLARK

Here. I mean, Metropolis University.

PERRY

And where have you been since you graduated?

CLARK

Traveling some. Seeing what's out there. I also wrote a little for the paper back home in Smallville.

PERRY

Right. I got a call from your editor last week. Old friend of mine. She likes you.

Perry puts the paper down and looks to Clark.

PERRY (CONT'D)

My problem is that this isn't the Smallville Gazette.

CLARK

Ledger. Smallville Ledger.

PERRY

Hmm.

CLARK

But Gazette's fine too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY

It doesn't matter what it's called, Kent. My point is that I'm not sure you're ready to be working at a paper like this. You have talent, I'll give you that. I'm just not convinced that you're there yet.

CLARK

There?

PERRY

There. Here... You know what I mean. You're not ready. Frankly, I wouldn't even be giving you a chance if it weren't for the reference.

CLARK

But I am ready. I've been working toward this for a long time. And I didn't just study journalism at school. I took courses in astronomy, physics, bio--

PERRY

I get it. You're smart.

CLARK

My point is that I know a little bit about a lot of things and I'm willing to learn more about what I don't know. You've seen my writing and you know that I can do this. I'm just asking for a chance.

Perry takes a moment to consider this. He looks Clark up and down, admiring the kid's drive.

PERRY

You remind me of a kid I used to know. Came from nowhere and worked his way up.

(beat)

I'll give you a chance, kid. Nothing fancy, just a small piece in the Metropolis Life section. A fluff piece to fill a couple of paragraphs. After that... Well, after that we'll see how it goes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Clark smiles and stands up, extending a hand to shake Perry's.

CLARK
Thank you, sir.

Perry shakes Clark's hand.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark and Perry walk out of the office. Perry walks Clark through the room, giving him a quick tour.

PERRY
I don't have time to give you the whole tour. Supplies are back there and if you need anything else, just ask someone.

They reach an empty desk, which is right next to Lois'. She doesn't look up from her computer.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Use this desk for now. I'll be in my office.

Perry turns and walks back toward his office.

Clark takes a seat at his desk and tries to get a feel for it. He turns on his computer screen and sits back in his chair.

After a moment, his attention turns to Lois. She still doesn't look in his direction.

CLARK
Hi.

No response.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Okay then.

Clark turns back to his computer. After a moment, Lois types a quick sentence into her computer. Once she's finished with the thought, she sits back in her chair.

LOIS
I guess you're the new guy?

Clark looks at her again. Finally, she looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Hmm?

LOIS

You're the new guy. Yes?

CLARK

Yes.

Lois looks him up and down.

LOIS

Nervous?

CLARK

No.

Lois smiles.

LOIS

I'm Lois.

CLARK

Clark Kent.

LOIS

Nice to meet you, Clark.

CLARK

You too.

Lois turns back to her computer and resumes her work.

LOIS

(under her breath)

I give you a week, tops.

Lois assumes that Clark can't hear her, of course.

Of course, she is wrong. He's a little thrown by the comment as he turns toward his computer screen. After shaking off Lois' comment, he looks around his desk and the room. Things are looking up.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - NIGHT

FIVE YEARS LATER

Clark's desk is now full of pictures, papers and notes. He's made it his own. He is currently sitting in his chair, wearing a more expensive suit, talking on the phone. He's not happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

I understand that, but the crime rates in Suicide Slum have increased by twenty percent in the last five years. How can you deny this?

(beat)

I understand that. That's why it's called Suicide Slum.

(beat)

That doesn't excuse the lack of police protection for its citizens.

(beat)

There have been six convenience store robberies in the past week. Two apartments were robbed while the families were held at gunpoint. Three carjackings. An attempted rape. One man was killed and two others were shot. What is being done to put an end to this crime spree?

The line goes dead. Clark stops mid-sentence as he realizes this.

CLARK (CONT'D)

No comment. Of course there's no comment.

Clark turns toward Lois' desk where she is working on a story of her own.

CLARK (CONT'D)

That's the third time this week.

LOIS

Maybe you're losing your charm, Smallville. I, on the other hand, just scored the interview of a lifetime.

(beat)

Well, the interview of the week anyway.

CLARK

The mayor?

LOIS

Nope. Lex Luthor. He's agreed to give me a one-on-one interview after the opening of the new Luthor Medical Research Center.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLARK

Good luck. Talking to that man is like talking to a brick wall.

LOIS

For most reporters. For me, it is just another challenge to be met and conquered.

CLARK

Yeah. You might want to look over your personnel file. Make sure your "next of kin" contact number is up to date.

LOIS

So, I'm guessing you believe the rumors.

CLARK

I'm starting to.

Lois stands up.

LOIS

This is why nobody trusts the media anymore. Every time someone makes a few bucks, every paper in the world tries to bring them down. Score the next big headline. By the time there's actual news to report, nobody wants to listen.

CLARK

So, I'm guessing you don't believe the rumors.

LOIS

I neither believe nor disbelieve the rumors. Until I see hard evidence, I remain impartial. That's what good reporters do. Report facts, not spread gossip. Frankly, I'm surprised that you're so quick to judge. You're usually all ethical and stuff.

CLARK

It's getting harder to see the glass half full. It seems like we're writing the same headlines every day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CLARK (CONT'D)

I'm starting to think everyone has something to hide these days.

LOIS

Everyone does.

(beat)

Besides you. You're this big ball of boy scout goodness and it was only a matter of time before this job wore you down. You have to stop letting the world get to you.

CLARK

How?

LOIS

I wish I could tell you. It's just something you have to learn for yourself. Like riding a bike, or the birds and the bees.

(off Clark's puzzled reaction)

My parents worked a lot.

CLARK

Seems like.

LOIS

Anyway, it's late. I'm getting out of here. You should do the same. Get something to eat. Sleep. Come at it again in the morning.

CLARK

Sage advice. Want to grab some dinner?

LOIS

I would, but I have a date.

Clark's a little disappointed by this. Lois doesn't notice.

CLARK

Richard?

LOIS

Yup. Third time's a charm, right? Who knows. Maybe I found me a good one for a change.

CLARK

Good luck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Lois grabs her coat and starts to walk away.

LOIS
Thanks. I need all the help I can
get. G'night.

CLARK
G'night.

Once Lois is gone, Clark is the only person remaining in the office. He looks at a stack of notes, but doesn't feel much like writing. He gets up, grabs his coat and walks out of the office.

EXT. METROPOLIS STREET - NIGHT

Clark walks down the street. As he walks, MANY SOUNDS FLOOD HIS EARS. He is finding it hard to ignore the sounds, which include babies crying, couples fighting, people laughing, cars honking and sirens wailing their way across town.

Suddenly, a loud scream breaks through all of the other noises. This is a sound which he would have heard with or without super hearing.

Clark looks up in time to see a MUGGER grab the purse of a WEALTHY OLDER WOMAN who has been knocked to the ground. The mugger is holding a gun to the woman's head.

WEALTHY OLDER WOMAN
No. Please no. Take it!

MUGGER
I want your jewelry.

The mugger snatches the woman's necklace right off of her neck and shoves it into his pocket.

MUGGER (CONT'D)
Now give me the earrings, or I'll
take them the same way I took the
necklace.

Clark looks around the street. Several people are watching this happen, but nobody is doing anything to stop it. This confuses Clark.

As the woman struggles to get her earrings off, Clark takes a few steps toward the mugger, but hesitates as he thinks of what he will do. Finally, he decides to just go for it and walks toward the mugger with more determination.

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CONTINUED:

CLARK

Hey!

The mugger turns toward Clark, aiming the gun at Clark.

MUGGER

Don't be a hero.

CLARK

I'm not a hero.

MUGGER

Good.

The wealthy older woman notices that the mugger's attention is off of her and attempts to sneak away. The mugger quickly sees this and turns the gun back to her.

MUGGER (CONT'D)

Stop!

CLARK

No!

Clark starts to take a step toward the mugger. When the mugger sees this, he turns the gun back to Clark. The gun goes off.

THE WORLD SLOWS DOWN around Clark.

The bullet makes it's way from the gun, toward Clark's chest. Clark watches it get closer and closer. He could easily swat it out of the way, but that would attract too much attention. He looks around to see how many people are watching. There are too many to overlook any use of super powers.

The bullet gets closer and closer to Clark.

Finally, THE WORLD RESUMES NORMAL SPEED.

The bullet hits Clark in the gut. Clark stumbles back a little and puts his hand on his stomach.

The wealthy older woman screams. The crowd gasps. The mugger and Clark lock eyes, both of their eyes widening as they start to panic.

The mugger takes off down the street.

WEALTHY OLDER WOMAN

Someone call 911!

The wealthy older woman stands up and looks at Clark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WEALTHY OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Clark keeps his hand over the bullet hole in his suit as he looks down, pretending to examine the damage. Finally, he looks back up at the woman and the crowd around her.

CLARK

Blanks.

(beat)

They were blanks.

The woman lets out a sigh of relief. Clark turns to face a wall, taking a deep breath of his own and buttoning his jacket as discreetly as possible.

A police car pulls up. Clark looks toward it, wondering how to explain all of this.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clark walks into his apartment and tosses his coat onto the couch as he walks toward the bedroom.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Clark walks into the bathroom and turns on the light. He stands in front of the mirror, looking at the hole in his shirt.

He unbuttons his shirt and opens it, revealing an undershirt with a bullet hole in it.

He lifts the undershirt revealing the completely undamaged skin beneath. He looks at the reflection for a moment.

THE PHONE RINGS. Clark looks toward the bedroom and finally leaves the bathroom, turning off the light behind him.

The PHONE RINGS AGAIN, but this time it's answered mid-ring.

CLARK (O.S.)

Hello?

(beat)

Hi, Mom.

(beat)

Well... I was shot in the stomach.

(beat)

Yeah, it's ruined.

(beat)

The one you gave me for Christmas.

(beat)

I know. I liked the shirt too.

INT. KENT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Martha is on the phone with Clark.

MARTHA

Did anyone see you get shot?

intercut with:

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clark walks out of the bedroom with the phone in his hand.

CLARK

Actually, yeah. There were a few people watching. I was trying to stop a mugger.

MARTHA

Did you?

CLARK

He ran. I couldn't really do anything about it. I told everyone that he was using blanks.

MARTHA

And they believed you?

CLARK

No reason not to. How many times have you suspected someone of being from another planet?

MARTHA

You didn't live through the 60's.

Martha waits for a chuckle, but none comes.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Clark, are you okay?

CLARK

I'm really not.

Martha's not sure what to say. She knows what's bothering Clark, but she has no way of making it better. Especially over the phone.

MARTHA

Listen. Pete and Lana are in town. I'm having them over for dinner tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

I don't know.

MARTHA

It'll do you some good to be around people who know. You've been so isolated lately.

CLARK

I'll see if I can make it.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark is sitting at his desk, typing away at his computer when JIMMY OLSEN walks up to him.

JIMMY

Clark.

Clark looks up.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Have you checked out the John Corben blog?

CLARK

No. Why?

JIMMY

I just thought you might wanna.

Jimmy looks up and sees Perry walking toward them.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Or you might want to play sick. A little post traumatic stress. Something like that.

CLARK

Jimmy, what are you talking about?

Perry reaches the desk. He doesn't appear happy. He looks at Jimmy.

JIMMY

I should go develop some film.

PERRY

Develop--? How many times have I told you to use digital?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

But film has more depth. More personality.

PERRY

We're not opening an exhibit, we're printing the news. Digital can be up on the website in five minutes.

JIMMY

Yessir.
(to Clark)
I'll see you later.

CLARK

See ya.

Jimmy walks off. Perry pulls up a chair and sits near Clark.

PERRY

Would you say that I'm a nice guy, Clark?

CLARK

I... guess so. Yes.

PERRY

Easy going? Not one of those bosses that everyone hates?

CLARK

Sure.

PERRY

So, why do you hate me?

CLARK

I don't.

PERRY

You don't hate me?

CLARK

Sir, did I...? What's...? Huh?

PERRY

We're a newspaper, Kent. We report the news, correct?

CLARK

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PERRY

Then why is there a police report online which claims that you were not only witness to, but the victim of a shooting last night?

CLARK

I-- It was blanks.

PERRY

You had a gun aimed at you. The trigger was pulled. You don't see a story here?

Clark doesn't respond.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Your life flashed before your eyes. Your heart was pounding in your chest. For a moment, you thought you might have been shot. You thought you were dying. For a moment, the rest of the world didn't exist and you saw a light at the end of a tunnel.

CLARK

I did?

PERRY

Work with me. There's a story here. Not only that, but it fits in with the series you've been working on. The only way this could be better is if you were actually shot. And you know what I mean by that so don't get all emotional.

CLARK

I'm sorry, sir. I'll work on it.

PERRY

Damn straight, you will. And I will never see a story like this on that hack's blog ever again, right?

Perry stands up.

PERRY (CONT'D)

I'll be in my office.

Perry walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PERRY (CONT'D)

What does that mean anyway? "Blog."

Clark turns back to his computer and pulls up John Corben's website. On it are links to several stories relating to crimes in Metropolis under the headline "War On The Streets".

Clark clicks on one of the stories and begins reading.

EXT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

A CROWD is gathered in front of the building for it's opening. Lex is standing on a small platform in front of the crowd. Next to him stand several doctors and men in suits.

LEX

Ladies, gentlemen and members of the press, it is an honor to welcome you here today as we take another step toward the future. The Luthor Medical Research Center has been a dream of mine since I was a child, watching helplessly as disease claimed the life of my beloved mother. Since that time, I have wanted to do my part to aid in the battle against not only disease, but all of the physical setbacks that keep us from achieving our true potential. I won't bore you with drawn out speeches and self-congratulatory rhetoric. That is not what this day is about. This day is about the dawning of what I hope will be a new era of medical research. Already, I have assembled a team of the world's most skilled scientists to face this task and they have begun work on some very exciting experiments which I look forward to sharing with you in the coming years.

ANGLE ON : THE CROWD

Lois and Jimmy stand with the rest of the crowd, watching Lex speak. Jimmy snaps a few photos with a digital camera. He's having a difficult time with the camera.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

I thought he said he wasn't going to make a drawn out speech.

JIMMY

Well, I hope he keeps talking. I can't get this camera to work right.

LOIS

Is the lens cap on?

JIMMY

No.

Jimmy pushes a button and it BEEPS.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ah.

Jimmy aims the camera again and takes a picture. He looks at the shot on the camera's screen.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Works now.

LOIS

Great. I think he's just about to get around to the self-congratulatory rhetoric.

LEX

(continuing the speech)

So I thank you. With your help, we really can make this world a brighter place.

LOIS

Okay, I guess I was wrong.

LEX

I am but the monetary supplier.

LOIS

Or not.

LEX

I am a small part of this larger machine. The millions of dollars given to fund this facility are nothing compared to the dedication of those who will work here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX (CONT'D)

The support given to them by the city of Metropolis -and indeed, the world - will drive them more than any amount of money ever could.

(beat)

Without further delay, I present to you the Luther Medical Research Center. I present to you the future of mankind!

The crowd applauds. Lois claps despite being a little bored.

Meanwhile, Lex is busy shaking hands and greeting guests. Lois keeps her eye on him, waiting for her chance.

LOIS

(to Jimmy)

When we get inside, keep up. I don't want to miss a thing.

(beat)

Oh, and make sure you get his reactions to the hard hitting questions. If I hit on something, I want to see the look on his face plastered all over the front page.

JIMMY

I'll do what I can.

Lex turns and starts to walk toward the building. Lois starts after him.

LOIS

Let's go.

Jimmy follows.

JIMMY

Shouldn't we wait until someone calls us?

LOIS

A lesson for you Jimmy. Always try to keep them off balance. Once you let them dictate the order of things, you might as well be their PR guy.

As Lois and Jimmy get closer to the building, a GUARD steps in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GUARD

I'm sorry, but the tours haven't begun yet.

LOIS

That's okay. I'm getting mine from Mr. Luthor. If you'll just let me in.

GUARD

You must be Miss Lane.

LOIS

You've heard of me. I'm touched.

GUARD

Lois Lane, Daily Planet. It's on the guest list.

LOIS

Oh.

GUARD

You'll have to wait a little longer, Miss Lane. Mr. Luthor will let me know when he's ready to see you.

JIMMY

So much for keeping him off balance.

GUARD

And the kid will have to wait out here.

JIMMY

Kid?

LOIS

He's my photographer.

GUARD

Invitation for one person only. I'm sure the boy got enough pictures during the speech.

JIMMY

Jimmy-- Jim Olsen. Not kid. Not boy. Mr. Olsen if you want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GUARD
(ignoring Jimmy)
Sorry. I don't make the rules.

LOIS
Whatever. Just let me know when
he's ready.

The guard nods. Lois and Jimmy turn and start to wander back toward the crowd.

JIMMY
A lesson for you, Lois...

Lois shoots Jimmy a look that warns him not to continue.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I mean, Miss Lane.

LOIS
Do you have any smaller cameras?

JIMMY
Not on me.

LOIS
Damn.

JIMMY
Sorry.

LOIS
You might as well go back to the
office.

JIMMY
You sure? I could wait.

LOIS
No thanks, Jim. I'm good.

Jimmy nods and walks off. Lois sits on a nearby bench and starts waiting.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - LEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Lex is sitting at his desk in the new office, which looks nothing like his other office. It has a much more high-tech feel to it.

On his computer monitor is video from the security cameras. On the video, Lex watches Lois wait for him. She checks her watch and sighs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lex grins. He's in control of this situation.

Lex hits the intercom.

LEX
Miss Ambrose.

MISS AMBROSE
Yes, sir?

LEX
Wait another ten minutes and then
tell Miss Lane that she can wait in
the hall.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Lois is pacing in the hallways as the guard from before stands nearby to keep an eye on her. She smiles and waves at him, growing more impatient. As she looks at her watch, Lex turns the corner and walks toward her. When she sees him, Lois pulls out her pad and pen.

LEX
Miss Lane, I presume?

LOIS
Mr. Luthor. How nice of you to meet
with me.

LEX
I hope I didn't keep you waiting.

LOIS
Not at all.

LEX
Good. Shall we? There are a lot of
exciting things to show you in this
facility.

LOIS
I'm sure there are, but I'm not
here to write an ad for you. I
think you should know that.

LEX
Of course. What is it they say?
(beat)
"Hit me with your best shot."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

Tell me that you didn't just start off the interview by quoting Pat Benatar.

LEX

We all have our weaknesses, Miss Lane.

Lois writes something in her pad.

LEX (CONT'D)

I thought most reporters used digital recorders these days.

LOIS

It's running in my purse.
(beat)
Shall we?

Lex nods and starts leading Lois down the hall.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - OTHER HALLWAY - DAY

Lex continues to lead Lois as he conducts a tour and she conducts an interview.

LEX

The entire east wing of the center is a functional hospital, complete with emergency room, and surgical facilities. It's equipped with the latest technology, of course. All in an effort to provide the common citizens of Metropolis with the best care at prices they can afford.

Lex motions toward a door.

LEX (CONT'D)

In here we have the lab of Dr. Aaron Strong. He's working on developing a type of cancer vaccine that uses spores found in the Alaskan forests. I'm sure he could explain it much better than I, but it's fascinating to hear about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

Cancer cure. Great. So, how do you respond to rumors of LexCorp emissions far exceeding the legal limits in almost all of your manufacturing plants? I bet they're not helping the cancer rates very much.

LEX

I've only recently been made aware of such rumors and I assure you that I'm making every effort to get to the bottom of the situation. I thought I'd hired a team of managers that I could trust to run my plants effectively and safely, and I'm truly saddened to think that my trust might have been betrayed.

Lois nods and makes a note.

LOIS

So these managers are going to be fired?

LEX

If it's discovered that they've been neglecting their duties, absolutely. At LexCorp we take the safety of the environment as seriously as those of our own employees. Our own families.

LOIS

Right. In your speech, you made mention of your mother. How do you think she'd react to the opening of this center?

LEX

I would hope that she'd be proud. Though it might be too late to help her, I think that she would be happy that I was doing something in my own way to help the world's growing health concerns. To truly make the world a better place, free of disease.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

As Lex says this, Professor Vale walks down the hallway. Vale isn't paying attention to where he is going. He's looking over papers and making notes on them.

As he walks, Professor Vale bumps into Lois. Both drop their papers. As they bend down to pick them up, Lois sees the word "metallo" on one of the papers. She doesn't think much of it and moves on.

PROFESSOR VALE

I'm sorry. My mind isn't here today.

LOIS

Don't worry about it.

Professor Vale smiles and walks off. Lois turns back to Lex.

LOIS (CONT'D)

One of your doctors?

LEX

Yes. I can't discuss his project right now, but I think it's safe to say that it could change the face of Metropolis- and the world really- as we know it.

LOIS

Lovely.

(beat)

Now, you mentioned that your mother died of a disease?

LEX

Yes.

LOIS

I thought I read that your mother burned to death in an apartment fire.

Lex takes a moment and then looks down.

LEX

Both are true, really. It's a hard topic for me to discuss.

LOIS

I understand. If you'd rather not...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LEX

No.

(beat)

My mother was sick. For a year I watched her grow weaker and weaker before my eyes. The woman that I knew was gone long before her death, and my father couldn't stand to watch her suffer any longer.

LOIS

Are you saying that your father killed her?

LEX

I'm saying that my father was human, Miss Lane. With all of the weaknesses that we all have.

LOIS

But he did set the fire that killed her?

LEX

And himself.

Lois makes a note.

LOIS

How did you learn about this? If you don't mind my asking.

LEX

I was at work. This was before I had the security that I have today. I was working in a small print shop across town. I remember a police officer coming into the shop with my family's minister and I knew right away that something was terribly wrong.

LOIS

I'm sorry.

LEX

For years I hated my father for what he did, but once I learned to see what he was going through, I learned that illness doesn't just hurt those infected. Those around the ill can also be made weak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LOIS
Interesting.

LEX
But enough about myself. Let me
show you our genetics lab.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark is at his desk, reading a website. Lois slumps into her
chair next to Clark.

LOIS
I've never interviewed someone for
so long without getting anything
interesting to write.

CLARK
Interview didn't go well?

LOIS
It was like listening to white
noise for an hour. Either this guy
is squeakier than you or he's an
evil genius. I'm kinda leaning
toward the latter.

Clark smiles.

CLARK
What happened to journalistic
impartiality?

LOIS
I still have it. It's just asleep,
next to the part of my brain that's
been listening to the man speak all
day.

CLARK
Do you at least have something to
write about?

LOIS
I'm sure I'll work it out. I am
brilliant after all.
(beat)
How about you? Any breaking news?

CLARK
Besides the fact that Perry had me
write a story about my near death
experience last night?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

Huh?

Clark moves over and shows Lois his computer screen with John Corben's page loaded on it. The story about Clark is displayed.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Wait... You were almost killed?

CLARK

The guy was shooting blanks.

Lois smirks.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I wasn't almost killed.

LOIS

Still, it had to be scary right?

CLARK

Yeah. It was scary.

LOIS

So Corben scooped you on a story about you? That's just not making you look good.

CLARK

Thank you.

(beat)

So, what do you know about John Corben?

LOIS

What do you mean?

CLARK

I mean, I've been reading his site all day and something seems off about it. I can't put my finger on it.

LOIS

Well, it wouldn't be the first time. John isn't known for his integrity.

CLARK

You know him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOIS

Used to. He worked here a while before you. Actually, you're sitting at his desk.

CLARK

What happened?

LOIS

Perry found out that John wasn't into checking facts, he was more into making them up. Half of what he wrote was fictional. Made the Planet look like a joke. Made Perry look worse.

(beat)

Perry trusted him. He was ivy league, smart... Everything that's supposed to make a good reporter. After that, Perry changed. He went for people he thought he could trust rather than people who just had an impressive resume. That would be why you're here.

CLARK

And yet somehow Corben's website still attracts all of this attention.

LOIS

As far as I know, the stories on his site are legit. The guy still seems a little strange to me, but he has a talent for getting to the scene before anyone else.

Clark sits back in his chair and thinks this over.

CLARK

Still, something seems off.

LOIS

Let me know if you figure it out. Until then I have to go listen to my Luthor interview and try to put a few paragraphs together without sounding like I'm on the payroll.

CLARK

Good luck.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - VALE'S LAB - NIGHT

Professor Vale's lab is a dark room that's filled with a lot of semi-creepy robotics equipment. At the moment, Professor Vale is sitting at a desk, looking down at a small rod made of metallo.

Lex walks into the lab behind him.

LEX

It's late, Professor. Please tell me that there's good reason for this meeting.

PROFESSOR VALE

There is. Look.

Lex walks to the desk and looks at the rod.

LEX

It looks like a piece of metal.

PROFESSOR VALE

But it's not. This is the latest metallo experiment. The piece of the puzzle that makes the picture clear.

LEX

And yet, it looks like a piece of metal.

PROFESSOR VALE

Watch.

Professor Vale grabs some jumper cable-type wires from under the table and attaches them to the rod. He then presses a button which activates the power.

The lights in the room dim.

EXT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - NIGHT

Every light in the building dims, along with the lights of several other nearby buildings.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - VALE'S LAB - NIGHT

Lex looks around the room, noticing the power drain. He looks back at the metallo rod and notices the rod bend itself into a square.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Professor Vale shuts the power off. The metallo returns to its rod form.

Lex stands in silence for a moment.

LEX

That's it? That is the breakthrough?

PROFESSOR VALE

It may not look like much, Mr. Luthor, but it is. There are no standard mechanics in the metallo. No joints. No weak spots. The metal is as strong as any substance on the planet and can move as freely as the human body, given the proper programming and energy.

LEX

Can you make full scale androids out of this?

PROFESSOR VALE

Yes. I could mold the body at any time. The only setbacks will be the power supply and the central processor. The computing power needed to process the metallo commands would be extraordinary. This rod is only capable of the most basic commands and those are preprogrammed.

LEX

Do we have the ability?

PROFESSOR VALE

We may on some larger level. The challenge will be to scale it down to a reasonable size without losing any functionality. In essence, I would have to find a computer capable of functioning on the same level as the human brain.

LEX

Do it. I want a prototype ready within the month.

PROFESSOR VALE

But--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX

No excuses, Professor. This won't just give the Center the publicity it needs. It will put LexCorp on the map as the only source for law enforcement robotics. Do you know what that would mean for me?

PROFESSOR VALE

Millions of dollars.

Lex chuckles and shakes his head. Vale just doesn't get it.

LEX

Get back to work.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - NIGHT

While it is dark out, there are still plenty of people working in the office.

Clark is going over news reports on the Daily Planet's website. Lois is still at her desk, just finishing up her piece on Lex Luthor. After finishing, she sits back and rubs her eyes.

LOIS

I feel a sudden need to wash my hands.

Clark doesn't respond. He is flipping back and forth between the Planet's site and Corben's site.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Clark?

Lois looks back at Clark's screen.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You're still reading crime reports? You're going to drive yourself insane. Or at least blind.

CLARK

Only a few more minutes, Mom? Please?

LOIS

Ha ha. At least tell me you're onto some kind of story here and not just obsessed with creepy stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Other than the fact that Corben is a hack writer who only writes about a handful of the crimes down in Suicide Slum while ignoring the others? Not really.

LOIS

Maybe he only reports on the really bad ones?

CLARK

No. He's completely ignored murders, rapes, and child abductions. He usually focuses on armed robberies and stuff like that.

LOIS

(sarcastic)

Weird. Who would have thought John Corben was a half-assed reporter?

Lois stands up and stretches.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna get going. I have a date.

CLARK

Richard?

LOIS

John. Richard's not getting past the third date.

CLARK

I thought you liked him.

LOIS

I thought I did. Then, the last time we went out I spend the whole night wondering why I liked him. He's not incredibly bright or funny. I'm not comfortable around him. Good looking, yes.

(beat)

I just want someone who will wow me. Sweep me off my feet. Bring me soup when I'm sick.

CLARK

Sweeping and food preparation. Sounds more like you want a maid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOIS
(smiling)
Whatever, Smallville. At least I
date.

Clark looks at his watch.

CLARK
Actually, I have dinner plans
tonight. With an old girlfriend.

INT. KENT HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Martha opens the front door and smiles when she sees LANA
LANG and PETE ROSS standing outside. Lana is very pregnant.

MARTHA
Lana! Pete! Come in here. Let me
have a look at you.

PETE
Hi, Mrs. Kent.

MARTHA
We're all grown up now, Pete. Call
me Martha.

PETE
That would be weird, Mrs. Kent.

Martha gives Pete a hug, and then Lana.

MARTHA
Lana, you look amazing. Exactly the
same as you did ten years ago.
Pete, are you putting on weight?

Everyone laughs.

LANA
So, is Clark coming tonight?

MARTHA
He's here. He's just too rude to
come to the front door. Come
inside.

Pete and Lana walk further into the house as Martha closes
the door. They walk into the living room where Clark is
sitting in jeans and a t-shirt, with his laptop in front of
him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Clark!

Clark looks up and sees Pete and Lana. He puts his laptop down and stands up.

CLARK

Hey. Sorry.

PETE

Big breaking news?

CLARK

Actually, the same old story. Just a lot more of it these days.

LANA

You look worn.

Clark looks at Lana.

CLARK

You look pregnant. How are you feeling?

LANA

Y'know, now that you mention it, pregnant sounds just about right.

CLARK

Sit.

LANA

Yes, sir.

Lana walks to where Clark is sitting and takes a look at his laptop. She winces and shuts it.

LANA (CONT'D)

Sorry. Weird things make me nauseous these days. Murder scene photographs would be one of them.

MARTHA

It's about time Clark put work aside anyway. Dinner's almost done.

LANA

It smells great.

PETE

I hope you made a lot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTHA

You kids go sit down at the table
and I'll bring the food.

LANA

I'll help.

MARTHA

You'll do no such thing. In my
house, the pregnant ones get to
relax.

Martha walks into the kitchen.

CLARK

Plus, she hates having anyone else
in her kitchen.

MARTHA

I heard that.

Clark stands up and puts an arm around Lana.

CLARK

It is good to see you guys. I've
missed you.

PETE

Are you hitting on my wife?

CLARK

No.

LANA

I have a jealous husband. Be
careful or he might come after you.

PETE

I'm jealous, not stupid.

The three of them start to walk toward the dining room.

PETE (CONT'D)

So how's work in the big city?

CLARK

It's tiring.

INT. KENT HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Clark, Pete and Lana walk into the dining room. Pete pulls
out Lana's chair as Clark takes his seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANA

At least you're able to get away from work for a while.

CLARK

I can run, but I'm not sure I can hide. I can't stop thinking about these things. I can't let go of it.

LANA

That doesn't sound healthy.

PETE

We're in town until Monday. Why don't you spend the weekend here? We can hang out just like the old days.

CLARK

Maybe.

Martha walks into the room with large bowl of salad in her hands.

MARTHA

The roast isn't quite there yet, but we can start on the salad.

She starts dishing out the salad as the conversation continues.

CLARK

So, did you come back home for any particular reason, or just to visit?

LANA

Oh, we have reasons.

CLARK

Nothing bad, I hope.

PETE

Depends on who you're talking to at the time. To my mother, it's bad.

MARTHA

What is it? You two aren't getting a divorce are you? There are too many people getting divorced these days. I don't like it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LANA

No. We're not getting a divorce.

CLARK

Then what?

PETE

I'm... Umm--

(beat)

Well, I've decided to join the Army.

MARTHA

What?

LANA

Pretty much what I said.

CLARK

What brought this on?

PETE

I don't know. I guess I've felt like I owed the world something since I was a teenager. Some part of me feels like I'm not really supposed to be here, so I should give back.

MARTHA

What do you mean, you're not supposed to be here?

PETE

You know what I mean. If it wasn't for Clark, I would have died years ago.

CLARK

Pete--

PETE

It's true. And it's not about being depressed or anything like that. I'm here because someone saved me. I think I owe it to the world to pay back the favor. I've been given a second chance and I want to do something with it.

Clark doesn't say anything. His mind goes elsewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARTHA

It's so dangerous.

PETE

I know, but I have faith that I'll be okay.

LANA

And in the meantime, I'll be here in Smallville with the baby.

MARTHA

It sounds like you've thought this through.

PETE

We have. Lana will stay with my parents until I get back.

MARTHA

I guess we'll be seeing a lot of each other then.

Pete looks over at Clark. He notices that Clark's mind is somewhere else.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Well, how 'bout that salad?

LANA

I'm starving.

EXT. KENT HOUSE - FRONT PORCH/LAWN - NIGHT

Clark is leaning against the railing, looking out across the open fields and the stars above them. Pete walks out of the house holding a copy of the Daily Planet.

PETE

You look deep in thought.

CLARK

Taking in the quiet.

PETE

Y'know, I've always wondered something. Is it actually quiet here for you, or is it just slightly less noisy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

You mean, can I hear Mom and Lana talking about baby names in the kitchen, or Mrs. Dauber yelling at her husband down the road?

(beat)

If I try. It's a lot easier to tune it all out though. Easier to forget what's going on in the rest of the world.

PETE

Is that what you've been thinking about all night?

CLARK

Kinda.

(beat)

Can I ask you a question?

PETE

Yeah, anything.

CLARK

Why the Army? Why do something so huge? You could just help the world in some other way.

PETE

Because someone needs to do it. I'm about to have a kid and I want that kid to know a world that's better than this. I need to stand up for what I believe in. The American way of life, y'know? Truth and justice and all that good stuff.

CLARK

Yeah.

Clark starts to walk down the steps and across the lawn. Pete follows.

PETE

So, what about you?

CLARK

I'm doing nothing.

PETE

Not true. You show people what's out there. You make it harder for them to ignore it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLARK

I talk, Pete. I could be doing so much more to help this world, but instead I hide.

Pete holds up the newspaper, which has a large (and bad) picture of Clark on it, with the headline "Daily Planet Reporter Nearly Killed In Attempt To Stop Mugging"

PETE

And you're doing a bang-up job of it too.

Clark grabs the paper away from Pete and folds it up.

CLARK

You know what I mean.

(beat)

The woman that was being mugged could have been killed and I was more concerned about people finding out what I am.

PETE

The guy was using blanks, right?

Clark doesn't answer, which causes Pete to realize the truth.

PETE (CONT'D)

Oh.

CLARK

Every day, it's the same thing. I report on all of this stuff happening in the world, but I do nothing to stop it. I watch it happen. I let it happen.

PETE

You're putting a lot of blame on yourself.

CLARK

Why shouldn't I? Like you said, that boy of yours is going to grow up in a world much worse than this unless we do something to stop it.

Pete doesn't respond for a moment. Finally, he looks back to the house to make sure that the women aren't around and then looks Clark in the eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PETE

Then stop hiding.

(beat)

Your mother would kill me for saying this, but you've been doing this for so long and it's wearing you down. You're a good man, Clark. Good men don't sit back when they could be doing something.

Clark allows Pete's words to sink in. The thought of revealing himself to the world scares the hell out of him, but at the same time it's the only thing that makes sense.

EXT. KENT HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - LATER

Martha and Lana are sitting on the porch now. Clark and Pete walk up the steps.

LANA

We were starting to worry about the two of you.

PETE

We should go.

CLARK

No. Stay.

Pete looks down to Martha, not wanting to be here for this.

PETE

Do we have to?

(beat)

I mean... Are you sure?

CLARK

Please.

Pete nods and sits on the railing.

PETE

Fun.

LANA

What is wrong with you?

MARTHA

Clark?

(beat)

You're not joining the Army too, are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

No.

MARTHA

Oh. I was worried for a moment.

CLARK

But I've decided to do something else.

(beat)

I'm not hiding anymore. I can't.

LANA

(confused)

Wait... What are you talking about?
You're not...

(to Pete)

What did you do?

PETE

Me?

CLARK

It's not Pete. It's me. I've been thinking about this for a long time now. Every time I read a police report and know that I could have done something about it.

MARTHA

It's too dangerous.

CLARK

What's the alternative? Let more people suffer? I can't do that anymore.

(beat)

Mom, I know you worry about what people would do to me if they found out, but I can't live like this anymore.

As Clark explains this, it's like he's a new man. He already seems happier than before.

Martha walks to Clark and puts a hand on his shoulder.

MARTHA

Do you know what this will do to your life?

CLARK

I've thought about it. I think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTHA

Then I will support you. But know that once you do this... Everything we've known for the past thirty years will change. Clark Kent won't exist as you know him. People won't look at you the same way, or treat you the same way. You'll be the same person inside, but everyone else will change.

Clark looks down.

CLARK

I know.

Martha takes the glasses off of Clark's face and looks down at them.

MARTHA

Your father's glasses.

Martha attempts to look through them, but the prescription is too much for her eyes. Clark smiles.

CLARK

To help me see the world through his eyes. To remind me of where I come from.

(beat)

If he were in my shoes, I know he'd be doing the same thing.

MARTHA

I know.

Martha puts her arms around Clark and holds him tight.

LANA

Maybe it doesn't have to mean the end of your life as you know it.

Clark and Martha both look to Lana.

CLARK

I think people will catch on to the fact that I'm flying around, shooting lasers out of my eyes.

LANA

What if they don't know it's you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CLARK

How? I don't want to wear a mask. I don't want people to fear me.

LANA

(to Pete)

Look at him. Without the glasses he almost looks like a different person already.

(to Clark)

If you don't dress like Clark or talk like Clark, maybe they won't see Clark.

PETE

It's true. My uncle used to work in a circus. There were these performers who would do their acts in big flashy costumes. I'm talking slicked back hair, capes, the whole thing. When the show was over and they put on their normal clothes, you could hardly tell that they were the same people. It's all about the illusion.

CLARK

So, I wear a costume?

MARTHA

(smiles)

You wear a costume.

PETE

But a strong costume. Something that can stand up to the things you can do. I mean, Clark can fly through an explosion, but that doesn't mean his clothes can, right? That could make for an awkward moment.

Clark thinks for a moment before remembering something.

CLARK

Pete, come with me.

PETE

Where?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CLARK

Just come.
 (to Martha and Lana)
 We'll be right back.

Clark walks off of the porch, toward the barn. Pete follows.

INT. KENT BARN - NIGHT

Clark walks into the barn with Pete close behind. As they walk, Clark grabs a flashlight off of a table.

They walk to one side of the barn where there is a door in the floor, which is covered by hay. Clark sweeps the hay off of the door and opens it. He starts to walk down a set of stairs, into a cellar.

INT. KENT BARN - CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Clark and Pete walk into the dark cellar. Clark turns on the flashlight and points it to the center of the small cellar. The light reflects off of the metallic surface of a small alien ship. The ship that Clark was sent to Earth in.

PETE

What are we looking for?

CLARK

Hold this.

Clark hands the flashlight to Pete. Clark then walks to the ship and looks down at it.

On the top of the ship is the familiar "S" shield, right below a small black stone.

Clark touches the stone. Under his hand, the STONE BEGINS TO GLOW BRIGHT RED.

Soon, the top of the ship slides back, revealing a small compartment within. This compartment is padded with a deep red cloth lining.

PETE

Is that what you plan to use for the suit?

CLARK

No.
 (beat)
 When I was a teenager, I came down here one night.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK (CONT'D)

I opened the ship, just to look inside. To try to feel some connection.

PETE

Did it work?

CLARK

Not really.

(beat)

Then I rested my hand on the top of the ship.

Clark puts his hand over the "S" shield on the top of the ship. The "S" BEGINS TO GLOW BRIGHT BLUE, and then slides open, revealing a compartment even smaller than the other.

PETE

Whoa. You never told me about that part.

CLARK

I never told a lot of people.

Clark looks inside the "S" compartment for a moment, and then reaches inside.

CLARK (CONT'D)

It's a time capsule, I think. My parents must have wanted me to have something from my own world, so they put these in here.

Clark pulls out a crystal. It's long and beautiful, but he doesn't think much of it as he looks it over and hands it back to Pete. Pete looks more closely.

PETE

Think it's worth anything?

Clark doesn't respond. He reaches inside once again, this time pulling out a handful of folded blue cloth. The cloth has the "S" shield on it too, with the standard Superman colors.

Clark unfolds the cloth, showing Pete that it is actually a piece of clothing. It looks small, but it's obviously a uniform of some sort. The "S" shield and red feet are the only parts of the uniform that aren't blue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETE (CONT'D)

Wow.

(beat)

So, your parents were psychic?

CLARK

No. I think the shield is like a family crest or something. This might be my planet's version of a suit of armor.

PETE

It's kinda small though.

Clark pulls on the material, which stretches for him.

PETE (CONT'D)

Oh. Any idea what the symbol means?

CLARK

I think it means whatever I want it to mean. Who's going to tell me I'm wrong?

Clark and Pete stand in silence for a moment, looking at the costume.

PETE

Can I keep the crystal?

CLARK

No.

INT. KENT HOUSE - CLARK'S ROOM/SEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Martha, Pete and Lana are sitting in the room, waiting.

MARTHA

So, there was another part of the ship?

PETE

Yeah.

MARTHA

I wonder why he never told me about it.

PETE

Don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANA

He didn't want to hurt you. Didn't want you to think that he didn't love you, or that he wanted to find his own people. He wanted it to go away. He wanted to be normal.

Martha and Pete look at Lana, wondering how she knows all of this and they don't. She shrugs.

LANA (CONT'D)

I mean... Maybe that's it, right?

Lana tries to pass off an innocent smile, and puts her hand on her belly to remind everyone that she's in a delicate condition.

Martha turns toward the bedroom door.

MARTHA

(calling out)

Clark, are you okay in there?

CLARK

Yeah. It's just... Well...

We can hear the BATHROOM DOOR OPEN and a moment later, Clark walks into the room wearing his new costume.

The costume is skin tight. As stated before, it's all blue except for the shield on his chest and the red feet, which meets the blue somewhere around his shins.

CLARK (CONT'D)

It's a little form fitting.

PETE

Yeah.

Clark walks to the mirror and looks at his reflection.

LANA

It looks fine to me.

Pete fires a look toward Lana, which she quickly shoots down.

CLARK

Maybe we can add another layer around the middle so it's not so... form fitting.

Clark turns and looks at his ass in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLARK (CONT'D)

And a cape. I think I'd like a
cape.

PETE

There's always the material in the
other part of the ship. The red.

CLARK

And there's a yellow belt looking
thing in the storage compartment.
Maybe I can use that.

PETE

It's like an amazing technicolor
dream costume.

MARTHA

Children will like it. It'll be
easy for them to draw.

LANA

Women will like it.

CLARK

I'm going to change now.

EXT. KENT HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAWN

Clark is standing on the porch, watching the sun come up. The
world is quiet around him.

After a few moments, Martha walks out of the house with two
cups of coffee. She hands one to Clark, and sits down in a
nearby rocker.

Neither one of them says a word. They just take in this
moment. Both know that one way or the other, their lives will
soon change forever.

INT. REED APARTMENT - MORNING

The apartment is small and hasn't been cleaned in quite some
time. Baby clothes and toys are scattered around, along with
dirty dishes and take-out boxes.

In the background, the RADIO IS ON. It's tuned to a talk
show. The radio host is discussing bombings in foreign
countries.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO HOST

What I don't get is how the rest of the world can stand by and watch this happen. One of our allies is being attacked and we're looking the other way. It's time that our government woke up and did something to defend these people. It's time for the rest of us to stop watching the news and shaking our head. It's time to make a change in the world, because if we don't, who will? The guys who are tossing bombs into candy stores?

(beat)

I don't know. We need to do something. I'm open to suggestions. The number is 1-800-555-KMET. We'll take some calls right after this word from our sponsor...

The television is on, but muted. On it is the morning news with coverage of the latest round of bad news.

We can also hear the sound of a baby crying. We soon PAN OVER to REVEAL JACKIE REED, a woman in her late 20's who is holding a six month old baby, TYLER REED, who is screaming his head off.

Jackie looks tired and distant. Her hair hasn't been washed for several days. Her clothes are dirty. She is watching the muted TV as she rocks her crying son, completely blank of expression.

JACKIE

Shh. I know. I know, sweetie.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Lois walks across the room, toward her desk. She is holding three cups of coffee.

She sits down at her desk and arranges the cups neatly before sipping the first as she turns on her computer.

Clark walks in shortly after she sits down and starts to walk toward his desk. Jimmy catches up to him on the way.

JIMMY

Hey, Clark.

CLARK

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

You look kinda tired. Long weekend?

CLARK

Kinda. What's up?

JIMMY

Nothing. Just saying hey. It's been a slow morning.

They reach Clark's desk. Lois smiles at them.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Hi, Lois.

LOIS

Jimmy.

CLARK

So, how'd the date go?

LOIS

Date?

(then)

Oh. Yeah, it went nowhere. They all go nowhere. I've decided to stop caring.

INT. REED APARTMENT - MORNING

Jackie is now wrapping Tyler in a blanket. He is still crying.

JACKIE

I know, baby. It's not right. None of it's right. I'm sorry.

(beat)

Mommy is going to make it better though. I promise.

Jackie picks Tyler up and walks out of the apartment, leaving the door open as she leaves.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark sits down and turns his chair to face the others.

JIMMY

At least you can get dates. The last girl I asked out laughed at me. She actually laughed. While I was standing right there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

Ouch.

Lois turns to Clark.

LOIS (CONT'D)

How about you? How'd the date with
the old girlfriend go?

CLARK

I never said it was a date.

Clark crosses his legs, exposing what looks like a red sock.
Lois sees this and smiles.

LOIS

Red socks. Aren't we stylish.

Clark puts his foot back down on the floor just as Perry
walks up to the group.

PERRY

Hey, gang. What are we talking
about?

LOIS

Very important things, Chief.

JIMMY

Yes, sir. Business. News.

PERRY

Right.

(to Clark)

How 'bout you? Care to back their
stories?

CLARK

We were talking about the
suspicious nature of the John
Corben website. Lois was filling
me in on Corben's history at the
Planet and Jimmy was about to dig
through some old stories to see if
he can find anything.

PERRY

On what?

CLARK

Whatever it is that I can't put my
finger on, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PERRY
(sarcastic)
Well, since we cleared that up.

CLARK
There's something about Corben's
blog that isn't right. I've been
looking over the stories all
weekend and I know something isn't
adding up. I just can't figure out
what that something is.

PERRY
So you're going on instinct?

CLARK
If you want to call it that.

LOIS
I'd probably call it a long shot,
or maybe a stab in the dark.

Perry thinks for a moment.

PERRY
Fine. Let me know what you turn up.
I want to bring down this "blog".
And this better not get in the way
of your other work, Olsen.

JIMMY
It won't.

Perry turns and starts to walk away.

PERRY
Shelly!

SHELLY
Sir?

PERRY
Track down the person who invented
the word "blog" and get me his e-
mail address.

SHELLY
Yessir!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - DAY

Jackie walks out onto the roof. A gust of wind blows past her as she walks across the roof. When she reaches the edge, she looks out at what she can see of Metropolis.

She kisses Tyler on the head.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Now that Perry is gone, Lois turns to Clark.

LOIS

Nice save. Who knew you could lie?

CLARK

Who was lying? You were explaining Corben's history to me. I just didn't say when you were doing it.

JIMMY

What about me? I wasn't about to dig through stories.

Clark looks at Jimmy for a few moments without saying a word. Finally, Jimmy gets it.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I'll let you know if I find anything.

Jimmy turns and walks away.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Don't we have people for this?

SHELLY

Jimmy!

Jimmy stops and turns around. He starts to walk to the other side of the office.

JIMMY

Please let this be real work.

INT. PETE'S CAR - DAY

Pete is driving down the road, dialing his cell phone. In the background, the RADIO IS ON. It's the same radio show as before.

intercut with:

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark is sitting at his desk, typing an e-mail when HIS CELL PHONE RINGS. He pulls the phone out of his pocket and answers it.

CLARK

Hello?

PETE

I'm on my way. Goodbyes have been said, tears have been shed. Hugs. Kisses. It was a whole big thing. You should have been there.

CLARK

Sorry I wasn't. How did Lana take it?

PETE

Fine, up until I told her not to drive me to the train station.

CLARK

I guess you didn't want to make a scene?

PETE

I'd love to make a scene, but the rental car needed to be returned and I didn't want my pregnant wife walking back to Smallville.

(beat)

So... Any news from your end?

CLARK

You mean newspaper news or personal news?

PETE

I mean amazing technicolor dream news.

Clark turns his chair slightly, as though it will get him more privacy.

CLARK

Not yet.

Lois doesn't look away from her work, but smiles.

LOIS

Tell Ma Kent I said hi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Clark ignores her. He waits a moment before speaking again.

CLARK

So, are you nervous?

PETE

Me? Nah. You?

CLARK

Nope. But, I mean, this is a big deal for you. You're about to put your life on the line. Everything changes now.

PETE

True.

(beat)

I have faith, Clark. Whatever happens, it happens for a good reason. We fight for what we believe in. We stand up for those we love. It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game.

(beat)

Damn, that's deep.

Clark smiles.

CLARK

Good luck, Pete.

PETE

You too, brother.

A radio host's voice comes over Pete's radio. Pete doesn't listen to it at first, but when the word "Metropolis" comes up, his interest grows.

RADIO HOST

And it's five past the hour on this beautiful Monday morning. Eighty-two degrees and not a cloud in the sky. Before we get back to business, let's check out the latest news headlines. Here's the latest from the news desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RADIO NEWSCASTER

Metropolis police were called to the three-thousand block of Alabaster Street earlier this morning when reports came in of a woman threatening to jump off the roof of her apartment building. Those on the scene say that the woman is holding what looks to be a baby and appears to be in some sort of daze. Authorities are asking people to stay away from the building, fearing that a crowd may provoke the woman...

PETE

Did you hear that, Clark?

Clark stands up and starts to walk out of the office.

CLARK

I'll have to call you back.

Clark turns off his phone and continues to rush out the door.

Pete puts his phone down in the passenger seat and turns the radio up. He takes a deep breath.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DAY

Clark walks into the stairwell and quickly scans it for any other people. Luckily, he is alone.

He is breathing heavily as he takes off his glasses and rips open his shirt, revealing the "S" shield on his chest.

In the blink of an eye, HE IS GONE.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - DAY

Jackie is now standing on the ledge, holding Tyler and looking down at the growing CROWD below. There are also plenty of police cars, fire trucks and ambulances below and two or three helicopters flying overhead.

Behind Jackie, a POLICE OFFICER walks onto the roof, keeping a distance. As the door closes behind him, Jackie hears it and turns around. The police officer stops walking, trying to keep her from freaking out.

Jackie isn't angry or scared. She still has that same distant look about her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKIE

Look at them. So many people down there.

POLICE OFFICER

You're putting on quite a show.

JACKIE

It's not a show. It's not about that.

POLICE OFFICER

What is it about?

Jackie doesn't say anything for a moment. She then holds Tyler up for the officer to see.

JACKIE

He's beautiful, isn't he? So small and helpless.

POLICE OFFICER

Yes, he is.

JACKIE

When I was a little girl, I used to play house with all of my dolls. I used to pretend that I had a little baby.

POLICE OFFICER

But he's not a doll.

JACKIE

I know that.

Jackie turns away from the officer.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

I know that.

ANGLE ON : THE CROWD

Looking up at Jackie from the street. Some deeply concerned. A few teenagers laughing. Several photographers have arrived and are taking pictures.

ANGLE ON : JACKIE

JACKIE (CONT'D)

It isn't fair, you know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POLICE OFFICER
What isn't fair?

JACKIE
Any of it. He deserves better.

POLICE OFFICER
Do you think this is better for
him?

JACKIE
It is. It has to be.

POLICE OFFICER
It's not. The boy deserves a
chance. He deserves to live.

JACKIE
I love him.

POLICE OFFICER
I know you do.

JACKIE
That's why he deserves better.

POLICE OFFICER
So, why don't you give it to him?

Jackie turns and faces the officer. She smiles.

JACKIE
Thank you.

The officer holds out a hand and starts to take a step toward Jackie when he notices her close her eyes. At first, he's puzzled, but a realization quickly comes over him.

POLICE OFFICER
No!

He runs toward her, but before he can grab her she leans back and lets herself fall off of the ledge.

The crowd gasps as Jackie and Tyler fall from the rooftop. Several people look away. The teenagers lose their smiles.

Everyone in the crowd holds their breath as she falls. They know what is coming and they know it isn't going to be pretty.

As Jackie falls, she has a peaceful look on her face. She is nearing the bottom when she is suddenly scooped up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SUPERMAN has arrived and has Jackie in his arms. He angles his descent to avoid any physical harm to her or the child.

Noticing that she is no longer falling, Jackie opens her eyes. She sees Superman and is quite puzzled by this.

JACKIE

Who are you?

SUPERMAN

A friend.

Superman lowers Jackie onto the street, in front of the crowd. Two officers come to take care of her and the child.

ANGLE ON : THE ROOF

The police officer that attempted to speak to Jackie is on the roof looking down at what just happened. He's in shock.

ANGLE ON : SUPERMAN

Once the situation is resolved, Superman notices the crowd of people watching him. All are silent. All are expressionless.

He steps backward, and then LIFTS OFF OF THE GROUND. This is pretty much his version of the whole "naked in front of a crowd" nightmare and for a moment he is caught like a deer in headlights, unable to move.

For that moment he and the crowd just look at each other. Neither side knowing exactly what to think or feel. Photographers snap photos. The flash causes Superman to snap out of whatever daze he's in, and he quickly shoots into the sky, past the officer on the roof and the helicopters above.

The crowd is left in awe.

ANGLE ON : JIMMY

In the crowd with his camera in hand, wondering what he just witnessed.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DAY

Clark's clothes are in a pile on the floor until a hand quickly grabs onto them and pulls them out of view.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - BATHROOM - DAY

Clark rushes into the bathroom and checks to see if anyone else is around. When he's sure he's alone, he rushes to the sink and splashes water on his face. He looks at his reflection for a moment and suddenly feels very sick. He rushes into one of the stalls.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Lois is hard at work when Jimmy runs into the office, toward Perry's office. When he sees that Perry isn't in there, he runs toward Lois.

JIMMY

Lois! Where's Mr. White?

LOIS

I think he's downstairs. What's going on?

JIMMY

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

LOIS

Try me.

Just then Perry walks into the room. Jimmy sees him and rushes toward him. Lois follows.

JIMMY

Mr. White, you're not going to believe what just happened!

PERRY

Slow down, son. What's going on?

JIMMY

I was down at that jumper scene on Alabaster, right? And the lady, like, jumped.

LOIS

I can see why you're so excited.

JIMMY

No, it's not that. So, she jumps and she's like falling.

LOIS

As they sometimes tend to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perry shoots Lois a look. She zips her mouth and listens to Jimmy.

JIMMY

Only, she didn't hit the ground.
Someone caught her.

PERRY

What?

JIMMY

I know! It gets better. He didn't
catch her on the ground. He caught
her mid-air. Flying. Then he drops
her off and then, WHOOSH! Gone.

PERRY

You're telling me that this guy
flew?

LOIS

This is why I keep the bourbon away
from you, Jimmy.

Jimmy whips out his digital camera and shows Perry the display screen. On it is a picture of Superman hovering over the street just after saving Jackie.

PERRY

My God. He is flying.

Lois turns the camera so she can see.

LOIS

Wow.

(beat)

Check out the outfit. No wonder he
can flutter around like that.

PERRY

Jimmy, I want you to sit down with
Dan and tell him everything you
saw. I want this picture up on the
website in fifteen minutes,
complete with story.

Jimmy nods.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jimmy rushes off, leaving Lois and Perry behind. Perry suddenly notices a crowd growing around a flat-panel monitor on one of the walls. On it is news footage from one of the helicopters at the scene, showing Superman flying past them as he exited the scene. Perry and Lois watch this from the back of the crowd.

PERRY (CONT'D)

I don't know what's going on here,
but things are about to get very
interesting in this town.

Behind them, Clark walks out of the bathroom. Lois turns and sees him.

LOIS

You look like death.

She turns back to the news report.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Check out what you've been missing.
Apparently there's a guy flying
around Metropolis in tights.

Clark sees the report on the screen. He is more interested in the reaction of those watching than the news itself.

CLARK

What are people saying about this
guy?

PERRY

It's your job to find out.

CLARK

What?

PERRY

This is our focus right now. I want
this thing covered from every
angle. Who is this? What does he
want?

LOIS

Where does he shop?

(off Perry's look)

It's gonna take me a while to get
past the outfit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PERRY

This is serious, Lois. I want you two to do everything you can with this. Man on the street reactions. Official reactions. Someone is going to have to track him down for an interview and I expect it to be us. Get to work.

Perry walks off, leaving Clark and Lois alone.

LOIS

So a lady jumps off a building with her infant in hand and we're running a story on the circus act that saved her.

CLARK

You don't sound too impressed.

LOIS

I've seen a lot in my day. Some guy who figured out how to hide some wires isn't the most shocking.

Lois watches as the news replays the shot of Superman flying past the helicopters.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Maybe it was a jet pack.

(beat)

Anyway, I'm off to chase down the nut job that he saved.

Lois walks out of the office. Clark stays behind and watches as others keep their eyes on the TV screen. He can't help but form a small smile as he walks back to his desk and sits down.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Jackie is sitting in a hospital bed, watching the news. Lois walks into the room and knocks on the door. Jackie looks over at her and smiles. She no longer has that dazed look to her.

LOIS

Lois Lane. I'm with the Daily Planet.

JACKIE

I'm not supposed to have visitors.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

Which explains the two cops I had to dodge getting in here.

Jackie chuckles. Lois walks in and sits down.

JACKIE

So what do you want to know? Who he was? Where he came from?

LOIS

Why'd you do it?

Jackie's smile fades.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I'm not usually one to sugar coat things, Miss Reed, so I'm not going to pretend to be your new best friend and I'm not going to pretend that I feel your pain. You jumped off of a building. You tried to kill your own child. Why?

JACKIE

Wow. That's--

(beat)

I thought I had to. The doctors say it's postpartum. I don't know. It just made sense. There's this whole world out there and none of it looks good. I love my son. Suddenly, it seemed like I was giving him a life sentence for a crime he didn't commit.

Lois writes this down and then looks back to Jackie.

LOIS

What do you think now?

Jackie turns back to the TV.

JACKIE

I don't know. I jumped and as I was falling, it was like none of it made sense. Living didn't make sense. Dying didn't make sense. I felt like I was falling and I couldn't stop.

LOIS

Well... Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACKIE
No, I mean inside. I was lost.

LOIS
Do you still feel lost?

JACKIE
(smiles)
Yeah. But I'm not falling anymore.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark is at his desk once again. He is looking at the various Superman reports online. Jimmy walks up behind him.

JIMMY
You should have been there, Clark.
It was amazing. He just flew in
and caught the woman. Then he flew
out.
(beat)
If I were him, I'd have stopped for
interviews and autographs and
stuff.

Clark brings up the Daily Planet's site, which has a huge picture of Superman on it.

CLARK
Nice picture, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Thanks. The first two were kinda
messed up 'cause of the whole
digital thing, but luckily for me,
he stayed around for a few seconds.
(beat)
What do you think the "S" means?

CLARK
I'm not sure.

Clark pulls up John Corben's site next. Surprisingly, there is no picture of Superman. No story about Superman. The page hasn't been updated.

JIMMY
Wow. He's usually the first one
with all of the big local stories.

CLARK
I wonder why he hasn't updated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Maybe he's out of town or something.

Clark stares at the screen for a moment.

CLARK

He is always the first.

JIMMY

Not that you're not good too.

CLARK

Thanks.

Clark skims the list of articles, going back months until he reaches Corben's first entry. He clicks on it and skims the story.

JIMMY

What are you doing?

CLARK

Look at this. Corben's first story wasn't a crime report. It was a story on the slow 911 response time in Suicide Slum and the actions that local store owners were taking to protect themselves.

JIMMY

Guess it didn't work.

CLARK

Not for the store owners. All but one of them has been attacked in the last few weeks. The alarm systems were all taken out, like the thieves knew just where to go and what to do.

Jimmy's not catching onto what Clark's saying.

JIMMY

Umm... Right.

CLARK

All but one.

(beat)

What do you want to bet this guy's next?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY

Oh! You think the criminals are using Corben's story as a hit list?

CLARK

It's not that easy. Corben doesn't go into specifics about the security measures. He was protecting the people he interviewed.

JIMMY

So...?

CLARK

So, I think I'm saying that I believe Corben's in on this.

JIMMY

What?

CLARK

It makes sense. He's fired. He needs money. He needs to rebuild his career. If he's cut in on these robberies, it would explain how he can survive without having an income. Plus, he's always the first one on the scene.

JIMMY

This is big. If you're right, you have to do something about it.

CLARK

Exactly what I was thinking.

JIMMY

You have to call the police.

CLARK

And tell them what? That I want them to arrest the guy who keeps scooping me? We need more than that.

JIMMY

What are you going to do?

CLARK

I'm going to get evidence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JIMMY

How?

Clark stands up.

CLARK

By doing what Lois would do.

Jimmy's eyes widen.

JIMMY

You'll get arrested!

CLARK

How many crooks do you know that want police swarming their apartment?

Clark walks into the elevator.

JIMMY

Okay, so you'll just get killed then.

Jimmy looks around for someone to tell, but there's nobody he feels comfortable including in this.

EXT. ENDOVER BUILDING - DAY

The area around the Endover Building is blocked off as a crew of DEMOLITIONISTS prepares to bring down the building. One such man walks to his supervisor.

DEMOLITIONIST 1

We have the charges set and we're ready to bring her down.

DEMOLITIONIST SUPERVISOR

Are we cleared out?

The crew member nods.

DEMOLITIONIST SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)

Then let's get ready.

The supervisor looks at his watch.

DEMOLITIONIST SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)

Twenty minutes.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

A man, ALEX FOLGER is driving through a tunnel with his two small children in the car. They are LIZZIE (5 years old) and ROSE (3 years old).

The car is stopped due to a traffic jam. Alex is trying to use his phone, but there is no signal. He puts the phone away and smiles at his daughters in the rearview mirror.

ALEX
We'll call Mommy when we get out of
the tunnel, okay?

ROSE
When will that be?

ALEX
I don't know, sweetheart. Traffic's
all backed up.

ROSE
When will it be un-backed up?

LIZZIE
When the cars move, stupid!

ROSE
When's that?

ALEX
When whatever is blocking us gets
out of the way.

LIZZIE
Daddy, are we underwater?

ALEX
Umm... Yes.

Rose's eyes widen.

ALEX (CONT'D)
But we're safe. I swear.

Rose doesn't care what he says. She's freaking out. Finally, she lets out a scream that could shatter glass. Lizzie smiles.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Clark walks down the hallways of this less than high-class apartment building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He finally reaches apartment 2-D and stops at the door. Before knocking, he looks around to see if anyone is watching. When he's sure he's alone, he looks toward the door again. This time, he looks through the door.

After a few moments of peeking, he grabs the doorknob. As he is about to twist it and break the various locks on the door, a thought occurs to him. He stops and takes his hand off of the knob.

INT. CORBEN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

One of the windows slides open and Clark climbs inside the apartment. He stops for a moment, trying to decide where to start looking. Finally, he decides and starts to walk toward a desk on the far side of the room.

As Clark walks across the room, we get our first look at the apartment. It is nothing like the hallways outside. The walls are freshly painted, there is a flat-panel TV on one wall, and designer furniture all around.

Clark reaches the desk, which has a laptop on it. He opens the laptop. As the screen goes on, a password prompt appears. Clark looks at it, trying to figure out how to go about this.

He looks around the desk a little, seeing nothing that might reveal a password. As he looks around the rest of the room, something catches his eye. He walks to one of the corners and bends down, picking up a fake rock from the floor. He looks at it, wondering why someone would put this thing in an apartment. After he shakes off that thought, he turns the rock over and slides the bottom open to reveal the hidden compartment. Inside is a piece of paper, which Clark grabs and unfolds. He puts the rock down.

On the piece of paper is list which reads:

"GYM LOCKER - 23-14-52"

"CELL PHONE - 135"

"LAPTOP - POODLEBUNNY21"

"VOICEMAIL - 90210#"

"E-MAIL - BARBARA WALTERS"

Clark finds all of this rather odd, but goes back to the computer and types in the password anyway. Once he's into the computer, he starts looking up files.

EXT. ENDOVER BUILDING - DAY

A reporter, CHERYL DOUGLAS, is standing outside the building holding a microphone and talking as her CAMERAMAN films.

CHERYL

We're just minutes away from the demolition of the Endover Building, which has graced the Metropolis skyline for nearly seventy years. Once the clock hits zero, the building will implode, leaving the area clear for construction on the New Endover Building, which is slated to begin in January...

INT. CORBEN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clark is reading the files on Corben's computer. He finds them very interesting. He pulls his cell phone from his pocket and dials before putting the phone to his ear.

CLARK

I need to report a crime that's about to be committed. Sal G's Deli...

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Alex is trying to see past the cars ahead of him. Lizzie and Rose are in the back seat, bored.

ALEX

I think it's clearing up.
(beat)
They're doing some kind of work up there.

LIZZIE

I'm hungry.

ALEX

We'll eat dinner when we get home.

LIZZIE

We've been here forever.

ALEX

I'm sure it won't be too much longer.

LIZZIE

I'm hungry.

EXT. ENDOVER BUILDING - DAY

Cheryl and her cameraman are now farther down the street. The Endover Building is behind Cheryl, ready to implode.

Cheryl is once again talking to the camera.

CHERYL

Only a matter of seconds now. Soon,
the historic Endover Building will
be reduced to rubble.

Cheryl puts a hand on her ear, listening to something over her earpiece. She then perks up and smiles.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Here we go. Ten... Nine... Eight...
Seven...

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Lizzie is in the back seat with her hands over her ears now, singing to herself so that she can't hear Alex.

ALEX

Lizzie, stop that. Please.

EXT. ENDOVER BUILDING - DAY

CHERYL

Five... Four... Three...

INT. CORBEN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clark is still on the phone.

CLARK

Thank you.

He hangs up and walks toward the window.

EXT. ENDOVER BUILDING - DAY

CHERYL

Two... One...

Cheryl turns and looks at the Endover Building as a BOOM can be heard. The BUILDING BEGINS TO IMplode.

EXT. HOBBS RIVER - DAY

Under the water, the MUFFLED BOOM can be heard. We can see the tunnel nearby.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Alex pauses and looks around, puzzled. Lizzie stops singing and pulls her hands away from her ears. She is also puzzled.

LIZZIE
Daddy, what was that?

ALEX
I don't know.

Drops of water fall onto the windshield.

LIZZIE
Is it raining?

Alex doesn't like this. He leans forward and looks at the tunnel walls.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
Daddy?

ALEX
Girls, you stay in the car.

Alex opens his door and steps out of the car.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Alex isn't the only one getting out of his car. Around him, MANY OTHER DRIVERS are out of their cars and looking around the tunnel.

FEMALE DRIVER
Did you all feel that?

Alex looks around the walls to see where the water came from.

A section of the wall suddenly breaks, shooting water onto the road.

Many of the people in the tunnel begin to scream.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Clark is just getting off of the fire escape ladder when he HEARS THE SCREAMS. He turns his head in the direction of the tunnel for a moment, and then looks around to see if anyone is nearby and watching. He ducks behind a dumpster as he loosens his tie.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Water is pouring into the tunnel. People in the tunnel are panicking. Some are leaving their cars and running. Others are in their cars, trying to pull around everyone else. It's a mess.

Alex pulls Lizzie out of the back seat and sits her on top of the car. He then pulls Rose out and holds onto her. Both girls are crying.

LIZZIE
What's happening?

ALEX
It's okay. We'll be okay. Just hold onto Daddy.

Alex grabs Lizzie and holds both of his daughters as he tries to get out of the tunnel. The water level is rising.

Alex passes a car and sees an OLD WOMAN inside, looking out at him. He looks down at her, knowing that he can't do anything to help her.

ANGLE ON : SUPERMAN

As he flies into the tunnel. As he flies, he looks down at an 18-wheeler, and uses his heat vision to cut off the side of the trailer. As he passes it, he grabs the side of the trailer and pulls it off as he continues toward the hole in the wall of the tunnel.

Alex stops and looks back toward Superman. Both of his daughters have stopped crying and are staring in awe.

LIZZIE
Daddy...?

ALEX
I have no idea.

Superman continues to hold the metal over the hole in the wall. He looks back to the growing number of onlookers below.

SUPERMAN
Run!

Alex looks back to the old woman. She nods to him, telling him to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes his daughters and runs toward the end of the tunnel, which is far beyond sight from this location.

As Superman holds the metal in place, he looks around at the rest of the tunnel. He can hear it cracking.

X-RAY POV

The walls are starting to weaken. Cracks are forming inside the walls. Soon, the tunnel will collapse.

Superman stops to think about how to handle this. He looks back to the crowd of people as they try to escape. They won't have time.

INT. VAN - DAY

Two men are sitting in the front of the van. They are REESE LARSON and LARRY CAMDEN. Both are in dark colors and are looking out the windshield at Sal G's Deli.

Two police cars pull up to the deli and FOUR POLICE OFFICERS get out. They start talking to each other in front of their patrol cars.

REESE

What is this?

LARRY

Maybe they're just hungry.

REESE

If you're hungry, you go inside.

As they watch, two of the officers walk down the alley next to the deli. The other two walk inside.

LARRY

They went inside.

REESE

This ain't right. Something's wrong here.

LARRY

What do you mean?

REESE

I mean, the job's off. We've been found out.

LARRY

Who told?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REESE

There's only one guy who knew about this. Same guy that told us.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Superman is still holding the metal over the hole. A crowd of people is still moving beneath him. A TRUCK DRIVER stops and looks up at Superman. He notices Superman looking at the other walls and not liking what he sees.

TRUCK DRIVER

The rest of this place is gonna go too, isn't it?

SUPERMAN

You should keep moving.

TRUCK DRIVER

What about you?

SUPERMAN

I'm fine. Go.

The truck driver hesitates.

TRUCK DRIVER

I wanna help. What can I do?

Superman is about to respond, but pauses. He looks down toward the ground next to the truck driver. The truck driver looks down.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

What?

SUPERMAN

Keep moving.

With that, Superman speeds out of the tunnel. The hole begins to shoot water into the tunnel again.

The truck driver starts moving once again. A YOUNG LADY is behind him.

YOUNG LADY

Nice of him to leave us.

TRUCK DRIVER

He'll be back.

EXT. HOBBS RIVER - DAY

Superman rushes out of the tunnel and flies over the river. He looks down at it for a moment, and then shoots up into the sky.

A moment later, there is a BANG as the sound barrier is broken. Superman speeds downward in a blur, splashing into the water.

UNDERWATER

Superman shoots through the water at full speed until he rams into the ground. A cloud of dust fills the entire area.

A moment later, Superman shoots back up toward the surface.

ON THE SURFACE

Superman flies out of the water and looks down at it. The water level is lowering quickly. Superman flies toward the tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Superman flies toward the spot where the water is shooting through the wall. The flow of people is still moving beneath him as he makes his way through the tunnel.

Superman reaches the location of the leak and inspects the area. He is about to grab the piece of metal and hold back the water again when he sees the old woman, still in her car. He lands next to her car and looks through the window, which is rolled down.

SUPERMAN

Ma'am, you shouldn't be here.

OLD WOMAN

I couldn't walk out of here if I wanted to.

Superman looks to the leak and then back to the woman.

SUPERMAN

I'll take you.

He opens her car door.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE OF TUNNEL - DAY

A large crowd of people is gathering outside of the tunnel, resting after their escape. Police cars and fire engines are arriving.

Superman flies out of the tunnel, holding the old woman in his arms. When they're far enough away from the tunnel, he sets the old woman down.

OLD WOMAN
(giggling)
Thank you. I haven't had that much
fun in years.

Superman isn't sure how to respond to that, given the situation.

A FIREMAN rushes up to him.

FIREMAN
Who are you?

SUPERMAN
That's a story I don't have time
for at the moment. Stay out here.
The tunnel could collapse any time
now.

FIREMAN
Are there still people in there?

SUPERMAN
I'm working on that now.

EXT. HOBBS RIVER - DAY

The water level is low now. The top of the tunnel is no longer under the water.

The water from the river is still draining into an unseen cavern below.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Superman flies back into the tunnel and sees a line of people running for the mouth of the tunnel. He flies past those that are near the outside and heads deeper into the tunnel to help those that are still in the most danger.

He flies past the hole in the wall of the tunnel. Water is no longer pouring from it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deep within the tunnel there are still stragglers attempting to make their way out. Superman sees them and then looks around for a way to get them out faster. Finally, he sees his answer. An abandoned bus.

He then looks up at the tunnel ceiling.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE OF TUNNEL - DAY

The crowd watches as people run out of the tunnel, and the firemen help them.

Suddenly, there is a loud BOOM.

FIREMAN

What was that?

A moment later, people in the crowd start to gasp and point toward the exposed tunnel in the river. The fireman turns and is stunned by what he sees.

FIREMAN (CONT'D)

You've gotta be kidding me.

ANGLE ON : SUPERMAN

Carrying the bus full of people. Behind him, we can see a hole punched through the tunnel, large enough to fit the bus through it.

Superman carries the bus to the street and sets it down gently.

Another fireman rushes to where Superman is.

FIREMAN 2

Anyone left in there?

SUPERMAN

I'll take care of them. You stay here.

Superman flies back into the tunnel. The two firemen look at each other.

FIREMAN

Screw that.

They head toward the tunnel.

EXT. TUNNEL - LATER

Cheryl and her cameraman are outside of the tunnel now. She is once again talking into her microphone, looking into the camera.

CHERYL

This is Cherly Douglas, reporting live from the scene of one horrible accident and one amazing miracle. Just one hour ago, the Hobbs River tunnel began to collapse. With hundreds inside and water flooding the tunnel, the situation was looking grim. That is, until Metropolis' mysterious hero literally flew into the tunnel without the aid of any known technology, and carried those trapped inside to safety by the bus-load. Amazingly, not one person was killed...

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - DAY

Cheryl's news report is playing on all of the TVs in the store, and MANY PEOPLE are gathered around them, watching video of Superman saving the day. Among these people are the STORE MANAGER and a YOUNG EMPLOYEE.

STORE MANAGER

This is incredible. Look at that guy.

YOUNG EMPLOYEE

I wanna know how he's doing it. I mean, there has to be some kind of trick.

The store manager shakes his head. He has no clue how this is possible. He turns around and sees the people watching the TVs. He hadn't noticed that there were so many of them.

Finally, he turns back to the news report and speaks loud enough for others to hear.

STORE MANAGER

If I hadn't seen this in high-definition widescreen, I wouldn't believe it. Look at the colors on that guy's cape. No way you're getting that kind of detail on a normal TV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG EMPLOYEE

What are you talking about?

The store manager nudges his young employee.

YOUNG EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Ouch.

(beat)

I'm pretty sure you're not allowed
to do that.

The store manager leans close to the young employee and
lowers his voice.

STORE MANAGER

This is a commission job, kid. I
suggest you play along.

The young employee catches on and raises his voice when he
speaks.

YOUNG EMPLOYEE

I mean... wow! Look at the detail
on his... little hair curl thing.

ANGLE ON : JOHN CORBEN

John Corben is a tall blond man who is stylishly dressed. He
is standing behind the crowd, watching the news report. He is
intrigued by what is going on, but not as awed by Superman as
others seem to be.

A FEMALE EMPLOYEE of the store walks up to him, holding a
computer cable of some kind.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Last one we had.

John takes the cable and smiles at her, flirting ever so
slightly.

JOHN

Must be my lucky day.

She smiles at him.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Must be. Will that be all?

JOHN

For now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She walks to a checkout counter and starts ringing him up. He looks back to the news report.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

That's twenty-two seventy-three total.

John reaches for his wallet, still watching the news. The female employee looks in the direction of the TVs and sees what he's looking at.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

I know. It's amazing, right?

(beat)

No way you'd be watching that report from back here if those weren't 1080p HDTVs. Clearer than real life if you ask me.

John turns back to her, smiles and hands her his credit card.

JOHN

I just bought one a few weeks ago. Good pitch though.

She grins as she swipes his card.

EXT. STREET/JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

John is walking down the street with shopping bag in hand. He is skimming through his iPod menu as he walks, so his attention is not on the street ahead.

As he gets closer to his apartment building, he slips his iPod back into his pocket and looks up. It's now that he notices that there are two police cars parked outside of his apartment building.

He stops walking and thinks for a moment. As he sees TWO POLICE OFFICERS walk out of the building, John turns around and starts walking away from the building.

He picks up his pace as he nears the next corner. As he turns the corner, he comes face to face with Reese and Larry. Reese smiles at him.

REESE

Hello, Corben. Let's go for a ride.

Larry grabs John's arm and pulls him toward the van, which is parked nearby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
What's going on?

REESE
It would seem that the cops caught wind of our plans for this evening. Any idea how that might have happened?

JOHN
It wasn't me. I swear.

LARRY
Right. It was the other guy who knew what we was up to.

Reese opens the van door and shoves John inside.

REESE
I don't like having the cops on my tail, Corben.

JOHN
We can talk about this. C'mon!

Reese closes the door and then looks to Larry.

REESE
Right. Let's go talk about this.

INT. CITY ROOM - DAILY PLANET BUILDING - DAY

Perry, Lois and Clark are watching Cheryl's report on the TV screen.

LOIS
Saving babies and old women in the same day. Are we sure he's not running for office?

PERRY
Look at that. The man tore through the bottom of the river, into an underground cavern. Unbelievable.

(to Clark)
This is what news is all about, son. And we're right at the front of the coverage, thanks to the two of you.

(to Lois)
How you managed to land that interview...

(then, to Clark)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY (CONT'D)

... and you managed to be at the scene of the tunnel collapse before anyone else is what makes the two of you the best in town.

CLARK

Thank you sir.

LOIS

Thanks.

Perry turns off the TV.

PERRY

But as of now, that's all old news. We have the lead now and I want to keep it that way. I'm counting on the two of you.

CLARK

We won't let you down, sir.

Perry nods and walks off. Lois walks to her desk. Clark follows.

LOIS

"We won't let you down, sir!"

Lois throws Clark a solute as she sits.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Why didn't you just bake the man an apple pie?

CLARK

Funny.

LOIS

I know it, son. I know it.

As Clark sits down at his desk, he looks over a note that someone left for him. He then picks up the phone and dials it. As he waits for an answer, he turns back to Lois.

CLARK

Don't blame me if my manners happen to be better than yours.

LOIS

Are you implying that I was raised in a barn, Smallville? Because I have a snappy comeback ready and waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Clark is about to say something when someone picks up the other end of his phone call.

CLARK

Yes, this is Clark Kent of the Daily Planet. I called in a tip earlier.

(beat)

Right.

(beat)

Right.

Clark takes notes as the other person speaks.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Clark hangs up the phone.

LOIS

You called in a tip?

CLARK

John Corben was involved with those robberies that he was writing about.

LOIS

Seriously?

(beat)

I knew he was a few grains shy of a healthy breakfast, but criminal? How did you come to this conclusion?

CLARK

I read the reports on his site. The first one had interviews with several of the robbery victims before they were robbed.

LOIS

That's a hunch, not something you take to the cops.

Clark hesitates.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You broke into his place, didn't you? I'm proud of you, son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Lois looks back to the TV screen behind Clark. She rolls her eyes as the picture shows live coverage of Cheryll on the roof of a building.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Look at that. As we speak, hundreds of eager young reporters are sitting on their rooftops, trying to flag down a man who can fly. It's sad.

CLARK

It's news.

LOIS

Yes. And believe me when I say that I wouldn't turn down an interview with the man, but I draw the line at acts of desperation.

CLARK

Do you have a better idea?

LOIS

As a matter of fact, I do. I'm going home. I'm going to microwave myself a burrito and burn the top of my mouth while watching an episode of Greys Anatomy that I Tivo-ed.

CLARK

And the interview?

LOIS

If the guy wanted to do an interview, he'd find someone to do it. He's not going to respond to a bunch of people trying to flag him down like a taxi.

CLARK

I think it's a little early to be calling the man's plays before they happen. You don't know when he'll show up next.

LOIS

I know that it's not going to be on my roof.

Clark shrugs and turns to his computer. When Lois can't see his face anymore, he grins.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - VALE'S LAB - NIGHT

Professor Vale is at his desk with a number of electrodes stuck to his head. His eyes are closed and he is focusing as strongly as he can.

Down on the desk, the metallo rod is attached to another electrode. After a few moments, the ROD BEGINS TO MOVE. It finally changes form, into a "V" shape, and then a wavy line.

Professor Vale opens his eyes and looks down at the metallo rod, which springs back to its original shape a moment later.

Vale lets out a sigh as Lex walks into the room.

LEX

Good evening, Professor. How are we this evening?

PROFESSOR VALE

Working, as usual, sir.

LEX

Good to see. So I assume you haven't seen the news?

PROFESSOR VALE

Not today, no.

LEX

Then allow me to fill you in on the latest headlines. It would seem that some sort of comic book superhero is flying around Metropolis, saving people left and right.

PROFESSOR VALE

Umm... I don't really--

LEX

No, you don't. So let me tell you what this means. It means that this man can fly into a collapsing tunnel and carry dozens of people to safety. It means that he can ram his way into an underground cavern and lower the water level of an entire river, just to buy a little more time to save the day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEX (CONT'D)

It means that the police have a new ally who is capable of going places and doing things that nobody else on the planet is able to.

(beat)

It means that there is a very real possibility that the need for your metallo-man in this particular city is growing smaller by the moment. Now, I'm not a stupid man, Professor. I know that whoever or whatever this man is, he can't possibly be everywhere in the world. He can't possibly save every one who needs saving. I know that the world still needs your brilliant creation to save the day. It's just that we have ourselves a little competition right now. I need to know that we are still in the game. I need to know that this metallo was worth the money that's been invested.

PROFESSOR VALE

It is! I was just running some new tests and it's coming along.

LEX

What progress have you made?

PROFESSOR VALE

Well, I was trying to find a way of using the human brain to control the machine. My problem is that there is no way to process my thoughts through a computer in a way that could control the metallo on a reasonable level. By the time the signal reaches the metallo, it's degraded. It's delayed. It's just... wrong. On top of everything else, my brain is being used to control my own body's functions. It can't handle two bodies at once.

LEX

You've been talking about human brains quite a bit, Professor. What are you trying to tell me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PROFESSOR VALE

I'm saying that in an ideal world,
I might be able to use an actual
human brain to process the commands
of the metallo.

LEX

You need a human brain?

PROFESSOR VALE

Ideally, yes.

Lex pauses as he listens for a sound.

PROFESSOR VALE (CONT'D)

Is something wrong?

LEX

I just figured that I'd hear a
clash of thunder or some type of
organ music.

(beat)

If you need a human brain, then
we'll just have to get you a human
brain.

PROFESSOR VALE

How?

LEX

Organ donors, Professor. One of the
many perks of working in a state-of-
the-art medical center.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lois' apartment is pretty large and well decorated. As though
it was ripped from the page of a furniture catalog. She has
two doors in the back of the room which lead to a balcony.
These doors are open.

Lois stands near the couch, facing the doors. She is in her
pajamas and is just taking a moment for the cool breeze to
come over her.

From the kitchen, a BEEP can be heard. Lois walks into the
kitchen and returns a moment later with a cup of hot coffee
and a few cookies wrapped in a paper towel. She sits on the
couch and flips on the TV, setting the cookies down on the
table in front of her.

As she searches through her DVR menu, another gust of wind
blows behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She takes a sip of her coffee, which is very hot. As she reacts to this, she puts the cup down on the table.

SUPERMAN

Careful.

Lois quickly turns toward the open door, knocking the coffee cup as she turns. The mug begins to fall.

Superman speeds across the room and catches the mug before it hits the floor. No coffee is lost. He sets the mug down on the table.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

You should let this cool before you try drinking it.

LOIS

You're just saving all kinds of people today, aren't you?

Lois stands up.

SUPERMAN

I do what I can.

LOIS

Which includes breaking and entering?

SUPERMAN

I walked through an open door.

LOIS

Yeah, well... It doesn't count if it's a fifteenth floor balcony.

SUPERMAN

If you want me to leave...

Superman starts to walk toward the open doors.

LOIS

Wait!

Superman stops.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You invade my home, the least you could do is give me an interview.

Superman faces her again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUPERMAN

That's why I came.

LOIS

You came to give me an interview?
Why?

SUPERMAN

You're a reporter.

LOIS

I mean, why me? There are a dozen
tarts with sleeping bags, camping
out on their roofs tonight. Why do
you come to the one who just wanted
to stay home and watch TV?

SUPERMAN

I like your work.

LOIS

You've read my work?

SUPERMAN

Often.

(re: the TV)

And, I think it was a rerun tonight
anyway.

LOIS

Whatever.

SUPERMAN

If you'd rather I call your office
and make an appointment, I could.

LOIS

Well, you're here. You might as
well do it now.

Lois looks down at her clothes.

LOIS (CONT'D)

If you don't make fun of my outfit,
I won't make fun of yours. Deal?

SUPERMAN

Deal.

LOIS

Okay. So... You want to sit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SUPERMAN
I'll stand.

LOIS
Okay. That works too.

Lois goes to a nearby desk and pulls out a notebook with pen,
and an audio recorder. She presses a button on the recorder.

LOIS (CONT'D)
You don't mind if I record this, do
you?

SUPERMAN
No.

LOIS
Good. Okay. Umm...

Lois chuckles.

LOIS (CONT'D)
I have no idea where to begin with
this conversation.
(beat)
What the hell are you?

SUPERMAN
I don't know.

LOIS
Well, where do you come from?

SUPERMAN
I don't know.

LOIS
What does the "S" stand for?

Superman doesn't get the question at first. Lois then points
to the "S" on his chest.

SUPERMAN
Oh... I don't know. I mean... I'm
not really sure.

LOIS
You're not making this easy.

SUPERMAN
I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LOIS

Why don't you tell me what you do know? You've been doing a lot of pretty impressive things. You seem to have...

(beat)

...abilities. Beyond those of normal men. Want to tell me about those? How do you fly?

SUPERMAN

I'm not sure how it works. I just do it.

Lois takes notes as Superman talks.

LOIS

Have you always been able to?

SUPERMAN

Since I was a teenager.

LOIS

And lifting busses?

SUPERMAN

I've been stronger than other people since I can remember.

LOIS

How much can you lift?

SUPERMAN

I'm not sure. I've never really gotten a firm number.

LOIS

You've never seen what your limits are?

SUPERMAN

I've tried. I just haven't come across anything that I couldn't lift.

LOIS

Seriously?

Superman just nods.

LOIS (CONT'D)

What else can you do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SUPERMAN
Heat vision...

LOIS
Laser?

Superman looks at a candle across the room and a beam of heat shoots from his eyes. The candle lights. Lois sees this and makes a note.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Wow.
(beat)
How hot is that?

SUPERMAN
Depends on what I want it to do. I can make it weak enough to light a candle or hot enough to melt metal.

LOIS
Handy. Anything else?

SUPERMAN
I can see through things. I haven't found anything that can wound me so far...

LOIS
Nothing?

SUPERMAN
Not yet.

Lois makes a note of this. She then looks to Superman with a very serious look in her eyes.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
What?

LOIS
Just seeing if you can read my mind.

Superman chuckles.

SUPERMAN
That's one thing I cannot do.

Lois jots this down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

LOIS
(under her breath)
Too bad.

SUPERMAN
But I can hear things from miles
away.
(beat)
Really good ears.

LOIS
Good to know.

Lois finishes writing a note and then lowers the pad. This question is as much for her as for her interview.

LOIS (CONT'D)
You have no idea where you come
from?

SUPERMAN
I know that I'm not from around
here.

LOIS
Where do you think you're from?

SUPERMAN
Someplace far away.

LOIS
Are you a Russian science
experiment, left over from the Cold
War?

SUPERMAN
No.

LOIS
Then could you be more specific?

SUPERMAN
I'm not from this world, Miss Lane.

LOIS
Oh.
(beat)
When did you come here? Are you a
documented... alien?

Lois knows that she probably should have used a different word. Superman doesn't like it either.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

SUPERMAN

I came here as a baby. I grew up on Earth. It's my home. That's why I want to protect it. It's why I need to help people.

LOIS

Sweet. So what's your agenda?

SUPERMAN

Beyond helping people, I don't have one.

LOIS

Everyone with power has an agenda. What's your endgame? What do you stands for?

SUPERMAN

I'm not a political figure.

LOIS

You have to believe in something.

Superman thinks. An answer suddenly comes to mind which makes him smile.

SUPERMAN

Truth, justice... The American way.

LOIS

How noble of you.

SUPERMAN

You don't believe me?

LOIS

You're just coming across as a little too good to be true. You have to be hiding something.

SUPERMAN

Aren't we all?

(beat)

Look, I don't want to be worshipped and I'm not looking to rule the world. Honestly, I have too much on my plate as it is. What I want is to help. I have abilities that can be of use to this world and I want to use them in any way I can.

Lois doesn't respond for a moment. She actually believes him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

LOIS

Fine.

(beat)

So superpowers and world conquest
aside... You're an alien. That's
pretty big. That solves a few of
the bigger questions that we've
been asking for most of our
existence. "Is there life on other
planets?"

(beat)

I guess so, right?

SUPERMAN

Yeah. I guess so.

Superman walks to the open doors and looks out at the sky.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Then again, you have to wonder what
kind of people would abandon their
child on an alien planet.

(beat)

I don't come from here, Lois. But
that world out there is far more
alien to me than this one.

Lois turns off her audio recorder and puts her notes down.

LOIS

I didn't mean to... I mean--

SUPERMAN

It's fine. Nothing I haven't
thought about a million times.

LOIS

I can't imagine what it must be
like to feel so alone.

Superman looks Lois in the eyes.

SUPERMAN

I don't.

They share an extended look. Finally, Superman looks outside
again.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Do you like flying, Miss Lane?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

LOIS
I hate confined places.

Finally, his comment sinks in and she realizes what he means.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Oh. You mean... Flying.
(beat)
No. Thank you, but no.

It's obvious that Lois is nervous. Superman finds this amusing.

SUPERMAN
I never pictured you as the nervous type.

LOIS
Survival instinct. You might have unbreakable bones of steel or whatever, but when I hit the ground from twenty stories up, I tend to make a mess.

Superman holds out a hand.

SUPERMAN
Trust me. I won't let you fall.

Lois looks at him, about to repeat what she just said, but something about his look changes her mind. She swallows hard and puts her hand in his.

LOIS
If you drop me, it is going to be very bad press.

They step out onto the balcony. Superman scoops Lois into his arms and lifts off of the floor. Lois gasps as he does this.

LOIS (CONT'D)
It's like riding an elevator.
(beat)
Y'know, without doors or a floor or any kind of safety mechanism.

Superman grins as he rises higher, into the night sky.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Superman carries Lois high above the city. She looks at the lights below, taking in the beauty. Superman says nothing as he watches the look of awe in her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lois looks at him.

LOIS
This is incredible.
(beat)
I get sick looking out of an
airplane, but this is completely
different.

SUPERMAN
It's the fresh air.

LOIS
Or what passes for it in
Metropolis. You must come out here
a lot.

SUPERMAN
Not until recently.

LOIS
Why not? If I could fly around like
this, I'd... Probably be worried
about some crazy government trying
to conduct an alien autopsy on me.

SUPERMAN
It's more complicated than it
seems, isn't it?

LOIS
That's why you waited so long,
isn't it? You were scared?

SUPERMAN
Me? Scared?

LOIS
Right. Do the male ego thing.
That's usually the part where I
sneak out the bathroom window, but
in this situation I think it might
be best if I stayed put.

There's a moment of quiet between them. Lois looks at the "S"
shield on his chest and runs her hand over it.

LOIS (CONT'D)
You said you weren't sure what the
"S" stood for. What do you think it
is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUPERMAN

Hmm?

(then)

Oh. It's not an "S" exactly. It was in the ship I was sent here in. I think it's my family's crest. The costume... most of it is like a suit of armor, I think.

LOIS

Well, if anyone asks about it from this point on, I'd just say it's an "S". "Suit of armor" could come across as a little hostile.

SUPERMAN

And if they ask what the "S" means?

LOIS

I'm sure we can think of something clever.

SUPERMAN

We can try.

(beat)

Hey, wanna go higher?

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - MORGUE - NIGHT

Professor Vale walks into the morgue with THREE ASSISTANTS behind him. He looks around nervously.

PROFESSOR VALE

(to himself)

This is... science. It's science. We're doing the work of... science.

A MORGUE TECHNICIAN walks to Professor Vale.

MORGUE TECHNICIAN

Can I help you?

PROFESSOR VALE

I... I, uhm... Need a brain.

MORGUE TECHNICIAN

Excuse me?

PROFESSOR VALE

I work in the research center. We need... a brain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGUE TECHNICIAN
Are you kidding me?

Professor Vale hands the technician a card, which the technician reads. He then walks to a nearby phone and dials a number.

Professor Vale waits nervously as the morgue technician makes his phone call and then walks back to Professor Vale.

MORGUE TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
Looks like you need a brain.

PROFESSOR VALE
Something recent. Fresh.

The morgue technician walks to the wall of refrigerated drawers and opens one. He pulls out the drawer which has a corpse on it, still in a body bag.

MORGUE TECHNICIAN
This one was just brought in. I haven't even had time to work on him yet. The body's messed up, but the head's not too bad. License says he's a donor.

The morgue technician unzips the bag, revealing the face of John Corben.

Professor Vale takes a quick look and then looks away. He nods to the technician. The morgue technician smiles.

MORGUE TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
Anything else for you tonight?
We're running a special on honey baked ham if you're interested.

Professor Vale looks as though he might be sick.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Clark is sitting at his desk, reading the front page of the newspaper. Lois and Jimmy are nearby too. Lois is listening as Jimmy reads.

JIMMY
"My Night With A Super Man." This is incredible, Lois.

LOIS
Yes, it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

A superpowered alien from another world who has sworn to protect humanity. I used to read stories like this when I was a kid.

CLARK

Who didn't?

LOIS

He's more than that though. He's not from around here, but who is? I mean, all of our families came to this country at some point, right?

JIMMY

But not from Mars.

LOIS

He's not from Mars, Jimmy.

(beat)

Probably. Either way, he's more human than most of the people I've met on this job.

CLARK

You think so?

LOIS

I do. I can tell a creep from a mile away and my gut is telling me that this guy is for real.

CLARK

That's not what you were saying yesterday.

LOIS

Well, yesterday I didn't know the guy.

JIMMY

The guy whose name isn't even mentioned in the article?

LOIS

He didn't tell me his name, okay? Everyone has a right to some secrets.

Jimmy leans closer to Clark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY

Remind me to get Lois a pair of pom-poms for her birthday.

Clark chuckles. Lois punches Jimmy on the arm.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ouch.

Clark flips over the paper and reads another story. His smile drops.

LOIS

What's wrong with you?

CLARK

John Corben was killed last night.

LOIS

What?

CLARK

He was shot six times in the chest. Died at the new Luthor Medical Center.

Clark puts the paper down.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Why didn't I know about this?

JIMMY

Do you think he was killed by whoever was doing the robberies?

Clark doesn't respond.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

If he was killed by the robbers, it's probably because the police stopped the robberies, and that's only because Clark told the police about Corben. So if that's what happened, then in a way--

Lois punches Jimmy on the arm again.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ouch! Why do you keep doing that?

Clark gets up and walks toward Perry's office.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - PERRY WHITE'S OFFICE - DAY

Perry is sitting at his desk, looking over some papers. There's a knock on the door as Clark opens it.

CLARK

Can I have a second?

PERRY

What can I do for you?

CLARK

The story in the paper today. The one about Corben being killed...

PERRY

Don't work yourself up over it. You did what you had to.

CLARK

Why didn't someone call me with this news?

PERRY

I tried to last night. You weren't answering.

(beat)

It's not your fault. We report the facts here. The fact is that Corben would still be alive if he hadn't gotten involved in this mess to begin with. You ran a good story and that's where your part in this ends.

CLARK

Is it really that simple?

PERRY

It has to be.

(beat)

Sit down. Let me tell you a story.

Clark sits. Perry puts his work down and sits back in his chair.

PERRY (CONT'D)

When I was a young reporter, I caught wind of a connection between certain political figures and a local crime family. Money passed hands, crimes were overlooked and I reported on it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY (CONT'D)

I covered that story from every angle I could think of and in the end, the piece got me the recognition that led me to this office I'm in today.

(beat)

Three members of that family were killed in mysterious accidents before they could name names. All the evidence that I'd worked to gather fell through when it came time to put criminal cases together. None of those men ever stood trial for what they'd done. It was quite the scandal in the days before O.J.

CLARK

Did you feel guilty about any of it?

PERRY

Guilty? No. I was doing my job.

(beat)

But I think that's the first time I truly realized how much power we have when we write our stories. There's a lot of romance thrown around about the life of a reporter. Travel. See the world. Report what you see and hope to mean something someday.

CLARK

But it carries more weight than people imagine.

PERRY

Yes, it does. When some people discover this, they run. Others don't care. They're in it for the glamor. The really good ones never stop caring. They don't just work toward a Pulitzer. The good ones never lose their souls in this mess. That's why I'm glad you wanted to see me, Kent. I was starting to worry.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - VALE'S LAB - NIGHT

There is a table set up to one side of the lab now. On the table is the form of a man, covered with a sheet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Professor Vale is standing over the table, looking down at the form. There are SEVERAL LAB ASSISTANTS in the room behind him.

Lex walks into the lab.

LEX
I trust you have good news for me,
Professor?

PROFESSOR VALE
I do. I think.

LEX
That's vague.

Lex walks to the table and looks down at the form.

LEX (CONT'D)
Is this it?

PROFESSOR VALE
I've molded the metallo in the form
of the brain donor's original body.
It might help ease some of the
shock. I still need to put
finishing touches on it, but it
should be functional soon.

LEX
What's your power source?

PROFESSOR VALE
A uranium capsule. It was the only
power source that seemed to provide
reasonable power for the metallo.
Everything else drained too
quickly.

LEX
But the uranium will last?

PROFESSOR VALE
I theory. I'm exploring other
options, just in case. I read an
article about a meteor--

LEX
As long as the uranium works, I
don't care about space rocks,
Professor.

(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX (CONT'D)

Turn it on. I want to see this thing work.

Professor Vale nods and pulls the sheet back, revealing the almost skeletal form of Metallo. There are no wires or joints. He is a perfectly solid structure, lacking the layers of flesh that would be required to make him appear human.

Lex stops and takes a good look at this form. He then moves on to the file on a nearby table, looking at the image of the brain's donor.

LEX (CONT'D)

He looks familiar. Did he work for me?

PROFESSOR VALE

No. Not that I'm aware of.

LEX

What was his name?

PROFESSOR VALE

I'm not sure. John, I think.

Professor Vale types a command into his computer, sending a signal to the metallo.

LEX

John?

Lex suddenly recognizes the form.

LEX (CONT'D)

You mean, John Corben?

PROFESSOR VALE

That might be it.

LEX

You fool. You chose the brain of a widely known criminal?!

PROFESSOR VALE

Wha--? I didn't... I mean...

LEX

Do you read the papers, Professor? John Corben has been all over the front pages since he died, three days ago. People will recognize him!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PROFESSOR VALE

But...

LEX

You have to switch donors. Find someone else.

PROFESSOR VALE

I can't. The metallo has been calibrating for the last three days. This body won't work with any other brain.

LEX

Then scrap it. Start over. I can't have a criminal representing LexCorp.

Professor Vale pauses for a moment, not sure how to respond.

Suddenly, Metallo's eyes shoot open. They are without proper coloring at the moment, so they appear to be completely black.

Metallo looks around the lab. Lex steps back as Metallo sits up.

Metallo moves his mouth, but no sound comes from it. He tries a few more times until there is finally a garbled mess of sound.

Metallo looks to Professor Vale, and then to Lex. He recognizes Lex. The two of them lock eyes for a moment.

LEX (CONT'D)

Shut it off, Professor. Kill the damn thing.

Metallo is confused by this. He lifts a hand and looks at it. He then looks back to Lex.

METALLO

(slightly garbled)
What the hell is this?

LEX

(to Vale)
Turn it off!

PROFESSOR VALE

I can't. The metallo is independent now. It's alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Lex doesn't like the sound of this. He looks back to Metallo.

METALLO

Metallo?

(beat)

What have you done to me?

Lex doesn't respond for a moment. Finally, he accepts the situation and regains his composure.

LEX

We brought you back from the dead.

Now you work for me.

Metallo doesn't know how to respond to this. He looks at his hand again, and then to the rest of his body. He feels his chest, which is where the compartment for his power supply is. His chest is the only part of his body that isn't solid. There is a seam in the chest, allowing for access to the power supply.

When Metallo speaks again, his voice is perfectly clear.

METALLO

I can't feel anything.

(to Professor Vale)

What am I?

PROFESSOR VALE

You are the greatest breakthrough
of human history. A human brain
inside of a mechanical body.

Metallo doesn't respond to this. Lex looks to Professor Vale.

LEX

Finish it. Make it look human. Call
me when it's done.

Lex walks out of the lab. Once he's gone, Metallo looks to Professor Vale.

METALLO

Is that what I am now? An "it"?

Professor Vale isn't sure how to respond.

Metallo gets up from the table and walks around the room as several lab assistants watch. He walks to a computer and bends down to look at the screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

METALLO (CONT'D)

I'm pretty much the next upgrade to this computer.

(beat)

No wireless internet though. I'm disappointed.

PROFESSOR VALE

What?

Professor Vale walks to his computer and studies it.

PROFESSOR VALE (CONT'D)

Oh! I forgot to add you to the network.

As Vale goes to work on his computer, Metallo brings up the Daily Planet's website on the computer that he's using. He runs a search for "John Corben" and begins reading the search results.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Jimmy walks across the office, to Lois' desk. Lois is typing up a new story and Jimmy doesn't want to bother her, so he just stands there and waits for her to respond to him.

After a moment, Lois looks up at Jimmy.

LOIS

Is there a reason why you're standing over me?

JIMMY

I'm looking for Clark.

LOIS

I'm pretty sure he's not sitting at my desk.

Lois looks at Clark's desk.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I'm also pretty sure he's not sitting at his desk. My guess is that he's not here.

JIMMY

If you see him, tell him I was looking for him.

LOIS

You bet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jimmy walks away from Lois' desk and toward the TV monitor where Lex Luthor is appearing on a cable news show.

The HOST is sitting across from Lex on the brightly lit set of the show.

LEX

What I mean to say is that the current state of the Metropolis economy is something that we need to address sooner, rather than later. The problem may not be severe now, but if we allow it to get out of hand we could find our city in it's own depression.

HOST

Some say that you're only interested in expanding your own empire.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

The same scene, but no longer on TV. This is the taping, complete with cameras and lights.

LEX

While it may be true that I have a certain investment in the restoration of Hobbs Bay, my concern isn't merely about money. I grew up in the area. I know the people in the area. The fact of the matter is that the area is becoming more and more dangerous with each passing day. It's no longer safe for children to play in the streets. It's no longer safe for women to return home at night without an escort. This is unacceptable. Furthermore, the local government seems to have placed the area on the back burner as far as funds are concerned. The recent tunnel collapse is proof that someone needs to step in and see to it that these residents are not forgotten. I want to see to it that these people are not just given a better place to live, but also more options when it comes to the work that they're able to take.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOST

Some say that you are more interested in pushing those residents out of their own homes. Ideas ranging from a massive residential mall for the wealthy, to some mystical tower designed to channel the planet's chi have been thrown around online.

Lex chuckles.

LEX

I've heard some of those rumors, and while they're certainly amusing, they're also wrong. The truth is that I have had many proposals cross my desk over the years for many types of buildings all over the city. Plans for the development of Hobbs Bay are in such early stages that there really haven't been meetings on what type of buildings I would invest in. At the moment, the idea is simply that. An idea. To accomplish the goal of restoring this vital sector of our city to its full glory, we will need the support of government officials, other corporations and the residents themselves. We still have quite a way to go in this process, but I'm excited about it.

HOST

As, I'm sure, are many of our viewers. We don't have much time left, Mr. Luthor, but before we go I do want ask you about the biggest news development of the week. The hero of Metropolis that people are calling a "Superman".

LEX

I'm as intrigued by the story as anyone.

HOST

Any thoughts or opinions on the mysterious stranger?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX

He would certainly seem to be quite the blessing to our city and the world at large. I think it's a little early to form any strong opinions on the man himself.

HOST

You sound wary.

LEX

I am. I think we all must be. Any person with such power is to be approached with caution. We also have to take into consideration the fact that he is not human. We can't be sure of where he comes from or what his intentions are.

HOST

I thank you for being here, Mr. Luthor.

LEX

I enjoyed sparring with you.

The host smiles and turns to the camera.

HOST

Coming up after the break, just what are scientists saying about our alien visitor? We'll also be discussing how this revelation may impact the various religions of the world. Stay tuned... You're "On The Clock".

Lex stands up and shakes the host's hand as they go to commercial.

As Lex walks off of the set, his CELL PHONE RINGS. He answers it.

LEX

Luthor.

intercut with:

EXT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Professor Vale is outside of the center, looking around. He's nervous as usual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PROFESSOR VALE
Mr. Luthor, it's Professor Vale.

LEX
I don't suppose you have good news
for me.

PROFESSOR VALE
Well, I've completed work on the
project. Synthetic skin. Realistic
eyes. He looks perfectly human.

LEX
Right. So, what's the bad news?

PROFESSOR VALE
The bad news. Right.
(beat)
Well, I'm finding it difficult to
keep him under control.

LEX
I'll send extra security to handle
the matter.

PROFESSOR VALE
Right. Right.
(beat)
Mr. Luthor, he's not exactly here
at the moment.

LEX
What?

Lex walks to an empty corner of the room for more privacy.

LEX (CONT'D)
Where is he?

PROFESSOR VALE
I'm not exactly sure.

LEX
Doesn't he have a GPS system
somewhere in there?

PROFESSOR VALE
That's a very good idea, sir. I'll
be sure to make a note of it for
the next version.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX
He's missing.
(beat)
This is not good news, Professor.

PROFESSOR VALE
He said he'd be back.

LEX
Great.

Lex hangs up his phone.

INT. BAR - DAY

Clark is sitting at a table with a plate of food in front of him. He is watching a TV screen above the bar, which displays Lex's interview.

BAR TENDER
Kinda makes you wonder, doesn't it?
I mean, the guy looks like a hero,
but how do we know he's not just
setting us up?

Clark looks across the room, toward the bar and sees the BAR TENDER. He's talking softly to a WELL DRESSED MAN who is seated on a stool.

WELL DRESSED MAN
We have no reason to doubt him.

BAR TENDER
Not yet.

WELL DRESSED MAN
Until he gives me reason not to,
I'm giving the guy some slack.
Whoever this Super-Guy is, he's
already saved a lot of lives.

YOUNG MOTHER
All day long, it's all he can talk
about.

Clark looks over to a distant corner of the room and sees a YOUNG MOTHER with a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN and a THREE YEAR OLD BOY who is coloring at the moment.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)
It's Superman! Superman! He won't
stop begging me to get him red and
blue sheets for his bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

You were the same way with My Little Pony. Just be glad they haven't started the marketing campaigns yet. I promise you that this guy will be all over the shelves by Christmas.

YOUNG MOTHER

I should start saving up now.

The three year old boy holds up a piece of paper to show his mother.

THREE YEAR OLD BOY

Look, Mommy! Look! It's Superman!

YOUNG MOTHER

That's very nice, baby.

THREE YEAR OLD BOY

Look, Mommy, he has lasers shooting from his eyes!

YOUNG MOTHER

Very nice. What's that he's burning all up?

THREE YEAR OLD BOY

That's Megan.

YOUNG MOTHER

How many times have I told you to stop drawing pictures of your sister on fire?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

They're so cute at this age.

Clark smiles.

CLARK

(under his breath)
Superman.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

The elevator doors open and Metallo walks out of the elevator. He now looks just like John Corben. He slowly walks through the room, looking around at his former workplace.

Jimmy walks by, looking at the display of his digital camera and bumps into Metallo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY
Sorry. Excuse me.

Jimmy starts to walk off again. Metallo grabs his arm.

METALLO
Where is Clark Kent's desk?

Jimmy looks down at his aching arm. He then points to Clark's empty desk.

JIMMY
Over there.

Metallo looks to where Jimmy is pointing and then looks to Jimmy's camera. He reaches down and grabs the camera from Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Hey!

Metallo crushes the camera in his hand. Jimmy is shocked by this. Metallo looks at his hand, still not feeling anything from it. He drops the camera.

METALLO
(to Jimmy)
Don't go anywhere. You won't want to miss this.

Jimmy doesn't like the sound of this. As soon as Metallo turns and starts to walk toward Clark's desk, Jimmy heads for a phone.

Metallo walks to Clark's desk and stands over it.

METALLO (CONT'D)
Where is he?

Lois doesn't look up from her work.

LOIS
Kent's out to lunch. You can leave a--

She looks up and sees Metallo's face. Her jaw drops when she sees who he is.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Oh my God. You're dead.

METALLO
Good to see you too, Lois.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOIS
I'm sure it is. Especially
considering the "your dead" part.

Lois stands up. Sitting down makes her feel too vulnerable.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Why are you here, John?

METALLO
I want to see the man who got me
killed.

LOIS
I'd suggest looking in a mirror,
but in your case that's never a
good option.

Metallo smiles. He reaches down and grabs the corner of Clark's desk. With a little effort, he tosses the desk across the room, narrowly missing several other people. By now, the whole room is looking his way.

Metallo looks at the people in the room.

METALLO
It would seem that we have an
audience.

LOIS
You should take your bow now.
Always leave them wanting more,
right?

Lois smiles nervously as she attempts to keep up her tough exterior.

METALLO
I'm waiting here until Clark Kent
returns, and so are you.

Metallo turns to the rest of the people.

METALLO (CONT'D)
The rest of you should run. I don't
need you here.

The place starts to empty out. As everyone races for elevators and stairs, Jimmy ducks behind one of the desks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LOIS

Clark might not even be back today. I'm sure if you want to leave a message, he'll get back to you just as soon as he can.

METALLO

Believe me when I tell you that if I leave a message here today, it is not one that you will enjoy.

ANGLE ON : JIMMY

As he crawls behind desks, working his way toward some unknown destination.

LOIS

He was just doing his job. You don't exactly have the moral high ground.

METALLO

No, I don't. I just have this completely irrational need to harm the man who led me to my death.

LOIS

Wouldn't that be the guy who kept shooting you in the chest?

METALLO

They'll get theirs. There is plenty of my anger to go around. I'm very powerful these days, and I plan to spread it around.

INT. BAR - DAY

Clark stands and tosses some money down on the table. As he is about to leave the bar, he looks to the TV screen and sees a live news report from outside of the Daily Planet. Police are gathered around the building and workers are filling the street.

Clark watches for a moment, and then continues to walk out of the bar. A moment after the bar door closes behind him, a LOUD BOOM can be heard, which rattles glasses and lamps in the bar.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Lois is sitting at her desk again. Metallo is near one of the large windows, looking down at the crowd below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

You're not getting out of this, John. You should just turn yourself in.

METALLO

You underestimate my power.

LOIS

Right. And where does that come from again?

METALLO

Sorry. No interviews.

A gust of wind blows through the office.

SUPERMAN

You came to the wrong place if you didn't want any press.

Metallo turns around and sees Superman standing near the elevators.

When Superman sees Metallo's face, he's very surprised, but tries to hide it.

METALLO

Well. This should be interesting.

SUPERMAN

You can't fight me.

METALLO

It's true that I don't have the tights, "Super man", but there's a lot of fight in this body.

Metallo grabs the TV screen from the wall and pulls it down. He throws it at Superman.

Superman catches it with ease.

SUPERMAN

I'm not impressed.

Superman puts the TV down and supersedes toward Metallo. Before Metallo knows it, Superman is right in front of him.

METALLO

Neat trick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Metallo throws a punch at Superman. Superman grabs Metallo's fist with little effort. He holds it for a moment.

SUPERMAN
End this, or I will.

Superman pushes Metallo, sending him to the floor, and sliding across the room.

As Metallo gets up, he notices Jimmy on the floor nearby. Jimmy is holding a regular film-type camera. He snaps a shot.

Metallo grabs Jimmy and stands up, holding Jimmy's neck with one hand.

METALLO
So, let's test out this new hero of ours, shall we?

SUPERMAN
Let him go.

METALLO
Yeah, that'll work.
(beat)
See, you can speed over here, but the way I see it, I'm still in control of this situation. You come near me and the kid gets his neck snapped.

SUPERMAN
I won't let that happen.

METALLO
How can you stop it? Are you fast enough? Sure enough that you won't mess this up? Can you risk it?

Superman doesn't respond. He just focuses his eyes on Metallo's hand and his heat vision shoots from his eyes.

Metallo's hand SIZZLES as a hole is burnt into it. He doesn't flinch.

Superman stops before he goes through the hand, to Jimmy's neck. He stands back, wondering why Metallo isn't hurt.

SUPERMAN
What are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

METALLO

I am the product of the world
around me.

(beat)

I know. I know. It didn't make any
sense, but I'll be damned if that
wasn't a poetic answer.

From out of nowhere, Lois appears behind Metallo and swings a
desk lamp into his head, shattering the glass lampshade.

Metallo hardly flinches. He grabs the broken lamp from Lois.

METALLO (CONT'D)

If that hurt even a little, I'd be
pissed off right now. Sit down.

Shocked that she didn't even hurt Metallo a little, Lois
lowers herself into a nearby chair.

Metallo turns back to Superman.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Catch.

Metallo throws the lamp at Superman with quite a bit of force
behind it.

Superman speeds out of the way, ending up behind Metallo.

The lamp shatters one of the windows that Metallo had been
looking out earlier.

Metallo turns around, facing Superman again.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I'm sure the people down below will
love that. Really, Superman.
Wouldn't it have been easier to
just catch it?

SUPERMAN

Let him go.

METALLO

Let who go?

Metallo looks at Jimmy, as though just remembering that he is
holding him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

METALLO (CONT'D)

Oh, right.

(then)

No.

Metallo backs away from Superman, still holding Jimmy.

SUPERMAN

You're not getting out of here.

METALLO

Really... I just wanted to see
Clark Kent. Say hi. Chat a little.
Rip his face off and paint a mural
on the wall with his blood. Is that
really so much to ask for?

Metallo looks down at Jimmy.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Is it?

Metallo shakes Jimmy's head "no".

METALLO (CONT'D)

(to Superman)

See? He agrees with me.

Jimmy is too scared right now to say anything. His eyes are
locked on Lois, who can do nothing to help him.

LOIS

Stop it! Let him go.

METALLO

Why would I do that? Do you not get
the idea of a hostage?

SUPERMAN

If you hurt him--

Metallo continues to back away as he replies.

METALLO

If I hurt him? How about when I
hurt him? This boy is the
unfortunate victim of circumstance.
My circumstance requires rather
drastic action, don't you think?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

METALLO (CONT'D)

I mean, I have the alien invader standing in front of me, burning holes in my hand with his laser-vision, which is both cool and incredibly creepy at the same time. Not to mention rude. I mean, do I go around burning holes in people? No. And I'm the bad guy!

(beat)

I think that what I mean by all of this is that I am in dire need of a distraction. Something impressive that will make Spandex-man leave me alone.

SUPERMAN

You're not earning any points, Corben.

Metallo smiles wide and looks down at Jimmy.

METALLO

He knows my name! A famous person knows my name!

(to Superman)

We're so BFF.

By now, Metallo is by the broken window.

METALLO (CONT'D)

It's not about points, Superfly. It's about cause and effect. Cause: I throw paparazzi-boy out the window.

Metallo quickly spins Jimmy around and pushes him out the window.

LOIS

NO!

Superman supersedes out the window after Jimmy. Metallo smiles to Lois.

METALLO

Effect: Superman leaves me alone. Tell Kent I'll be seeing him.

Metallo starts to walk toward the elevator.

EXT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - DAY

Jimmy yells as he falls from the window. The crowd below watches as Jimmy appears to be moments away from death.

CLOSE ON: JIMMY

As Jimmy falls, he closes his eyes.

Moments pass. Finally, when he doesn't die, Jimmy opens his eyes. He then realizes that he is slowly being lowered onto the ground by Superman.

Superman sets Jimmy on the ground and takes off, back toward the broken window.

Jimmy stands on the sidewalk, in shock, as POLICE walk toward him.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Superman rushes through the window and lands. When he's on the floor, he looks around the room. Lois is at her desk, typing away.

SUPERMAN

Where's Corben?

LOIS

He got away.

SUPERMAN

What are you doing?

LOIS

Scooping the competition.

Lois looks at Superman.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Care to give me a quote?

SUPERMAN

Jimmy's fine.

LOIS

I know.

Lois looks back to her computer.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I knew you wouldn't let him die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lois types a little, just finishing a sentence. She then turns back toward Superman.

LOIS (CONT'D)

So...

However, Superman is gone.

LOIS (CONT'D)

...how 'bout that quote?

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - LATER

WORKERS are boarding up the broken window as reporters are swarming around, rushing to get their reports finished.

Perry is walking through the office with Lois close behind. He's reading Lois' report.

PERRY

Corben's alive?

LOIS

I'm not so sure about that. Keep reading.

PERRY

(beat)

Through his hand?! And Corben did nothing?

LOIS

Something isn't kosher here, Chief. Corben died days ago. If that somehow changed, you'd think we'd have heard about it.

PERRY

Get down to the morgue and find out what happened to the body. I want to know what funeral home picked him up. When's the viewing?

LOIS

I think we just had it.

They walk past Jimmy, who is still a little dazed.

PERRY

Olsen!

Perry and Lois stop to talk with Jimmy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY (CONT'D)
How are you holding up, son?

Lois rolls her eyes.

JIMMY
I'm... Did you see what he did? He
threw me. Right out the window.

LOIS
And yet you're wearing the same
pants as you were this morning. I'm
proud of you.

JIMMY
Who throws a person out the window?

PERRY
I'm glad to hear you're okay. Now,
tell me you got some pictures.

JIMMY
He also crushed my digital camera.

PERRY
Son of a b--

JIMMY
So I had to use my old camera.

PERRY
That's the way to do it! What did
you get?

JIMMY
Pictures are on your desk, Chief.
(beat)
Can I go home now? I think I might
be sick.

PERRY
Sure. Sure. Take the rest of the
day. We'll call you if we need you.

Jimmy nods and walk off.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Good work.

Perry turns to Lois.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PERRY (CONT'D)
Why are you still here? Every
reporter in town is going to swarm
that morgue. Go!

Lois nods and turns. She almost bumps into Clark when she
turns around.

LOIS
Clark!

Clark is looking around the room.

CLARK
What happened?

LOIS
Your old pal John Corben stopped
by. He wanted to see you.

CLARK
John Corben? He's dead.

LOIS
Really? I hadn't heard.
(beat)
Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a
morgue to visit.

CLARK
Morgue?

LOIS
To find out why our dead man is
walking. You're gonna have to catch
up with the rest of us if you wanna
stay in the game, Clark.

CLARK
I want to go with you.

LOIS
Yeah right. This is my story.

CLARK
Corben's my story.

LOIS
Hostage gets dibs. It's only fair.

PERRY
Both of you, calm down. Lois, take
Clark with you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PERRY (CONT'D)

He's Corben's target, so he has a right to know what's going on. Both of you be careful.

(to Clark)

Especially you, son.

Perry turns and walks away.

CLARK

Target?

Lois grabs Clark's arm and pulls him along as she heads for the elevator.

LOIS

Everyone's a "son" all of the sudden. I'm here longer than either of you, but am I "son"? No.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - VALE'S LAB - DAY

Lex is in Vale's lab now, listening as Vale tries to explain what's happened.

PROFESSOR VALE

He just left. I couldn't stop him.

LEX

Where did he go?

PROFESSOR VALE

I don't know. I know that he was reading reports about himself on the internet and then he got upset and left.

LEX

Please don't tell me that he walked right into an office full of reporters.

METALLO

You might not want to turn on the news.

Lex turns and sees Metallo walking through the door. He's not pleased by what Metallo said. He immediately tries to figure out a way to handle this situation.

PROFESSOR VALE

You're back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

METALLO

I said I would be.

LEX

Did anyone see you walk in here?
Did anyone follow you?

METALLO

Not that I know of. Then again, I
didn't really look.

Lex walks to Metallo, getting into his face.

LEX

Do you know what would happen to me
if they found out about you?
Especially now?

Lex turns to Professor Vale.

LEX (CONT'D)

We need to fix this. We need to get
rid of anything that might connect
us to everything that this machine
might have done.

PROFESSOR VALE

How?

METALLO

Yes, how?

Lex turns to Metallo. They lock eyes, attempting to stare
each other down.

LEX

As far as the world is concerned,
John Corben is dead.

METALLO

I wouldn't be so sure about that.

LEX

Either way, nobody will mind if you
vanish from the face of the earth.

METALLO

I'll mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX

You are the product of my will.
Never mistake yourself for anything
more than that. The moment I want
you gone, you will be gone.

METALLO

Yeah?

Metallo reaches up and grabs Lex's neck with one hand. He holds it firmly.

METALLO (CONT'D)

As of right now, the tables are
turned.

Lex angrily pushes Metallo's arm away. Metallo stumbles back a few steps.

Lex straightens his shirt as he looks to Professor Vale.

LEX

This is your mess now, Professor.
Clean it up or I'll have it done
for you. I promise, you won't like
the service I hire to do it.

Lex walks out of the lab. Once he's gone, Metallo turns to Vale.

METALLO

Looks like you're in a bit of a
pickle.

Professor Vale doesn't say anything to him. Metallo walks closer to Vale.

METALLO (CONT'D)

All of your work. All of the hours
that you've put into this project
and Luthor would have you throw it
away. Think about it, Professor. I
might not be perfect, but right
now, I'm all you got.

PROFESSOR VALE

You're a criminal.

METALLO

As opposed to Lex Luthor, the saint
of Metropolis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PROFESSOR VALE
I can't allow you to hurt anyone.

Metallo is standing right in front of Vale now.

METALLO
Now might be a good time to get
selfish. You help me and you get to
live. You don't and you die.

PROFESSOR VALE
How can you do this? How can you be
so flippant when it comes to
killing people?

Metallo shrugs.

METALLO
I've been under a lot of stress.

Professor Vale thinks about this response. He's suddenly too
distracted to remember the death threats and all of that
unimportant business.

PROFESSOR VALE
Actually, that makes sense. Your
brain wasn't designed for this.

METALLO
Whatever. I don't need exposition,
I need help.
(beat)
Luthor swatted my hand back there.
He got away from me. That shouldn't
happen, right? I'm supposed to be
stronger than him.

Professor Vale goes to his computer and sits down.

METALLO (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

PROFESSOR VALE
I'm trying to figure out what's
happening to you. If I were you,
I'd sit down and be patient.

METALLO
I don't need to sit.

As Professor Vale works on his computer, Metallo wanders the
lab, looking at and touching various objects around the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

METALLO (CONT'D)

I don't need to eat. I don't need to sleep or floss or blink. I don't feel tired or hungry.

He picks up a steaming mug of coffee and pours it on his hand. He watches the hot coffee flow over the hand, but feels nothing.

He turns his hand over and pours hot coffee into the hole that Superman burned earlier. Still, he feels nothing.

He puts the mug down and wipes his hand on the sheet that was once used to cover him on the table.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I don't feel anything. That's not normal, is it?

PROFESSOR VALE

It's hard to say what's normal. You're the first of your kind.

(beat)

Probably the only, when all is said and done.

METALLO

Fun.

Professor Vale notices something on his computer screen that he finds puzzling.

PROFESSOR VALE

Hmm.

Metallo turns to him.

METALLO

What?

PROFESSOR VALE

Well, I've figured out why you're so weak.

METALLO

I respect the narrative flow as much as anyone, but spit it out already.

PROFESSOR VALE

Your power source is draining faster than I expected.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Metallo walks over to him and looks at the screen.

PROFESSOR VALE (CONT'D)
It's as if the metallo is leaking
fuel.

METALLO
Fix it.

PROFESSOR VALE
I-- I don't know if I can.

METALLO
Let me help you figure it out.

Metallo grabs the back of Vale's neck and squeezes. Vale
winces in pain.

METALLO (CONT'D)
Fix it.

PROFESSOR VALE
Okay. Okay!

Metallo lets go of Professor Vale.

PROFESSOR VALE (CONT'D)
But we'll need to find a new source
of energy. Something that will be
more contained within the metallo.

METALLO
Like what?

Professor Vale thinks this over for a moment before
answering.

PROFESSOR VALE
I read an article about a meteor
that was found in the desert. It
emits a unique form of radiation...

Metallo listens with great interest as Vale continues.

EXT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Clark and Lois walk out of the center and begin the walk to
their car.

LOIS
No records available. Why am I not
surprised?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Maybe we could bribe a nurse or something.

LOIS

As much as I love bribery, I think this is beyond nurses. Corben was declared dead. That means that as far as anyone in the ER is concerned, the story is over. The morgue is where the trail goes cold.

CLARK

Suggestions?

LOIS

Morgue tech's not talking. Short of beating it out of him, I'd say the morgue's a dead end.

Lois sees Lex walking on the other side of the lawn.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Check it out.

Clark sees Lex.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I'm going to talk to him.

CLARK

You think he knows something?

LOIS

Possibly. At the very least, he can look into it, right?

CLARK

Be careful.

LOIS

Afraid I'll be turned into an undead killing machine?

CLARK

Just be careful.

Lois nods and walks toward Lex. Clark watches for a moment, then turns and walks in the other direction.

Lois rushes to catch up to Lex. When she gets close, she yells to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOIS

Mr. Luthor.

Lex turns and sees Lois coming toward him. He'd rather not deal with her, but short of making a break for it, there is no way to avoid her. Instead, he smiles politely.

LEX

Ms. Lane. How wonderful to see you again.

LOIS

Thanks. Mind if I ask you a couple of questions?

LEX

About what?

LOIS

John Corben.

LEX

I don't know the name.

LOIS

He was brought into your emergency room a few nights ago. He died.

LEX

I'm sorry to hear that.

LOIS

Don't worry, he got over it.

LEX

I'm sorry?

LOIS

Seems that he didn't take a liking to death. He attacked the Daily Planet this afternoon.

LEX

I can see how you might have some questions. Unfortunately, I don't think that I'm the man to be asking about this.

LOIS

I tried asking some of your employees, but they can't seem to figure out what they did with the body.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LOIS (CONT'D)

As far as I can tell, he died in the ER and vanished on his way to the morgue. Next thing we know, he's throwing my photographer out a window.

LEX

Is he okay?

LOIS

Superman saved him.

LEX

How lucky for us.

LOIS

The thing is, Corben must have needed some help with his little resurrection act. He was changed somehow. He was stronger and didn't even flinch when Superman fried his hand.

LEX

Perhaps he's another creature from outer space.

LOIS

I don't think so.

LEX

The fact is, we live in a very unusual time. We've recently become aware of alien beings who look human, walking amongst us. Beings capable of extraordinary feats. If anything, this story you tell me would seem to suggest that we must be wary of these beings. Until we know more about them, we must be cautious.

LOIS

So Superman saves us from a crazy undead hostage taker, and you're trying to spin it around to blame Superman? That doesn't hold much water.

LEX

I'm not blaming Superman. I am merely saying that we must be careful who we trust.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LEX (CONT'D)

These are alien creatures. Don't let their appearance fool you. They are dangerous.

Lex looks at his watch.

LEX (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm late for a meeting.

LOIS

Of course.

Lex turns and walks toward his car. Lois walks in the opposite direction.

LOIS (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

One more minute on that spin machine and I would have lost my lunch.

INT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - ASTRONOMY EXHIBIT - NIGHT

This section of the museum is filled with various displays which relate to outer space. Banners are hung which read "The Space Around Us".

A tour is underway, filled with PEOPLE from all walks of life. People who you would never expect to see in a tour like this. A TOUR GUIDE is showing them a display featuring a moon rock.

TOUR GUIDE

In 1969, man first set foot on the moon. With one small step by Neil Armstrong, our world would never be the same. This rock is an actual moon rock, gathered by the Apollo 16 mission in 1972. Over the course of six Apollo missions, nearly 850 pounds of lunar rocks were gathered...

In the back of the tour group, Metallo is standing with Professor Vale. Metallo is dressed normally, while Vale is wearing a long coat and looking even more nervous than usual.

METALLO

Is it true that the moon landing was faked? Because I heard that it was all set up on a sound stage in Area 51.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Metallo leans closer to one of the other tour members.

METALLO (CONT'D)

From what I hear, it's the same stage they shot "Showgirls" on. Tell me there's not an alien conspiracy in there somewhere.

TOUR GUIDE

Rumors of all kinds have surrounded the space program since its inception. While these rumors may be fun to humor now and then, none have been supported by any legitimate evidence.

METALLO

Okay, sorry. My bad.

A teenage GOTH GIRL near the front of the tour speaks up next.

GOTH GIRL

So, what's the deal with this Superman guy? He's an alien, right?

TOUR GUIDE

According to an interview with the Daily Planet, yes. At the museum, we're all just as excited over this news as all of you.

METALLO

Superman is horribly overrated. Personally I think it's a ratings stunt by the networks. What month is sweeps again?

GOTH GIRL

Dude, the guy flies. If that's a network stunt, I wanna know how you explain that.

A nerdier TEENAGE BOY is standing next to the goth girl.

TEENAGE BOY

Not to mention the super strength and laser eyes.

METALLO

Super strength. Pshh. Who doesn't have super strength these days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOTH GIRL

Like you could fly busses around
like that?

METALLO

Fly? No. Carry? I think so. I mean,
I'd probably have to stretch first.
Warm up with a Volkswagon or
something.

GOTH GIRL

Whatever. You're cracked, man.

A well dressed BUSINESS MAN in the middle of the group nods.

BUSINESS MAN

I couldn't have said it better
myself.

METALLO

You think I'm lying?

GOTH GIRL

I think you're full of it.

TOUR GUIDE

Ladies and gentlemen, we should
move on. Our next display is a
meteor rock--

The tour guide walks to the center of the room where a display case holds a green crystal-like rock. Kryptonite, obviously. Metallo walks to the front of the tour with a smile on his face.

METALLO

Meteor rock that was found in the Nevada desert. The rock has been found to emit a type of radiation which has fascinated scientists since its discovery, almost twenty years ago. While harmless to humans, the radiation could prove to be a source of clean energy, if only we could recreate it.

TOUR GUIDE

(big grin)

You're not trying to steal my job
out from under me, are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

METALLO

Your job? No.

(beat)

The meteor is protected by the latest in fancy-ass security systems. Impenetrable glass, very loud alarms, and a lockdown system that's all set to protect the piece, should anything happen to penetrate the impenetrable glass.

The tour guide has no idea how to react to this.

TOUR GUIDE

Umm... okay.

METALLO

(to goth girl)

You wanted to see my muscle?

Metallo turns and grabs the glass around the display. With all of his strength, he manages to rip the glass off of the display.

The crowd gasps as security bars lower around the display and ALARMS sound. As the bars lower, the base that holds the meteor rock opens and the rock is about to drop into the bottom of the display case. Metallo reaches through the bars and grabs it before it drops. This requires him to reach slightly farther than most would be able to, and through bars that are too narrow for most people to fit through.

The crowd moves back as Metallo looks back to them and shrugs.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I'm double-jointed.

With his free hand, Metallo grabs the bars and once again uses all of the strength that he can muster to pull them apart. He pulls his other hand free, along with the kryptonite rock.

The crowd begins to run from the museum, leaving Professor Vale alone with Metallo. Metallo looks at Vale, completely drained.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Was it something I said?

Metallo drops to his knees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

METALLO (CONT'D)

Get over here.

Professor Vale hesitates.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Do you think you can walk away from this if you don't help me? You're already an accomplice.

Vale thinks this over, but finally decides to run anyway.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Oh, fine.

Metallo struggles to keep himself upright as he rips open his shirt. He takes a moment and then rips the flesh off of his chest. Once this is done, he pauses.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I really should have felt that.

He opens the compartment in his chest which holds his power source. Of course there are lights of some kind on the power source within his chest, which is connected by several wires and tubes to the rest of the body. The lights are growing dimmer. Metallo is growing weaker.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Okay, really fast now.

He presses on the power source, which slides open to reveal the uranium capsule within. Metallo takes a deep breath and then quickly removes the uranium capsule and replaces it with the kryptonite rock. He closes the power source and waits a moment. Nothing happens.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Dang.

Metallo falls over, seemingly dead.

EXT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - NIGHT

POLICE are gathered around the museum, closing the museum off to the growing CROWD. A few stragglers are still running from the museum.

Superman flies over the crowd and lands near a police officer, OFFICER DANIELS. OFFICER DANIELS flinches, but gathers himself quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUPERMAN
What's happening?

Daniels looks Superman up and down.

OFFICER DANIELS
Behind the line.

SUPERMAN
I can help.

OFFICER DANIELS
We can handle it.

From behind Superman, the TOUR GUIDE yells.

TOUR GUIDE
Superman! The man in there... He's
not human.

Superman turns and looks at the tour guide.

SUPERMAN
What do you mean?

TOUR GUIDE
He was strong. The things he did...

Superman turns back to Officer Daniels.

SUPERMAN
I need to get in there. Now.

OFFICER DANIELS
We don't need your help. There's
already one alien freak running
around in there. We don't need
another.

SUPERMAN
He's not like me.

OFFICER DANIELS
I don't care one way or the other.
This is a police matter. Unless
you have a badge, I'm going to need
you to get behind the line with
everyone else.

Another policeman, CAPTAIN JACKMAN approaches.

CAPTAIN JACKMAN
Something wrong here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Officer Daniels turns to face his captain.

OFFICER DANIELS

No, sir. I was just telling the nice man in the tights that we don't need his help.

Officer Daniels turns to face Superman again, but Superman is gone. Officer Daniels doesn't like this.

OFFICER DANIELS (CONT'D)

Son of a--

CAPTAIN JACKMAN

Forget about him, Daniels. If the man wants to help, let him.

OFFICER DANIELS

But--

CAPTAIN JACKMAN

Would you rather send officers in there that aren't bulletproof? Just do your job. Control the crowd.

Captain Jackman walks away leaving an angry Officer Daniels behind.

INT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - ASTRONOMY EXHIBIT - NIGHT

Superman supersedes into the museum and stops right in front of Metallo, who is still face-down on the ground.

SUPERMAN

Corben?

Metallo doesn't move. Superman bends down for a closer look. As he does, a wave of dizziness comes over him. He pushes through it and taps Metallo on the back.

When Metallo doesn't move, Superman feels his neck for a pulse. There is none.

As Superman pulls his hand back, he grabs it, feeling an odd sensation in it. He stands up and takes a few steps closer to the nearest wall so that he can lean against it. He tries to pull himself together.

Behind Superman, Metallo rises from the floor. His chest is still open and the power source is now glowing bright green. As he rises, Metallo looks down at his hands and his chest. Something is different about him now. He feels something. He looks up at Superman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Superman keeps his back to Metallo as Metallo quietly steps toward him. Metallo gets closer and closer to Superman, but Superman does nothing. He is growing more pale by the moment.

Metallo grins as he balls his fist. Finally, Metallo swings with all of his strength at Superman.

Before Metallo's fist can reach Superman, Metallo suddenly finds himself face to face with Superman. Superman catches Metallo's fist.

Metallo's grin drops.

METALLO

Damn.

Superman pushes Metallo to the ground and Metallo slides across the floor. Still weak, Superman is pushing himself to fight.

As Metallo stands again, Superman looks at the large opening in Metallo's chest. He is very puzzled by this.

Metallo looks down.

METALLO (CONT'D)

Oh my! This is strange.

(then)

I could have sworn I had internal organs when I left the house this morning.

Metallo closes his chest compartment as he walks toward Superman again.

METALLO (CONT'D)

You're not looking well. Should I call someone?

SUPERMAN

You're not John Corben.

METALLO

Umm... Yes and no.

SUPERMAN

What are you doing to me?

METALLO

I don't know what's happening to you, Superman, but I know an opportunity when I see one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Metallo rushes toward Superman and swings at him. Superman flies across the room, smashing into one of the display cases. He drops to the ground.

As Superman struggles to get up again, Metallo goes to him and kicks him in the chest. Superman drops to the ground again, gasping for air.

Metallo steps back and leans against another display case as Superman continues to struggle.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I have to tell you, I enjoy our quality time together. It makes me feel all warm inside.

On the ground, Superman continues to gather himself. He doesn't look quite as pale anymore. His strength is slowly returning.

Superman manages to get to his feet, still a little uneasy.

SUPERMAN

Corben?

METALLO

Hmm?

SUPERMAN

You talk to much.

Superman flies toward Metallo at superspeed. Both of them shoot right through the doorway of the room, breaking off a chunk of it.

INT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Superman and Metallo crash through several display cases and the front desk before landing on the ground. Superman is on top of Metallo now, holding Metallo down with one hand on his chest.

As Superman prepares to punch Metallo with his free hand, he notices the hand on Metallo's chest growing pale. He weakens slightly, allowing Metallo to push Superman off of him.

Superman is thrown across the room, slamming into the wall. His hand regains its color. His strength returns to him.

Both of them get to their feet. They look at each other from opposite sides of the room, waiting for the other to make his move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally, Metallo charges at Superman. As he gets close to Superman, he attempts to dive on top of Superman. Instead, Superman grabs him and spins him around, slamming him into the wall.

Superman's hands go pale. As Superman weakens slightly, Metallo grabs onto Superman's arm and swings Superman around, throwing him through the glass doors which lead outside.

EXT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Superman flies through the glass doors and is just about to crash to the ground when he catches himself mid-air. He manages to pull himself up and land on his feet.

By now, the PRESS has gathered outside of the museum. Television cameras are capturing the situation from various angles, and Lois is at the front of the crowd, watching.

As Metallo slowly walks through the broken doors, the crowd gasps. The police begin to shuffle, attempting to move everyone farther back.

Somehow, Lois manages to slip behind a police car where she can't be seen by the police. She avoids being pushed back and continues to watch the fight.

Superman supersedes toward Metallo, grabs Metallo's arm and throws Metallo to the ground. He pins him there. Of course, holding onto Metallo for a few moments makes Superman weak.

Metallo turns himself over, throwing Superman to the ground. Metallo gets to his feet and looks behind Superman where a metal sculpture is standing. As Superman struggles to get up, Metallo goes to the statue and pulls it from its base.

Metallo uses all of his strength to throw the sculpture down, onto Superman.

Superman catches the sculpture with one hand and gently sets it down on the ground. He looks to Metallo. By now, Superman is sweating. The exposure to kryptonite is catching up to him.

Metallo looks past Superman, toward the police car that Lois is hiding behind. He sees Lois. He then charges toward Superman.

INT. KENT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Martha and Lana are in front of the TV, watching live coverage of Superman's battle with Metallo. With each punch that is exchanged, both women hold their breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As a close-up of Superman fills the screen, Martha frowns.

MARTHA
Something's wrong.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

The bar is packed with DRUNKEN SPORTS FANS, all watching the battle on various TV screens.

Sitting at the bar, Pete is watching the fight.

SPORTS FAN 1
Superman will kick that guy's ass.

SPORTS FAN 2
No way. Check out the way Supes is huffing. The dude with the metal shirt isn't even sweating.

FEMALE SPORTS FAN
I don't think that's a shirt.

SPORTS FAN 2
Whatever. The guy is gonna kick Superman's ass.

Pete hears this, but doesn't take his eyes off of the screen. He's worried.

SPORTS FAN 1
Wanna bet?

SPORTS FAN 2
Twenty bucks says the other guy wins.

SPORTS FAN 1
I'll put fifty on Superman.

FEMALE SPORTS FAN
Count me in. Superman all the way.

Soon, the room is rumbling with various bets being placed on the fight.

Sports Fan 1 grabs Pete's shoulder.

SPORTS FAN 1
Hey, pal. You want in on this?

Pete doesn't respond.

EXT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - NIGHT

Superman catches a wooden bench that Metallo has thrown at him.

Metallo charges at Superman and dives toward him. Superman moves out of the way, causing Metallo to land on the ground. Superman uses the bench to hold Metallo down.

Metallo grabs the bench with one hand and breaks it in half. He uses his legs to push Superman back and quickly gets back to his feet.

METALLO

All of this up and down is making
me dizzy. What do you say we make
this more interesting?

Metallo charges Superman one more time. Superman effortlessly spins Metallo around and throws him back down to the ground, not far from the police car and Lois.

Metallo stands up and dusts himself off.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I totally gave you that one.

Metallo then turns and grabs the police car. He pushes it out of the way, revealing Lois. She straightens up as her cover is lost. She's not sure what to do with herself.

The police car rolls toward the crowd. Superman superspeeds behind it and stops it just before it reaches them.

Metallo turns toward Lois. She starts to back away.

LOIS

What the hell are you?

Metallo thinks about his answer. He looks down at his metal chest and then back to Lois.

METALLO

I am but the sum of my parts. When
you write about this, you can call
me Metallo.

Superman superspeeds in between Metallo and Lois, looking Metallo in the eyes.

SUPERMAN

Lois, get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lois is still processing that name. Something about it is very familiar. She finally runs toward the rest of the crowd as Superman and Metallo resume their fight.

When Lois reaches the crowd, she stops to think about the name. She repeats it silently to herself a few times before she finally remembers where she's seen it before.

She turns around and starts to push her way to the back of the crowd, pulling out her cell phone and dialing. She puts the phone to her ear.

Before anyone answers on the other end, Lois spots Professor Vale in the back of the crowd. When he sees her, he turns and starts to walk away. Lois rushes to catch up to him.

Lois runs in front of Vale, cutting him off.

LOIS
You look familiar.

PROFESSOR VALE
I don't believe we've met.

LOIS
Luthor's Med Center. You're the guy who bumped into me. The guy with the file mentioning Metallo. What a coincidence.

PROFESSOR VALE
I do--I don't know what you're talking about. Really, I have to be going.

LOIS
You're not going anywhere. You're talking to me and then the police.
(beat)
Is Luthor in on this?

PROFESSOR VALE
Miss Lane, I am not a stupid man. I won't be saying anything about any of this.

ANGLE ON : CAPTAIN JACKMAN

Watching the fight with several other officers, Jackman doesn't like how this is going. He leans closer to one of his men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAPTAIN JACKMAN

We have to help him. Get the crowd out of here and get ready to bring him down.

The officers start to push the crowd back even farther, but the crowd begins to object.

GOTH GIRL

We're not leaving him!

OFFICER DANIELS

Get back.

GOTH GIRL

Screw you, ham hock.

Several members of the crowd fight the police, not wanting to leave Superman. Others in the crowd grab them and pull them back, knowing that the police have their job to do.

ANGLE ON : SUPERMAN AND METALLO

Metallo is holding Superman against a wall with one hand while repeatedly punching him with the other.

Superman finally catches Metallo's fist and stops the beating. He looks Metallo in the eyes, still weak from kryptonite exposure.

SUPERMAN

You won't win this.

METALLO

Seems to me that I already am.

Superman pushes Metallo's fist back with all of his strength. Even weakened, Superman is strong enough to battle Metallo.

Metallo struggles to push back. As they struggle, Metallo's eyes drift past Superman to one of the museum windows. In the reflection of the window, he spots Lois talking to Professor Vale. This upsets him.

A surge of strength helps Metallo push his fist back, smashing Superman's hand into the wall. He throws Superman to the ground and pounds him in the face several times.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I suggest you stay down, Superman.

Metallo stands up and starts to walk away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

METALLO (CONT'D)

But since we both know you won't...

Metallo grabs the police car that he pushed earlier. He somehow manages to pull together enough strength to lift the car off of the ground. He throws it through the air, toward the crowd.

ANGLE ON : THE CROWD

They scream and try to push at each other as the car flies toward them. As the car is about to land on top of several crowd members, it stops mid-air.

Superman has caught the car and is holding it over the crowd.

SUPERMAN

Run!

The crowd hesitates a moment and then begins to move again. As soon as the area is clear, Superman drops the car onto the ground, and then falls on top of it. He lays there, catching his breath as the police rush toward him.

ANGLE ON : LOIS AND PROFESSOR VALE

PROFESSOR VALE

It wasn't supposed to be like this.

LOIS

What was it supposed to be like?

METALLO

For starters, we were supposed to hit the gift shop on the way out.

Lois turns and sees Metallo standing behind her. She gasps.

METALLO (CONT'D)

I really wanted a stuffed dinosaur.

Metallo grabs Lois' arm and throws her to the ground. He then turns his attention to Vale.

METALLO (CONT'D)

What did I tell you about speaking to the press? We're supposed to be holding out for Oprah.

Metallo grabs Vale's arm and pulls him away from the scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANGLE ON : SUPERMAN

Still on top of the car, recovering. When Captain Jackman gets to his side, he pulls himself on top of the car.

CAPTAIN JACKMAN
Are you okay?

Superman attempts to pull himself up, but he can't.

SUPERMAN
Where is he?

CAPTAIN JACKMAN
He ran. We couldn't get a clear shot.
(beat)
He took someone.

SUPERMAN
Who?

Lois approaches, rubbing her arm.

LOIS
His partner.

Superman sits up just as Lois gets close.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Something tells me that "Metallo" didn't want the other guy talking. Damn near broke my arm during the getaway.

SUPERMAN
Do you know who he was?

LOIS
He wasn't talking. He was too scared.

CAPTAIN JACKMAN
I'd be scared too if that thing wasn't happy with me.

Lois doesn't say another word to Jackman. She turns her attention to helping Superman.

LOIS
Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SUPERMAN
Getting better.

Lois takes Superman's arm and helps him off of the car.

EXT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM - NIGHT

Superman and Lois are talking to another police officer. As they wrap up the conversation, they walk away from the crowd. Superman is looking much better now.

LOIS
You okay to fly or should I call
you a cab?

SUPERMAN
I'm good.

LOIS
I didn't want to say anything in
front of the press, but you kinda
got your ass kicked.

Superman doesn't respond.

LOIS (CONT'D)
What happened?

SUPERMAN
I don't know.

LOIS
Seems to be a popular answer with
you.

Superman finds this fact to be irritating. To Lois it's a light-hearted comment, but to Superman it's a fact of his life.

SUPERMAN
Yeah.

LOIS
You'll take him next time. You'll
be ready for him.

SUPERMAN
Will I?

LOIS
You should be.
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS (CONT'D)

The trick to these things is to educate yourself. Knowledge is power. Corben's been turned into some kind of metal robot thing. That means that he is man-made and that means that he's got a weakness. You just have to figure out what that weakness is.

SUPERMAN

Any idea where to start with that?

LOIS

I've got my leads. I'll let you know if I find anything.

(beat)

Do you have a cell phone by any chance?

SUPERMAN

I don't want you putting yourself in any danger, Lois.

LOIS

Me? Danger? If you knew me, you'd know that I rarely put myself in any kind of danger. I like to play it safe.

SUPERMAN

Be careful. If you need me, just yell. I'll hear you.

Lois nods.

LOIS

My hero.

SUPERMAN

I should go. Do you need a lift anywhere?

LOIS

I'll walk. Thanks.

SUPERMAN

You sure? It's getting pretty cool out here.

LOIS

I like a cold night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PROFESSOR VALE

The source of your power is very different than the one you had before. Your body was probably just reacting to the new energy.

METALLO

Whatever it was, I liked it. This rock is making me stronger than I ever was before. Every moment that passes, I grow stronger.

Metallo reaches down and lifts the desk, but it requires a lot more effort than he expected. He sets it down and looks to Vale. Vale is just as puzzled as he is.

PROFESSOR VALE

I don't understand.

METALLO

Then figure it out. I want answers.

PROFESSOR VALE

I don't have my lab. My equipment.

METALLO

The center just opened. You must have worked someplace before.

PROFESSOR VALE

The university.

METALLO

Then grab your bong, Doc. We're going to college.

EXT. KENT HOUSE - FRONT PORCH/LAWN - NIGHT

Martha walks out of the house, carrying her phone. She sets the phone down on the railing and looks at it for a moment, wishing that it would ring. When it doesn't she looks out across the land and the stars above. She's worried about Clark.

From the direction of the barn, there is a BANG. Martha turns toward the sound and waits a moment to see if she hears it again. When she doesn't, she grabs her phone and walks toward the barn.

INT. KENT BARN - NIGHT

Martha walks into the barn, holding the phone tight and preparing to dial it if she needs to. She carefully walks through the barn, looking for the source of the noise.

She looks toward the door in the floor, but sees no sign of disturbance. That relieves her slightly.

She continues to make her way through the barn, searching. She eventually ends up in a dark corner of the barn where many boxes are stored. There is also a tarp-covered car.

When she doesn't see anything right away, she turns to walk out of the barn. Before she leaves the barn, she stops herself. She turns back to the car and walks toward it.

As she gets closer, she notices the dust on the ground near the tarp has been disturbed on one side.

She approaches the car carefully, and lifts the tarp. She looks inside the car.

ANGLE ON : THE CAR

Through the window of this powder blue 1969 Dodge Charger, Martha sees Clark in the back seat, sleeping. He's not in costume at this point. Just jeans and a t-shirt.

Martha breaths a sigh of relief and covers the car again. She is still worried about Clark, but finds comfort in the fact that he is home. She turns and walks out of the barn.

EXT. KENT BARN - DAWN

Night has passed and the sun is rising.

INT. KENT BARN - DAWN

Clark lifts the tarp and climbs out of the car. He looks toward the barn door, not wanting to go back outside.

As he looks away from the door again, he sees a steaming cup of coffee on a nearby box, along with a note. He walks to the cup and takes a sip as he reads the note, which says "Breakfast is served in the kitchen, not the barn."

Clark smiles and walks toward the barn door.

INT. KENT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN

Clark opens the back door and enters the kitchen where he finds Martha carefully removing some freshly baked sticky buns from their pan, trying not to get burned by the hot topping.

MARTHA

I don't know how many times I've had to tell your father that same thing. Whether it was a sick cow or a broken tractor, he always seemed to be in the barn. Sometimes I didn't know if he'd gotten out there very early, or if he'd been out there very late.

Martha carries the platter of buns to the table and sits down. Clark sits with her as she places a bun onto a plate for him.

CLARK

How did you know I was here?

MARTHA

A mother knows these things.

(beat)

And I heard that old car door slamming.

CLARK

I just didn't want to come in.

MARTHA

I know.

Clark starts to pick at his sticky bun. Martha blows on hers to cool it off before she eats it. Neither of them says a word for a few moments. Finally, Clark speaks again.

CLARK

I've never been... I've never felt...

MARTHA

You got your ass kicked.

Martha smiles warmly. This makes Clark smile.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

You've never been vulnerable. Even as a baby, you were never sick. Never scraped your knee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

While this is all true, it's not everything on Clark's mind.

CLARK

But when I was fighting him, I felt weak. I felt sick.

MARTHA

It was bound to happen sooner or later.

CLARK

So what do I do about it?

MARTHA

Same thing we all do. Do you think Pete isn't worried about what might happen to him?

CLARK

So I just suck it up?

MARTHA

I don't see you as the type to run away.

Clark looks down.

CLARK

What happens if I get sick again?

MARTHA

What was it that made you sick?

Clark thinks about the answer.

CLARK

I guess I felt it just as I got close to him the first time.

(beat)

After that, I was fine until he actually touched me.

MARTHA

What changed?

Clark thinks back, searching for the answer.

CLARK

The meteor he stole from the museum. After he closed his chest I only felt sick when he was directly touching me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLARK (CONT'D)

I didn't feel anything earlier in the day, so it must be the meteor.

MARTHA

Meteors are from outer space.

Clark doesn't say anything.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Well, they are.

CLARK

So I won't let him get too close if I can help it. I won't let him touch me.

MARTHA

Sounds like a plan. Only this time, don't hold back quite so much. Even when you were sick, I saw the look in your eyes on that screen last night. Your whole life, you've been holding back. Now you're going to have to learn when not to.

Martha finally hits on that last nugget of concern in Clark's mind. He doesn't respond to it.

Clark finishes his breakfast and looks at his watch.

CLARK

I should go.

As Clark walks toward the door, Martha follows.

MARTHA

Y'know, I wasn't sure about this whole double identity thing at first. I always worried that the world would react badly to you.

(beat)

I was wrong. The world needs you, Superman.

Clark hugs his mother.

CLARK

Just so you know, I didn't pick the name.

INT. METROPOLIS UNIVERSITY - ROBOTICS LAB - DAY

Metallo is sitting on a table with various wires attached to him. Professor Vale is working at a nearby computer.

METALLO

Are we expecting results sometime soon, or should I send out for pizza?

(beat)

Can I eat pizza? Do I have a stomach?

PROFESSOR VALE

No.

(beat)

The computer needs to be calibrated to your specs. I'm almost there.

METALLO

Let me know when to cough.

The lab door opens and a student, KAYLEE FORD walks into the room. She's a pretty young lady, in a kinda nerdy way. It works for her.

Metallo stands up as Kaylee sees him. She doesn't see Professor Vale right away.

KAYLEE

Umm... Hi.

METALLO

Hello.

Metallo walks toward her slowly. She's not very comfortable with this.

KAYLEE

I don't think you're supposed to be here.

METALLO

An ancient philosopher once said that we are all where we are supposed to be. Therefore, if I am here, I am supposed to be here.

KAYLEE

Yeah, well that ancient guy wasn't head of campus security.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

METALLO

He can be if you want. I made the line up anyway.

KAYLEE

I'm calling security.

Kaylee turns to grab a phone and sees Professor Vale. He's distracted by his computer work, so he doesn't look up at her.

KAYLEE

Professor Vale?

Only upon hearing his name does Vale look up. When he does, he's not happy to see Kaylee. More out of concern for her than anything else.

PROFESSOR VALE

Miss Ford. You shouldn't be in here right now.

KAYLEE

Neither should you.

(beat)

I mean, I thought you were on sabbatical or something.

PROFESSOR VALE

I'm not officially back. I just really need to finish some work and then I'll be leaving again.

KAYLEE

Okay. I guess.

PROFESSOR VALE

It was good seeing you. If I could just have some time to finish this, I'd appreciate it.

KAYLEE

Yeah, I'll go grab a muffin or something.

METALLO

(to Vale)

Oh, now let's not be rude, Professor.

(to Kaylee)

You can stay a little while. We can chat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kaylee looks back to Metallo and just now notices the wires attached to him. She is confused by this.

KAYLEE

What?

She looks Metallo in the face again and suddenly realizes that she's seen him before. She grows nervous.

KAYLEE

I've seen you before. You're the guy on the news.

METALLO

Do I smell a fan? Okay, I'll sign one autograph and take one picture. That's it. Maybe an interview for a podcast if you have one. And don't try spraying me with that old "squirt-gun inside the microphone" trick.

KAYLEE

I'm not a fan, and now I'm pretty sure you shouldn't be here.

(to Vale)

Professor?

PROFESSOR VALE

I... I--

Professor Vale can't think of anything to say.

METALLO

What he's trying to say is that we'd really appreciate it if you didn't tell anyone we're here.

KAYLEE

I'm not helping you. I saw you on TV. You're psycho.

METALLO

Oh, now that's just glib. That's really glib.

Metallo grabs Kaylee's arm tightly and pulls her close.

METALLO

C'mon. Won't you be my Katie?

PROFESSOR VALE

Stop. Please!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Metallo spins Kaylee around and pulls her close to him. He smells her hair.

KAYLEE

Freak.

METALLO

I can't actually smell you, but I imagine it'd be like a mix of lilac and Reese's pieces.

Metallo pushes Kaylee down, into a chair. She starts to stand up, but he raises a finger to her.

METALLO

Ah-ah. I'd stay seated if I were you. You saw what I did to the Superwuss.

Kaylee stays seated. She turns her eyes back toward the Professor. He looks away from her as guilt comes over him.

PROFESSOR VALE

I'm sorry.

METALLO

(to Vale)

Get back to work. We need to hurry.

As Professor Vale goes back to work, his eyes drift back to Metallo, who is walking toward Kaylee.

INT. LUTHOR MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER - LOBBY - DAY

Lois is sitting on a couch in the lobby, looking at the front door. She clears her throat, checks her watch and then continues to wait in silence.

A moment later, the door opens and Lex walks into the building. Lois walks toward him. Lex smiles at her as she gets closer to him.

LEX

Staking out my workplace hardly seems high-class, Miss Lane. If you'd like to schedule an interview, you could always contact my office.

LOIS

Maybe next time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEX
Until then.

Lex is about to walk away when Lois steps in front of him.

LEX
Miss Lane, I'm incredibly busy.

LOIS
This won't take very long.

LEX
Then if you'd walk with me to my office--

LOIS
I'd rather not. The lobby seems like a good place to talk. It's comfortable.

LEX
May I ask what this is about?

LOIS
Does the word "metallo" ring any bells?

Lex thinks for a moment and then shakes his head.

LEX
Should it?

LOIS
Don't lie to me. I saw one of your employees with paperwork on something called "metallo" when I interviewed you. Saw the same guy at the museum last night when John Corben attacked the place. John Corben, aka "Metallo". John Corben whose body vanished from your ER.

LEX
I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about. Did this employee of mine happen to mention his name, or which department he worked in?

LOIS
How much information I got from this man is something you'll just have to wait and find out about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEX

That sounded rather hostile. I think this discussion is over.

LOIS

What do you know about this thing, Lex?

LEX

I know nothing. I'll be happy to look into the word and get back to you though. Anything I can do to help a friend.

LOIS

Whatever this is, it will be stopped.

LEX

(smiles)

I certainly hope so.

Lois is growing annoyed. She turns and walks out of the building. Lex watches her leave. Once she's gone, his smile drops.

INT. METROPOLIS UNIVERSITY - ROBOTICS LAB - DAY

Kaylee is tied up and gagged now. She is watching with interest as Professor Vale analyzes Metallo. Vale reads off his findings from the computer screen.

PROFESSOR VALE

This is astonishing.

METALLO

What?

PROFESSOR VALE

This meteor's radiation is reacting with the metallo in amazing ways. Every other source of power that I've attempted to use has hemorrhaged power at high levels. That's why it didn't last. The radiation from the meteor is different though. The metallo is absorbing it. It's being held within your body.

METALLO

What does this mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PROFESSOR VALE

It means that you won't have to worry about running out of fuel. Even without the meteor, you'd be able to survive for days under normal circumstances.

METALLO

Is that why it made me stronger?

PROFESSOR VALE

No. I mean, I don't know. Maybe. Yes.

METALLO

Thank you for clearing that up.

PROFESSOR VALE

There are reactions that I wasn't expecting. It would take me much longer to figure it all out.

METALLO

We don't have much longer. I want to know why I felt the way I did. It was like... Superman. When he got near me, it's like this meteor reacted to it. I felt a surge inside of me.

(beat)

There's just no way to explain this without it sounding very gay.

(to Kaylee)

I'm not gay, really. I'll call you sometime. We'll hang.

PROFESSOR VALE

Well, I've given you all of the answers that I can. I simply don't know anything else.

METALLO

I thank you, Professor. Without you, I wouldn't be the man I am today. I just don't think I'll be needing you anymore.

Professor Vale is a little troubled by that last part. Metallo starts to pull the wires off of himself.

PROFESSOR VALE

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

METALLO

I mean, at this point you're really more of a liability. If anyone can stop me, it'll be you, right?

Metallo walks toward Professor Vale.

PROFESSOR VALE

I won't. I promise.

METALLO

Shh... It's okay. It'll only hurt for a little while. I promise.

PROFESSOR VALE

John, you can't do this. It's the metallo. It's too much stress on your brain. It's driving you crazy.

METALLO

Really? Because I feel fine.

(beat)

Okay, technically I don't feel anything right now. But if I did, I'd feel fine.

PROFESSOR VALE

John, please.

Metallo grabs Professor Vale by the shirt and pulls him close.

METALLO

John Corben's dead. You of all people should know that.

PROFESSOR VALE

Metallo... Please.

METALLO

Sorry.

ANGLE ON : KAYLEE

As she sees some horrible scene and looks away from it. A moment later, Metallo walks to her and bends down to be face-to-face with her.

METALLO

Sorry about the mess. You have a janitor, right?

Kaylee keeps her eyes closed. Metallo leans in closer to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

METALLO

Tell Superman to catch me if he can. Tell him that I'm on my way to see a mutual friend of ours.

He strokes her hair one last time (not feeling it, of course).

Finally, he gets up and leaves. Kaylee keeps her eyes closed as she begins to struggle with her bindings. After some time, she manages to pull a hand free.

EXT. METROPOLIS UNIVERSITY - ROBOTICS LAB - DAY

Kaylee runs out of the building, still shaking from what just happened. She soon finds it impossible to keep running and falls onto the grass.

She closes her eyes and turns her head toward the sky, letting out the loudest scream that she can muster before breaking into tears.

STUDENTS around the lawn look in her direction and several start to walk toward her. Before they can reach her, however, Superman flies over the campus and lands near her. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

SUPERMAN

Are you okay?

Kaylee stays on the ground and shakes her head.

SUPERMAN

What happened?

KAYLEE

They were here. They tied me up and... Oh, God. He killed Professor Vale.

SUPERMAN

I don't understand.

Kaylee looks at Superman for the first time.

KAYLEE

The guy you were fighting with last night. He came in with Professor Vale. He was some sort of machine. After Professor Vale ran tests on him... Metallo. That's what he called himself. He killed Professor Vale.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUPERMAN

Are you hurt?

Kaylee shakes her head. She's physically fine.

KAYLEE

The Professor said that whatever
this Metallo thing is, it's going
crazy.

(beat)

And it's looking for you, Superman.

SUPERMAN

Where did he go?

KAYLEE

He said to tell you to that he was
on his way to see a mutual friend
of yours.

Superman knows exactly what this means, but he doesn't want
to leave Kaylee. Kaylee looks at him firmly now.

KAYLEE

Go.

Superman hesitates for a moment, and then takes off. Kaylee
watches him disappear into the sky.

EXT. METROPOLIS UNIVERSITY - CAMPUS LAWN - DAY

Metallo is running across the lawn with pretty impressive
speed and ease. As he runs he is filled with happy
determination, like a kid running toward a toy store.

Superman blurs into Metallo's sight as he cuts off Metallo's
path. Metallo stops short.

METALLO

You couldn't even let me get off of
the campus?

(then, to himself)

I need to learn how to tie a better
knot.

SUPERMAN

It ends here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

METALLO

Are you sure? Because I thought we were supposed to have a massive showdown on the top of the Daily Planet, with Lois Lane dangling from that spinning globe thing, screaming for her life every time her orbit brought her back around to us. It was going to be a special effects bonanza that they'd have to spend months creating in a computer.

SUPERMAN

Are you done rambling yet?

METALLO

Let me check.

(beat)

Yes. Yes, I am.

Metallo charges toward Superman, screaming with rage. He dives through the air to tackle Superman, but Superman speeds out of the way, leaving Metallo to crash onto the ground.

Superman stops behind Metallo and grabs Metallo's leg. He swings Metallo around and throws him across the lawn. Superman can feel a weakness in his hands after this, but he quickly gets over it.

Metallo crashes much harder this time, getting a mouthful of grass as he does. He quickly gets up and turns back to Superman. Metallo isn't happy.

METALLO

Ouch!

Metallo closes his hands into tightly clenched fists and charges toward Superman.

Superman does the same, but loosens his fists slightly at the last moment.

As they reach each other, Metallo swings at Superman. As he punches Superman in the face, Superman can feel the pain of the hit. He doesn't allow it to slow him down too much as he strikes back with a punch of his own. Superman's punch sends Metallo to the ground, but not as far as either one of them had expected.

As Metallo stands up, he can feel a surge of strength in his body. He smiles at this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Superman notices the smile and knows what is happening. He looks around the campus lawn, studying his options.

Metallo attacks Superman again, but Superman speeds out of the way.

As Superman stops behind Metallo, Superman uses his heat vision on the back of Metallo's leg, causing Metallo to stumble and fall over.

Superman flies to a nearby bench and picks it up. He moves over to where Metallo is and throws the bench as hard as he can.

Metallo sees the bench coming and swings at it. The bench is sent flying toward a nearby GROUP OF STUDENTS who have stopped to watch the fight.

Superman catches the bench before it hits the students and then flies through the air with great speed, toward Metallo.

With the bench between them, Superman rams into Metallo. Both of them travel several hundred feet, landing on the grass near a parking lot which marks the outer edge of the campus, beyond which the city of Metropolis lies.

Superman lands on his feet. Metallo and the bench land harder on the ground.

As Metallo struggles to get up, Superman moves to a nearby tree and rips off a rather large branch. He swings it like a baseball bat toward Metallo.

Metallo manages to catch the branch before Superman can hurt him with it. He pulls as hard as he can, ripping the branch from Superman's grip. Metallo lifts the branch over his head, about to swing downward at Superman.

Superman uses his heat vision on the branch near where Metallo is holding it. The branch bursts into flames and snaps. It falls on top of Metallo.

Metallo pushes the burning branch away, getting a little more upset now.

He turns toward the parking lot and walks toward the many cars.

Superman isn't sure what Metallo is going to do next, but flying cars are probably a bad idea, so he speeds toward Metallo, cutting him off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Superman punches Metallo, sending Metallo stumbling back, but not falling to the ground.

Metallo angrily bends over and grabs a smaller car. He lifts the car over his head and slams it downward, onto Superman. Superman falls to the ground, with the car on top of him.

Superman grows angry as he lifts the car off of himself. He holds onto the car tightly, swinging it at Metallo. As he hits Metallo, Metallo is sandwiched in between this car and an SUV that he had been standing near.

Superman continues to swing, hitting Metallo with the car several times before dropping it on top of Metallo and taking a few steps back. His anger has never been released like this before and he's not quite sure what to make of it.

Metallo pushes the car off of himself and stands up. He has taken quite a beating, and half of the flesh has been torn from his face, revealing the metallic creature beneath, along with the black robotic eye.

Superman takes in the sight of Metallo as Metallo allows the metallic side of his mouth to form a grin.

METALLO

Was that the best you can do?

Superman's eyes fill with fear and he looks away from Metallo. When he answers, it's more to himself than to Metallo.

SUPERMAN

No.

Superman looks back to Metallo with an intensity that he has never shown before. As heat vision shoots from Superman's eyes and strikes Metallo, Metallo is thrown back by the blast.

Metallo crawls behind the wreckage of the car that had been used against him earlier, trying to avoid another blast.

When he recovers, he grabs onto the car and lifts it as he stands, preparing to throw it at Superman.

Superman flies through the air with amazing speed, slamming into Metallo, punching Metallo in the chest when he finally reaches him. Metallo flies through the air, higher and farther than ever before, toward the city.

The car drops, but Superman is gone before it can hit him.

EXT. METROPOLIS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Metallo clears the campus property just as Superman flies up behind him and punches Metallo mid-air.

Metallo is sent toward the street below, fast.

As the PEOPLE on the street scream and scurry, Metallo crashes into the street, taking out a good chunk of pavement as he does.

Superman lands nearby and watches Metallo for a moment. Metallo doesn't get up right away, so Superman is waiting to see how much damage has been done.

After a few seconds, Metallo begins to move. He begins to pull himself up.

METALLO

Well...

Metallo stands and looks Superman in the eyes.

METALLO

Gotta say that sucked.

SUPERMAN

Had enough?

METALLO

I'll let you know when I've had enough.

Metallo walks to a nearby car and bends down to pick it up. He finds it more difficult than normal for some reason.

He looks to the rear of the car and sees Superman holding it down with one hand.

SUPERMAN

Enough of the car thing.

Metallo lets go of the car and pauses for a moment, pretending to have no further plan. He then dives on top of Superman.

Superman falls to the ground with Metallo on top of him. Metallo begins punching Superman in the face repeatedly.

Superman tries to push Metallo off, but when he grabs onto Metallo's arm, he finds himself weakened.

Metallo stops hitting Superman, remaining on top of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

METALLO

You're supposed to be fighting back.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Perry walks out of his office and over to Lois'.

PERRY

Where's Clark?

LOIS

I haven't the slightest.

After speaking, Lois lets out a slight cough.

PERRY

Fine. You do it. Get to University Avenue. Superman's at it again.

LOIS

With Corben?

PERRY

(nodding)
Take Jimmy.

Lois grabs her coat and rushes out.

EXT. METROPOLIS STREET - DAY

Metallo is holding Superman down on the hood of a car while people on the street watch in horror.

METALLO

"Superman defeated! Footage at eleven."

(beat)

I like the sound of it. It's got this apocalyptic ring to it. I just hope they film from my good side. Someone had to go and rip my face all off.

Superman is feeling the weakness that comes from Metallo's touch, but he's not struggling much either. He's not listening to Metallo ramble. He looks around at the people that are watching. Among them is a SOLDIER in an Army uniform in uniform.

METALLO

I guess I could always kill them if they don't.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

METALLO (CONT'D)

With you out of the picture, there won't be many people that could stop me.

SUPERMAN'S POV

The picture is blurred. Through Superman's eyes, the soldier looks a little like Pete.

The soldier takes a step toward Superman and Metallo. Superman puts up a hand, telling the soldier to stop.

To the side of the soldier is a NICE OLD LADY standing near a YOUNGER WOMAN. Through the blur, they look a little like Martha and Lana. Behind them, an OLDER MAN in a plaid shirt is standing, who could be Jonathan Kent.

Superman blinks a few times.

The picture clears enough to see that they aren't actually Martha or Lana. The older man is now gone.

METALLO

I'm bored. Are you bored?

Superman looks to Metallo. He reaches up and grabs the back of Metallo's shirt and pulls hard. Metallo is thrown to the ground next to the car. Superman gets up.

The crowd cheers. Superman looks back to them one more time.

SUPERMAN

Get back.

The crowd listens. All but the soldier begin to move back. The soldier ducks into a doorway to stay out of the way, but he remains close.

Superman steps away from the car and looks back to Metallo as Metallo gets back up.

Superman shoots heat vision at Metallo, blowing a hole through Metallo's arm. As Metallo looks down to assess the damage, Superman speeds toward Metallo and grabs him by the neck. He throws Metallo to the ground.

Metallo kicks Superman off of him, causing Superman to stumble back into the car. Metallo gets up. He charges at Superman. Superman speeds out of the way, ending up a few feet from where Metallo stops.

METALLO

That gets annoying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUPERMAN

Sorry.

Metallo turns toward Superman.

METALLO

New rule. No super speed.

SUPERMAN

I'm going to stop you however I need to.

METALLO

Chicken.

Metallo rushes toward Superman, swinging. Superman steps to the side, causing Metallo to miss. Superman grabs Metallo's arm and swings him toward the ground. Metallo crashes to the ground hard.

Superman then picks Metallo up, swings him around, and slams him down again on the other side. He finally throws Metallo yards down the road.

Metallo gets up. Superman smiles.

SUPERMAN

Didn't use super-speed that time.

Metallo runs toward Superman. Superman doesn't move.

When Metallo reaches Superman, he swings as hard as he can. When he hits Superman, Superman is thrown backwards, but manages to land on his feet.

Superman lifts off of the ground. After a brief pause, he shoots toward Metallo. When he hits Metallo, both of them smash through the wall of a nearby store, disappearing into it.

The street falls silent for a moment. The crowd begins to wonder what is happening. Just as the soldier is about to walk toward the store, Superman crashes through another wall of the building, slamming onto the ground.

Metallo walks through the hole in the wall, rubbing his fist. He walks toward Superman.

As Metallo nears Superman, Superman looks up from the street and uses his heat vision to blast Metallo. The force of the blast causes Metallo to fly through the air, hitting the side of a building on it's third floor. He falls back to the ground, landing hard on his stomach.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

When Metallo begins to get up, we can see that only small shreds of his flesh and one normal looking eyeball remain. The crowd gasps when they see the full metallic body of Metallo.

When Metallo finally stands, he looks around for Superman, but can't spot him. He continues to search.

METALLO

Where are you?

ANGLE ON : THE CROWD

Lois and Jimmy push their way through the crowd.

JIMMY

Should we be here? Maybe we shouldn't be here.

LOIS

You were thrown out of one window, Jimmy. Get over it.

They reach the front of the crowd and see Metallo. Lois gasps.

LOIS

Oh my God.
(then, to Jimmy)
Take a picture.

Jimmy doesn't move for a moment, but finally manages to raise his camera. He begins shooting.

Metallo turns toward Lois.

METALLO

Well... It looks like we might have our damsel after all. I seem to have misplaced your hero though.

(beat)

I find it a little odd that you appear just as he disappears. You're not really Superman in disguise, are you, Lois?

Metallo starts to walk toward Lois. He keeps his eyes on Lois as he walks, but directs his voice upward.

METALLO

I'm going to kill your reporter friend, Superman! Wouldn't now be a good time to stop hiding?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Metallo continues to walk toward Lois. There is no response from Superman. At first, Lois isn't phased by any of this. It's only once Metallo begins to get pretty close that Lois starts to wonder where Superman is.

JIMMY

I think we... I mean, maybe...

METALLO

Quiet, kid. I'm trying to plan a murder here.

Jimmy pauses for a moment. After a beat, he swallows hard and steps in front of Lois.

JIMMY

You're not touching her.

Metallo smiles.

LOIS

(to Jimmy)

What are you doing?

JIMMY

I'm... protecting you.

METALLO

Sweet.

Metallo begins to reach toward Jimmy.

METALLO

But incredibly stupid.

Just as Metallo is about to grab Jimmy, Superman shoots from the sky in a blur, striking Metallo with incredible force that drives both of them through the street, into the sewer below.

The crowd moves back, including Lois and Jimmy.

A second later, Metallo is thrown through the street a few yards away from the crowd, and crashes back onto the pavement. Superman follows, flying through the hole that Metallo created. He quickly snatches Metallo off of the ground with one hand, and throws him into the side of a building.

As Metallo hits the building, a large chunk of the wall is taken out of it. Metallo is about to move away from the wall when Superman shoots toward him again, slamming him back against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

With Metallo pinned, Superman punches him several times in the face. When Superman is done, he stands back. Metallo doesn't appear to be damaged very much by this.

METALLO

Hit all you want, Superman. I'm still stronger than you.

SUPERMAN

You won't be walking away from this.

METALLO

Stop me.

Metallo swings at Superman, but Superman blocks him by grabbing his arm. This weakens Superman slightly, but he still manages to punch Metallo in the face with his free hand.

Metallo comes back with a punch to Superman's gut. Superman doubles over, still weakened. As he looks back up at Metallo, he sees the outline of the compartment in Metallo's chest.

Metallo grabs Superman and spins him around, slamming him against the wall and punching him in the face several times.

METALLO

Not so much fun, is it?

As Metallo tries to punch Superman again, Superman grabs his fist, stopping him. He twists Metallo's arm, causing Metallo to flip onto the ground.

Metallo attempts to get up, but Superman pins him with one foot.

SUPERMAN

I advise you to stop now.

METALLO

I'm just starting. After we're done here, I plan to bring this town to its knees.

SUPERMAN

I can't let you do that.

METALLO

I can't see you stopping me.

SUPERMAN

You're not giving me much choice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

METALLO

Plan to stand here forever, pinning me to the ground with your foot?

SUPERMAN

No.

Superman steps back, allowing Metallo to stand up. Metallo does this cautiously.

When Metallo finally reaches his feet, he balls his fists again and charges at Superman. Before he can strike, he finds himself pinned against a car by Superman.

SUPERMAN

There's no other way, is there?

METALLO

Umm... huh?

Without further hesitation, Superman smashes his fist through Metallo's chest. When he pulls his bloody hand back out, he is holding into Metallo's power source.

The two of them lock eyes for a moment, and then Metallo falls to the ground.

Superman steps back and drops to his knees. He throws the power source across the street as he falls forward, catching himself with his hands and trying to catch his breath.

Superman looks to Metallo, who is not moving. After a few moments, Superman pushes himself off of the ground and begins to walk toward the crowd, still weak.

The crowd watches in silence as Lois rushes toward Superman. As she reaches him, Superman falls to one knee. She struggles to help him back up.

LOIS

Are you okay?

SUPERMAN

I'll be okay.

Superman looks down at his bloody hand.

LOIS

Who knew machines bled?

SUPERMAN

It's not his.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Lois realizes that the blood is Superman's. She's not sure what to say.

As Superman gets to his feet again, Jimmy calls to him from the crowd.

JIMMY
Superman, look out!

Superman is puzzled. He sees that Jimmy is looking behind him, so he and Lois turn to see what is happening. As they turn, Metallo rushes toward Superman, letting out a scream full of rage.

When he reaches Superman, Superman steps between Metallo and Lois. Metallo swings at Superman, hitting him squarely in the face as hard as he can.

Superman barely feels it.

Metallo's eyes widen. He stumbles backwards, trying to understand.

METALLO
It's gone.
(beat)
It's all gone.

Metallo looks Superman in the eyes.

METALLO (CONT'D)
What happens now?

Superman and Lois exchange looks. Neither knows the answer to Metallo's question.

INT. DAILY PLANET BUILDING - CITY ROOM - DAY

Lois is at her desk, talking on the phone.

LOIS
Thank you.

Lois hangs up the phone and coughs. She grabs a cough drop off of her desk and unwraps it as Perry walks to her.

LOIS (CONT'D)
So there are about six billion labs that are competing for the right to study this guy.

PERRY
Any word on who's in the lead?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOIS

I think it's between LexCorp,
S.T.A.R. Labs, and Wayne Tech.
Ironic, huh? Lex just might see a
return on his investment after all.

Lois pops the cough drop into her mouth.

LOIS

That is, unless we run my story.

PERRY

You know we can't.

LOIS

I've all but confirmed it.

PERRY

That's not enough. If we run a
story saying that Lex Luthor is
behind the Metallo incident and we
can't provide evidence to back it
up, we'll be slapped with a hundred
lawsuits. I'd be surprised if any
of us walked away with our jobs.

Lois stands and looks Perry in the eyes.

LOIS

We know that he did this. You and I
both know what Lex Luthor is hiding
and we both know that unless we can
prove it, he's going to get away
with everything.

PERRY

Even if we can prove that Lex is
behind the experiments that created
Metallo, we can't be sure that
he'll be brought up on charges for
it. It's just an experiment gone
horribly wrong.

Lois can't put together a response. She knows that he is
technically right and this annoys her. She sits back down and
rubs her head.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Go home, Lois. Take a few days and
get yourself well. You deserve it.

LOIS

Yeah.

INT. KENT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Martha brings a sandwich to the table where Clark is sitting and then sits across from him.

MARTHA

Eat. You need your strength.

Clark smiles and starts to pick at his sandwich.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I'm proud of you. Your father would be too.

CLARK

I hope so.

MARTHA

I know so. Your whole life, we've worried about what would happen if you showed the world what you can do. We worried about the government wanting to dissect you, worried about how people would react to the idea of an alien with super powers walking amongst them... Worried about how you would feel if they didn't accept you. But you overcame all of that fear because it was the right thing to do. I have no question that your father would be proud of that.

There's a pause before Clark answers. As though he's not sure how to phrase what he's thinking.

CLARK

When I was out there. When I was fighting Metallo, I looked at the people that were watching me. I always thought that if people saw me like that they'd be scared of me, but that's not what I saw.

MARTHA

What did you see?

CLARK

I saw people who accepted me. Who worried for me. Who cheered me on.
(beat)
And for a moment, I could have sworn...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Clark stops there.

MARTHA
Sworn what?

CLARK
Nothing. It's stupid.

Clark takes a bite of his sandwich. Martha watches him eat, knowing that there's more to that story but not pushing. He'll tell her when he's ready.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lois is on her couch, in her pajamas, watching TV with a box of tissues nearby.

There's a KNOCK at her door. She groans as she gets up and walks to the door and opens it.

Clark is on the other side, holding a bag.

CLARK
I heard you were sick.

LOIS
Remind me to wear a jacket the next time I go walking on a cold night.

Clark holds up the bag.

CLARK
I brought soup. Made fresh in Smallville.

LOIS
How did you get soup from Smallville?

CLARK
I... I had it sent overnight. It's a family recipe, passed down from generation to generation.

Lois gestures for Clark to come in. She closes the door behind him.

LOIS
Forgive the mess.

CLARK
Don't worry about it. Go sit down. I'll heat this up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lois takes a moment after hearing that. It's the first time anyone's done that for her.

LOIS

Thanks.

Lois goes to the couch and sits down.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You know where the kitchen is,
right?

CLARK

Yeah.

Clark walks into the kitchen. Lois quickly tries to clean up the area around the couch.

After a few moments, Clark returns.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Soup's heating.

LOIS

Thanks.

(beat)

So, am I missing anything big at
work?

CLARK

It's been pretty quiet since that
Metallo guy was taken care of.
Superman's helping fix up all of
the damage. Lex Luthor is angry
that Superman wasn't arrested for
causing the damage. He's also angry
that Superman is taking jobs away
from the crews that would be needed
to fix the damage.

LOIS

Did he get the research rights to
Metallo?

Clark nods.

CLARK

I wouldn't expect to hear many
updates on that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOIS

Figures. He causes all of this trouble and then he gets rewarded for it.

CLARK

Yeah, I heard about your story.

LOIS

And now it's just a matter of time before Lex does it again.

CLARK

So much for giving him the benefit of the doubt.

LOIS

I gave it to him. It just turns out that the rumors were right. He's not a good man, Clark. He's dangerous. I'm worried that when the world finally realizes that, it'll be too late.

Clark doesn't know how to respond to that.

CLARK

I'll go check on the soup.

Clark starts to walk toward the kitchen.

LOIS

Hey.

Clark stops and turns around.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Thanks.

(beat)

For the soup.

Clark smiles his "you're welcome" and heads for the kitchen. Lois watches him until he's out of the room.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LEX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lex is pouring himself a drink near the door to his office while his secretary, MARIE sits in a chair, taking notes.

LEX

I might need to push my two-o'clock back tomorrow. And reschedule my appointment with Dr. Marrow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lex takes a sip and turns toward the window. He walks to it, despite the fact that the light in the room makes it impossible to see out.

LEX

I'm also going to need a report from the lab on that Metallo project. Find out if it's still alive.

(beat)

That's all.

MARIE

What about your lunch with Senator Willis?

LEX

I'll keep that one.

Marie nods and stands.

MARIE

Anything else you need before I go home?

LEX

Just turn off the lights on your way out.

MARIE

Goodnight, sir.

LEX

Goodnight.

Marie walks out of the room, hitting the light switch on her way out.

ANGLE ON : LEX

As he looks out the window, now able to see what is outside.

PAN AROUND Lex to REVEAL Superman on the other side of the glass, staring Lex in the eyes. Letting Lex know that he's watching him.

FADE OUT:

THE END