

Man Of Steel
by
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Based On Characters Appearing In DC Comics

Superman Created By
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INT. PLANETARY CONTROL - KRYPTON

Engineers and technicians scurry and panic, trying desperately to avoid the falling debris as the ceiling above them collapses.

The ground is shaking beneath their feet as they flee, paying no attention to the BRAINIAC computer as relays data regarding the suns impending demise.

BRAINIAC

Alert! Alert! Commence evacuation procedures.

The Brainiac system begins to shut down, the holographic screens disappearing as a nearby technician is crushed by a falling crystal pillar.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

Destruction imminent, beginning data relocation.

A final warning before Brainiac shuts down and a deep chasm opens beneath the feet of the engineers, sending them falling to their doom.

EXT. KRYPTON

The entire planet is in chaos. Earthquakes rip open the crust, allowing molten lava to come through, swallowing up the great crystal structures of Krypton.

In the distance, a lone ship, carrying the child, KAL-EL, rises out of the planets atmosphere, towards a new home.

In the sky, the sun disappears and all is dark.

Nothing is seen, but the screams of Kryptons terrified population can be heard all around.

Then suddenly, a bright light fills the sky, and for a moment, Krypton is illuminated once more. B

But as the light gets ever brighter, the entire planet comes apart and within moments, KRYPTON is no more.

EXT. SPACE - DEBRIS FIELD

Among the giant rocks, that make up what's left of the planet, a small satellite floats, coming to life as it tries to avoid giant chunks of radioactive debris.

INT. SATELLITE

Within the ship, a small computer screen flickers to life and the BRAINIAC symbol appears.

BRAINIAC
Scanning...No life forms
detected...I am alone.

The screen flickers then switches off, a blinking red light seemingly all that's left of the great civilisation.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD - 30 YEARS LATER

A small crystal ship passes through the graveyard that was once Krypton, scanning the debris, a single beam of light guiding the way.

INT. SHIP

SUPERMAN stands in the central chamber, wearing a grey body suit as he reaches out to the various control crystals, guiding the ship as he peers through the main window, staring at his lost home.

SUPERMAN
How...how could they not have
known? It's gone...no life, I'm
all that's left.

He stands, quietly now. Sweat pouring down his face. Then suddenly he collapses, falling to the floor of the ship.

Managing to raise his head to peer through the window, Superman sees a large chunk of the planet, glowing a dangerous green.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
(weakened, breathless)
Kryptonite...

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD

The BRAINIAC satellite, now, a shadow of what it once was, covered in dents and holes, from the 30 years of bombardment from passing chunks of debris, slowly comes to life.

INT. SATELLITE

The blinking red light disappears, replaced by an active screen, displaying a read out of the current status of the solar system.

BRAINIAC
(excited)
Detection! A ship...scanning.

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD

The crystal ship spins out of control, bouncing back against large pieces of glowing rock.

INT. SHIP

Superman struggles to stand, pulling a crystal from the console.

SUPERMAN
Sta...stabilise...

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD

The ships boosters fire, slowing and stopping the ship, before turning and moving away from the heart of the debris field.

INT. SHIP

Superman crawls through the crystal ship towards his hibernation chamber, inserting the crystal into a console that stands next to his SLEEPING POD.

INT. SATELLITE

BRAINIAC
Scan complete...life form
detected.

INT. SHIP

Superman climbs into his sleeping pod, curling up as it closes around him, issuing a final command.

SUPERMAN
Home...

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD

Superman's ship turns away from Krypton and is soon blasting out of sight, back towards Earth, while the small satellite floats into view.

INT. SATELLITE

The entire internal structure of the satellite comes to life.

More screen flicker and show images of the crystal ship and scan results, cross-referencing them with the Kryptonian Archives stored in the satellites memory.

BRAINIAC

Life form confirmed as
Kryptonian...searching genetic
markers.

The results appear on the screen in the form of an image of JOR-EL.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

The House of El...identity found,
son of Jor-El and Lara Lor
Van...Kal-El.

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD

The small satellite turns around full circle, the main thrusters firing, sending the ship rocketing after the crystal ship.

EXT. SPACE

The familiar blue lettering of the OPENING TITLES begin to appear as the satellite moves through space, passing stars and planets.

Accompanying the titles, are newspaper clippings.

They detail events that happen from the time Superman left for Krypton, through to the events of SUPERMAN RETURNS and beyond, his heroic deeds since we last saw him being recorded by the DAILY PLANET.

Eventually we reach OUR solar system and the Brainiac satellite crashes into NEW KRYPTON.

But we continue on, past Mars towards Earth, not stopping as we begin to descend through the atmosphere until we reach METROPOLIS.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

Locals walk the streets, going about their lives.

A MOTHER and another WOMAN stand on a street corner, one of them holds the hand of her 10 year old son, oblivious to what has caught his attention as they chat to each other.

MOTHER

..so I told him that he could
stay home and...

The child, DAVID, tugs on the mothers arm.

MOTHER

David stop pulling on my arm.
Mommy's talking.
(to woman)
He could stay home and look after
the kids and be the housewife,
and I'd go back to work.

DAVID

(looks up in the sky)
Look Mommy...

WOMAN

Ouch, did he give you the whole
let him be a man speech?

DAVID

It's Superman.

MOTHER

He tried, but...what?

Both woman look up. They follow David's gaze, just in time to catch SUPERMAN fly by at speed, almost a blur as he rushes across the city.

He moves gracefully, but with a purpose, his destination approaching fast as he descends to fly alongside a train that's going a lot faster than it should.

Using his X-RAY vision, he scans the passenger cars, and sees the panic and fear on the faces of those inside.

He gives a reassuring smile and flies to the front of the train.

His TELESCOPIC vision lets his eyes zoom in on a curve in the track that's fast approaching.

The driver of the train is tries desperately to apply the brakes but to no avail and Superman flies to the open window.

He peers inside, making eye contact with the TRAIN DRIVER.

SUPERMAN

Hold on.

The driver can only nod, as Superman moves back to the first passenger car.

Using his HEAT VISION, he begins to burn through the connectors that keep the engine attached to the passenger cars, and soon, he has burned through.

The engine speeds off, leaving the passenger cars behind to start slowing down.

Superman races after the engine car and flies past it.

Superman dips below the track and disappears, just as the engine flips over the edge of the track at the turn.

The passenger cars approach the edge. It slows but not enough.

It seems like they are about to go over as well, but SUPERMAN rises up slowly, holding the engine car in ONE HAND, while he stretches out with the other.

He uses his palm as a bumper to stop the passenger cars, then pushes them back along the track and sets the engine down.

On the street below, a crowd of people shout and cheer.

The MAN OF STEEL looks into the train cockpit to check on the driver.

TRAIN DRIVER

Th...thank you Superman. You saved my life.

SUPERMAN

Are you alright?

TRAIN DRIVER

A few bruises...I'll be fine.

SUPERMAN

be sure to let the paramedics look you over when they arrive.

His SUPER-HEARING picks up the sound of police sirens.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Superman is gone in a flash. He flies up, high over the city.

EXT. FREEWAY

A black Mercedes is being chased by four police cars. The cars speed down the freeway, dodging and weaving in and out of traffic.

Inside are two men, rough looking, one of them, the passenger, is leaning out the window, firing at the chasing police before climbing back inside to reload.

INT. GETAWAY CAR

DOUG

(reloads gun)

Why did you pick this car? It probably has one of those fancy GPS things in it. Every cop in the city could be tracking us right now.

CHARLIE

It's a nice car. I wanted to see what it felt like to drive.

(turns the wheel, moving the car to the other side of the road, driving into oncoming traffic)

I might buy one. Besides, I'm not worried about the cops. You never know when you-know who might show up. Keep an eye out.

DOUG

Yeah well...

He leans out and shoot back at the cops then sits back inside.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I still say it was a bad idea doing this job in Metropolis. I still think we should have...

(stares at Superman flying outside beside the car on his side)

Oh crap...uh Charlie...

Charlie glances over, catching Superman's eye, who gives him a slight grin.

CHARLIE

Don't just sit there Doug, shoot him!

Doug hesitates. He looks away as he points his gun out of the open window and pulls the trigger.

The bullets fly out of the gun, FOUR SHOTS, each one of them CAUGHT in a blurring motion of speed by Superman.

Superman then takes off and flies ahead of them.

The thugs watch as Superman lands gracefully a few hundred yards ahead of them, folding his arms, waiting.

DOUG

Now what?

CHARLIE

We ram him.

Charlie presses his foot down hard on the accelerator.

DOUG

(grabs for the wheel)

Are you crazy?

EXT. FREEWAY

Superman watches as the two men fight for control of the car. It spins out of control.

His eyes are moving, assessing the situation, looking at the road surface, estimating the speed of the car, checking for innocent bystanders.

His eyes glow as he ignites his HEAT VISION, blowing out the front left wheel.

The car spins and flips through the air.

But Superman CATCHES THE CAR by its bumper.

He balances the Mercedes on his palms with ease as he looks through the windscreen at the two criminals.

Doug points his gun at Superman, ponders for a moment and thinks better of it, tossing his gun out the window, while Charlie finds his face squashed against the windscreen.

SUPERMAN

You should have worn your seat belt.

The police cars pull up just as Superman is putting the car down.

He moves to the passenger side first. He opens the door and pulls Doug out, while Charlie manages to sit back up and open his own door.

As Superman hands Doug over to a police officer, he watches Charlie who looks like he may make a run for it.

CHARLIE

Damn you. Why did you have to be here today?

SUPERMAN

I'm always here...you can try to run, but you know I'll catch you. Give up.

Charlie stares at Superman for a moment then turns his back to run, only to find Superman standing there, having moved faster than a speeding bullet to block his escape.

More officers approach to take Charlie away and with a respectful nod to the police, Superman takes off, floating upwards slowly until he is clear of the cars and people before shooting up into the sky.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

The BRAINIAC satellite lies motionless on the dead rock, apparently lifeless.

Suddenly, a panel opens, and a long spear rushes out, cutting into the ground.

Then two more soon after...extending, so the satellite is lifted up, balanced like a tripod.

It begins to move across the surface of NEW KRYPTON, scanning and searching.

After a brief search, the satellite comes across a collection of long crystals, reflecting in the light from the distant yellow star at the centre of the solar system.

Another panel opens, and a claw-like mechanical hand reaches out and grabs the crystals, before the satellite begins walking again.

INT. SATELLITE

On the screens within the satellite, read outs of the data obtained from scanning the various structures littered across the dead alien world are shown, with one in particular being singled out and targeted.

BRAINIAC

Such a desolate place. Unsuitable
as it is now for sons of Krypton.
I find it hard to believe that
Kal-El could knowingly build such
a lifeless world. Indeed the
ground appears to be poison. He
could not survive here.

A flashing on one of the screens indicates that he is
approaching his destination.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

Ah but there is hope still. I may
yet be able to purge this place
of its impurities.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

The satellite, walking on three legs, approaches the
entrance to a large chamber.

It stops for a moment and satellite begins to emit a beam
of light to illuminate the chamber then steps inside.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

In the centre of the large chamber, a control panel,
similar to the one found in the FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE, lies
dormant.

The Brainiac satellite approaches the panel. It extends the
mechanical hand once more and places a crystal into one of
the seven holes.

The hand retracts, then emerging again with another
crystal, placing it in another slot, and does it again and
again until all six crystals have been placed in the
control panel.

Just one slot hasn't been filled, but six is enough to
prompt a reaction as the gloomy grey of the chamber begins
to change, the KRYPTONITE being purged from the surface of
New Krypton being replaced with a shining and brilliant
white.

Directly in front of the control panel, a holographic image
begins to appear. It is JOR-EL.

BRAINIAC

Ah, Jor-El...so, you knew of
Kryptons doom and you saved your
son. You are wise even in death.

JOR-EL
 (hologram)
 My son, you do not remember me. I
 am Jor-El...I am your father...

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

The chain reaction started in the chamber continues across New Krypton, the dark greys being replaced by crystal whites. Incomplete structures reform and seal to protect them from the cold emptiness of space - KRYPTON is reborn.

EXT. METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON

The city glistens in the afternoon sun. Among the many landmark buildings is the DAILY PLANET, its globe restored and spinning on the roof.

INT. DAILY PLANET - NEWSROOM

Reporters and copy boys come and go, too busy to talk to each other as phones ring constantly and breaking news comes in over the live news feeds from networks all over the world on the monitors hanging from the ceiling.

CLARK KENT sits at his desk, almost mesmerised by the workings of the printer as it prints out his latest article.

JIMMY (O.S.)
 Clark...hey Clark...

Awoken from his staring contest with the printer, Clark turns to see JIMMY OLSEN walking past his desk.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 Daydreaming again?

CLARK
 Uh...

JIMMY
 Never mind...uh, look I gotta thing with one of the interns tonight and I want to make sure it's OK with you before I bring her home...not to say that I will be, but you never know, right?

CLARK
 I uh...sure?

JIMMY
Great, thanks Clark.

Clark doesn't get a chance to reply, as Jimmy is already leaving, heading towards the office of PERRY WHITE.

He seems lost in the moment again, a beep from the printer bringing him around. Standing, Clark walks to the printer and collects the pages of his latest article.

INT. PERRY'S OFFICE

LOIS LANE and PERRY WHITE are sitting across from each other with Jimmy, standing by the door. Lois and Perry are in another heated argument.

LOIS
...it's not that Perry, I just
work better alone. Ask Jimmy.

JIMMY
Hey don't drag me into this, I
just came in to show the Chief
some photos.
(waves folder in his
hand at Lois)
Although you do seem to excel at
getting into trouble.

LOIS
(looks at Jimmy sternly)
Thanks...

PERRY
Olsen's right. Think of Clark as
back up.

LOIS
Back up...as in protection? Are
we talking about the same Clark
here? I can take care of myself
and Clark...well he's sweet and
all but he's not much of a
bodyguard.

PERRY
You've worked together before.

LOIS
Yeah but this is Lex
Luthor...it's my story.

PERRY
I don't want to hear it Lois.
With your nose for a story and
Clark's ability to spell, it
makes you a good team.
(MORE)

PERRY (CONT'D)
The fact that he's a damn good
reporter makes you a great team.

Lois opens her mouth to respond but a knock on the door stops her as Clark enters the office. He places his article on Perry's desk.

CLARK
That's the report on Superman's
activities today Chief.

Perry leans over, picking up the papers, glancing through the article. His eyes focus on the top of the first page that reads:

"SUPERMAN STOPS RUNAWAY TRAIN AND FOILS BANK ROBBERS
GETAWAY"

PERRY
Good work Kent, but what did I
tell you about titling you
articles?

CLARK
Uh, make them shorter?

PERRY
(hands back the article)
Short and snappy...you don't need
to describe everything in the
title Clark, just grab the
readers attention..explanations
are what the paragraphs are for.

Perry turns away, looking out the window

PERRY (CONT'D)
Superman saves the day...run with
it.

CLARK
Right Chief.
(turns to leave)

PERRY
Stay where you are Clark. Take a
seat.

Perry waits as Clark sits next to Lois.

PERRY (CONT'D)
I want you to cover the Luthor
press conference with Lois
tomorrow.

LOIS
I still don't know about this
Perry--

PERRY
Clark has proved himself Lois.
He's even been scooping you
lately.

LOIS
How have you been getting those
Superman stories anyway? You seem
to be first on the scene every
time.
(looks at Jimmy)
Jimmy you're his room-mate,
what's his secret?

JIMMY
I don't know Lois, maybe he's
just better than you.

Jimmy tries to suppress a laugh even as Lois rolls her
eyes.

Clark puts his hands in his pockets, trying to go
unnoticed. He takes one hand out to push his glasses back
up his nose.

PERRY
Look, you two are my best
reporters and I want you both
there. The Metropolis elite may
be willing to welcome Luthor with
open arms, but this paper isn't
going to forget what kind of man
Lex Luthor really is and we won't
let our readers forget either.

LOIS
LexCorp has to be a front for
something.

PERRY
Well I want you two to find out
what that is.

INT. NEWSROOM

JASON WHITE enters the newsroom, followed by his father
RICHARD WHITE, who's hurrying to catch up with his son.

RICHARD
Hey kiddo, wait up.

Jason stops and turns around in the middle of the floor, getting in the way of the people walking past.

JASON
But I wanna find Mommy.

Richard looks around the newsroom.

He spots Lois, Clark and Jimmy as they from Perry's office.

RICHARD
(pointing)
There she is.

Jason looks around, sees Lois and begins to run towards her.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Don't run.

Slowing down, Jason walks across the newsroom, passing Clark who's walking in the opposite direction.

JASON
Hey Clark.

CLARK
Hey...
(pauses to look back at
Jason as Richard
approaches)

Jason reaches Lois and she bends down to hug him.

LOIS
Hi honey.

JASON
(pulling away from the
hug)
Hi Mom.

LOIS
Were you a good boy for Daddy?

JASON
Uh huh, Daddy took me flying.

LOIS
(standing up straight)
Wow.

A few feet away, Clark stands and smiles as Lois interact with Jason while Richard moves beside him.

RICHARD
Clark, Hey.

CLARK
(startled)
He seems pretty excited.

RICHARD
Yeah, well he loves to fly.
(looks at Lois)
Hey...

LOIS
Hey.
(to Jason)
Honey, why don't we go to my desk
and you can put your bag away.

JASON
OK Mom.

Jason cuts back across the newsroom, followed by Lois,
heading for her desk, leaving Richard, Clark and Jason,
standing outside Perry's office.

RICHARD
(looking across the
newsroom at Lois)
How's she been?

CLARK
Who, Lois? She's...she's uh...

JIMMY
Busy...

CLARK
Yeah. She's been working pretty
hard.

RICHARD
She still can't look at me. You
know if we didn't have Jason, I
doubt she'd speak to me at all.

CLARK
Yeah...well she's been through a
lot. You all have.

JIMMY
Clark's right. She just needs
time.

RICHARD
No it's not that. I can see it in
her eyes. There's no love there,
not anymore. It's just...hard,
you know?

JIMMY
I guess it would be hard for
anyone to compete with
Superman...

Clark and Richard stare at Jimmy

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Oh uh...
(glances towards the
office)
I think the Chief wants a coffee.
I'd better go...those interns
always mess it up.

Jimmy hurries off towards the coffee machine, leaving Clark
and Richard standing in silence for a beat.

CLARK
So uh, are you staying in town
for long?

RICHARD
I'm not sure. Perry wants to send
me to Europe to cover the
Presidents tour. Which reminds
me, I'd better check in.

Richard walks to Perry's office and knocks before opening
the door.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I'll catch up with you later
Clark.

CLARK
Uh, sure.

INT. NEWSROOM - LOIS' DESK

Lois is sitting at her desk, scrolling through an internet
web page regarding Lex Luthor's new company, LexCorp. Jason
is standing next to her, watching the screen.

JASON
What are you doing?

LOIS
Lex Luthor is launching his new
business tomorrow honey, and
Mommy is going to be there to ask
him a few questions.

A picture of Lex Luthor appears on the screen, accompanied
by an article titled:

"LEX LUTHOR: MAN OF TOMORROW?"

JASON

(nervous)
He's a bad man.

LOIS

Yes he is. But don't worry, Mommy
won't let him hurt you.

Lois reaches out from her chair to hug Jason as Clark
approaches her desk.

He pauses, waiting for Lois to finish hugging her son.
Clark coughs slightly, prompting Lois to look up at him.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Oh, hey Clark.

CLARK

Listen, Lois...I know you prefer
to work alone and I hope you
don't think I asked Perry to put
me on this assignment with you...

LOIS

No, no of course not Clark. Hey,
maybe some of your good grammar
will rub off on me.

CLARK

(notices Jason staring
at him)
Well uh...since we are going to
be working together, I thought
that maybe..if you want I mean, I
thought we could...maybe...go
over everything together, uh if
you want.

LOIS

Sure Clark. Tell you what, why
don't you come over to my place
about eight? We can work on it
then.

CLARK

Your place? Sure...uh...

LOIS

What is it?

CLARK

I don't know where you live.

Lois stares at Clark for a moment, then lets out a soft
laugh and shakes her head.

She reaches across her desk, ripping a piece of paper from her notepad and writes her address on it, then hands the paper to Clark.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Great.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

The planet Jupiter provides a stunning backdrop as the entire surface of New Krypton shimmers in the light. No longer dead rock, massive crystal structures now cover the land mass, with new structures growing, coming up from the ground.

In the centre, a massive dome-structure enters the early stages of growth.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

The BRAINIAC satellite stands inside a clear crystal tube, that extends from the high ceiling to the floor.

BRAINIAC

A new form...one more fitting.

The control panel lights up, and soon the entire chamber starts to glow.

A wave of electric energy descends through the crystal tube and the satellite begins to come apart, pieces of crystal and metal falling, until there is nothing left but a pile of electronic and crystal pieces left within the tube.

Another blinding flash of light, and the tube is once more filled with energy.

The satellite pieces begin to reassemble but in a different form. It starts with legs, each piece being attracted to each other like magnetism, as a torso and chest plate form, then arms, each piece connecting, until finally the energy disappears and the tube retracts back into the ceiling.

Brainiac stands, now in HUMANOID form, metallic in nature, but with crystal parts in his chest and arms. His head is tinted a slight green, bald with Brainiacs symbol extending down above his crystal eyes.

Brainiac walks towards the crystal control panel, slowly at first, adjusting to his new form.

As he reaches the control panel, two, tentacle-like wires extend from his arm, plugging into the control panel.

Holographic images begin appear, showing news clips and reports, all concerning Superman.

Brainiac studies them. He glances back and forth at each as it flashes in front of him.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

So Kal-El, you have given your life to these humans, though they are hardly deserving of your pity. It appears you have been corrupted by them. You may be unsuitable for the task of restoring Krypton. But we shall see.

EXT. METROPOLIS - SUNSET

The sun sets over the horizon as Superman flies over the city. He descends slowly as he glides between buildings.

Superman lands softly on the roof of Lois' apartment building.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Jason sits on the floor, in front of the TV with a games controller in his hand, playing video games.

Lois stands across from him, facing away towards the table. She sorts through notes and files on the table.

There's a knock at the door.

LOIS

(walking to the door)

Jason honey, it's time to put that away.

Lois opens the door to find Clark standing in the hallway.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Hey Clark, come on in.

Lois turns and walks back into the room.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Jason, now.

Clark walks in to the apartment, closing the door behind him. He stands slouched, with his hands in his pockets, watching Lois bend down next to Jason to turn off the console.

JASON

But Mom, I'll be quiet.

LOIS

Clark and I have to work honey.

Jason looks up at Lois, and then at Clark.

CLARK
I don't mind, really.

JASON
Please Mommy, Clark says I can.

Lois looks over at Clark who shrugs with a little smile.

LOIS
(sighs)
OK, but you have to be extra
quiet alright?

JASON
(turns back to the TV)
I will.

Shaking her head, Lois walks back to her chair and sits down.

LOIS
Don't just stand there Clark, sit
down. We have a lot of work to do
before Luthor's press conference
tomorrow.

Clark walks to Lois and sits next to her.

CLARK
Do you really think we'll find
something to confront him on?

LOIS
We both know what he's like. He's
a sadistic maniac and should be
behind bars. We just have to find
something that proves it...and if
we can't then we trip him up.

CLARK
Make him incriminate himself?

LOIS
(smirks)
Exactly.

Lois pulls a large binder from the centre of the table and opens it.

Inside are newspaper clippings, court documents and photographs, all relating to Luthor.

CLARK
Easier said than done...

EXT. HYPER SECTOR - NIGHT

The sky-reaching buildings that make up the financial centre of Metropolis stand, windows flickering with light, illuminating them.

One building however, remains dark, with just one light coming from the top floor. Just above a large sign reads: LEXCORP.

It's hidden in shadows, barely visible, until eventually flickering to life, brightened by a soft white glow.

It is then that it is seen to be taller than any of the surrounding buildings.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE

LEX LUTHOR and KITTY KOWALKSI sit opposite each other at a large desk. Lex is sitting with his back to the window.

On the desk in front of him is a photograph of New Krypton with the words "Property of NASA" printed on the bottom right corner.

Kitty pours two Martini's into the cocktail-glasses in front of her, dropping olives into each glass and handing one of them to Lex.

LEX

Unbelievable. The entire structure of that piece of rock has undergone a massive transformation.

KITTY

Lex, you promised you weren't going to talk about that place anymore.

LEX

Something is happening up there and I must know what it is. Knowledge is power Kitty. I didn't fully understand what I was creating but now--

KITTY

(interrupting)

You're a businessman now Lex, you've gone straight.

LEX

Of course you're right Kitty.

Lex opens a desk drawer and puts the photograph inside.

LEX

I can't be a criminal genius, not in a world where men can fly. But there's more than one way to acquire power. Money makes people listen, makes them want to shake your hand. If spoon-fed rich kids from Gotham can climb to the top, then so can I...and with my genius, LexCorp will destroy the competition.

KITTY

Aren't you getting a little ahead of yourself?

LEX

To survive in this world...in any venture...you have to be one step ahead of everyone else. I'll take LexCorp to the top and then...who knows...I may try my hand at politics.

KITTY

Don't tell me...
(laughs)
President Luthor?

Lex stares at Kitty for a moment, before opening his mouth to reply, but a knock at the door stops him.

Lex shakes his head and sits back in his chair.

LEX

Enter.

The door opens and MERCY GRAVES enters the room, dressed in a suit, her hair cut short.

LEX (CONT'D)

Ah, Mercy. I trust the preparations for tomorrow are complete?

MERCY

Yes Mr. Luthor, the press conference is scheduled for 10 AM and City Hall have confirmed that the Mayor will be there to cut the ribbon.

LEX

Good. I don't want any complications tomorrow, understand?

MERCY

Everything is under control.

LEX

I hope so. If that's all then you may leave.

Mercy turns and walks back towards the door.

She exchanging a venomous glance with Kitty on her way out, closing the door behind her.

KITTY

I don't like her Lex.

LEX

Jealousy doesn't suit you Kitty. Mercy is strong and reliable, an asset to this company. She's also loyal.

KITTY

And I'm not?

Lex looks up at Kitty with a slight grin as he takes a sip of his Martini.

LEX

You have your uses.

Kitty stands up and glares at Lex.

She turns and storms out of the office, slamming the door behind her.

Lex smiles. He puts his Martini down and opens the desk drawer, removing the photo and looking at it again.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Lois and Clark sit at the table, pouring over notes and documents relating to Luthor.

Jason is on the floor, playing his video game.

LOIS

There's got to be something.

CLARK

We've been over this stuff four times already. Luthor's very good at covering his tracks.

LOIS

Then we hit him with New Krypton..force him to confess.

CLARK

He was acquitted Lois. We may not like it, but even Superman's testimony couldn't send him down.

LOIS

We both know he bought that verdict. But I won't let him get away with it.

CLARK

Maybe...maybe you're concentrating on this too much Lois. You've been so intent on bringing Luthor to justice...maybe you need to take a break...

LOIS

You weren't there Clark. You can't understand.

Lois looks across at Jason to make sure he isn't listening.

LOIS (CONT'D)

(quietly)

He left us for dead on that boat. If it hadn't been for Superman...

CLARK

I know Lois...but dwelling on it 24/7 isn't healthy and--

LOIS

(interrupting)

No! He's not getting away with it. Not this time.

The sound of a ringing phone can be heard. Lois stands and removes a cell phone from her pocket.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Now what...

(answers her phone)

Yeah...that's me...you're kidding...oh that's great, just super...fine, I'll be right down.

Lois switches off her phone, and walks to the kitchen counter to grab her keys.

CLARK

Something wrong?

LOIS

I have to go downstairs. Some idiot tried to break into my car. Where's Superman when you need him?

(beat)

Can you watch Jason for me? It's just for a few minutes.

CLARK

Uh sure, of course.

LOIS

Thanks.

Lois turns to look at Jason.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Honey, I gotta go OK, but I'll be right back.

JASON

OK Mom.

LOIS

And Clark will be right here.

CLARK

Yeah.

Lois walks to Jason. She leans down to kiss the top of his head.

LOIS

Be good.

Lois walks to the door and exits, leaving Clark and Jason alone in the apartment.

Clark glances at Jason who has turned back to play his video game. He returns to looking at the documents.

Jason puts down the controller and stands up. He walks towards Clark.

Jason stays silent for a moment, looking at Clark's notes then at his face.

JASON

Clark...?

CLARK

(startled)

Huh? Yeah...

JASON
Why do you wear glasses?

CLARK
Oh, well they help me see better,
because my eyes don't work like
they're supposed to.

JASON
They help you see?

CLARK
That's right. Some people wear
them for reading or for watching
T.V. but I have to wear them all
the time.

JASON
But how come you don't wear them
when you fly?

CLARK
(stutters)
What? fly?

JASON
Yeah, I'll show you.

Jason runs into the bedroom, leaving Clark in his seat,
bemused.

When Jason returns, he has a newspaper in his hand which he
shows to Clark.

CLARK
What's this?

JASON
It's you. But you're not wearing
any glasses.

Clark looks at the newspaper. It's an issue of the DAILY
PLANET. On the front cover is a picture, credited to Jimmy
Olsen, of Superman in mid-air, holding the Daily Planet
globe over his head.

CLARK
That's Superman.

JASON
Yeah but it's you too.

CLARK
Jason, I'm not--

JASON
You're Superman. So you don't
need glasses...

Clark opens his mouth to answer, but he doesn't speak.
Instead he looks down at the photograph, and then back at
Jason.

Jason just smiles at him and reaches out.

He pulls the glasses from Clark's face.

INT. APARTMENT CAR PARK

Lois opens the door to the underground car park, and walks
towards her car, where a man, PHIL, is standing, dressed as
a security guard, looking over the damage.

The rear window has been smashed, along with the ones on
the driver's side. Two of the tyres have also been slashed.

LOIS
I swear to God Phil, you need
better security.

PHIL
I'm sorry Miss Lane, but I'm on
my own here, you know that.
Nobody else will work the night
shift.

LOIS
(looks over the car)
Well, where's the guy that did
this?

PHIL
It was a girl actually - two of
them. They did a real number on
your car.

LOIS
Yeah, I can see that. But where
are they?

PHIL
Oh they ran off...

Phil pulls a piece of paper from his pocket.

PHIL (CONT'D)
But not before one of them shoved
this into my chest...almost
knocked me over.

Phil hands Lois the piece of paper, which reads:

STAY AWAY FROM SUPERMAN, SLUT

Lois rolls her eyes and looks back at the car.

LOIS
Great...just great...

PHIL
The police are on their way.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Jason sits next to Clark, glasses in hand as Clark glances towards the door nervously.

CLARK
You uh...you haven't told your Mom have you?

Jason shakes his head, signalling a "no" as he hands the glasses back to Clark.

JASON
But why do you wear them?
Superman doesn't need glasses.

CLARK
They're like a mask. When I have them on, nobody can tell that it's me.

JASON
Really? That's stupid.

CLARK
(laughs)
You know you're probably right, but it seems to work.

JASON
But why do you need to hide?

CLARK
Uh...well there are some bad people out there.

JASON
But you're Superman. Nobody can hurt you.

CLARK
Maybe...but they could hurt you and your Mom and everyone I care about. That's why it has to be our secret, OK?

Jason nods his head in agreement, causing Clark to smile, all the while glancing out towards the door.

INT. APARTMENT CAR PARK

Lois stands by a police car as OFFICER LEWIS questions Phil about the events surrounding Lois' car.

PHIL

When I confronted them, they just ran off. Then I called 911 before calling Miss Lane here to tell her what happened.

OFFICER LEWIS

And do you have any CCTV that we could use to identify the culprits?

PHIL

I'm afraid not Officer.

LOIS

Of course you don't.

PHIL

There's no need to be like that Miss Lane. You know I'm on my own down here.

(turns back to Lewis)

We have cameras sure, but there hasn't been any tape in them for weeks. The residents just don't want to pay the extra cash.

LOIS

(annoyed)

Look, can we do this later? I really need to get back to my son.

OFFICER LEWIS

Sure. I think I have all your details but I'll still need you to come down to the station to make a statement as soon as possible.

PHIL

Can I assume your insurance will take care of the damage? As you know our policy doesn't cover this sort of thing.

LOIS

Fine, whatever. I'm leaving.

Lois walks away, back towards the stairs as Phil and Lewis stand, watching her leave.

OFFICER LEWIS

Is she really Superman's girlfriend? I can't really see him with a woman like her.

PHIL

No, I think the girls who did this were just drunk. You'd have to be to think he'd show any real interest in her.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Jason is sitting next to Clark, looking at the notes and pictures on the table.

JASON

I think I'm like you.

CLARK

Like me?

JASON

My Mom told me not to talk about it, she said people wouldn't understand...but you do.

CLARK

What do you mean?

JASON

I do things. I don't mean to do it but it just happens. Sometimes I break things like when I have a cup in my hand...and I squeeze it and it breaks or sometimes I breathe in but it won't come back out and I have to push it like this...

Jason begins to take short breaths, each one more rapid and sudden than the last before finally taking a deep breath and closing his mouth, trying to hold it in.

CLARK

Jason?

Still holding his breath, Jason points to his chest and tries to mumble something through his closed lips.

Eventually he opens his mouth and EXHALES, hard.

The documents and photographs begin to fly off the table and scatter across the room as a strong gust of wind coming from Jason BLOWS everything out of place.

When the room settles, Jason is breathing heavily. He gradually calms down to a normal rate.

JASON
Am I like you?

CLARK
(looks around at the
scattered papers)
I...what does your Mom say?

JASON
She says I'm special.

CLARK
And your Dad?

JASON
Mom said don't tell him. She said
he wouldn't understand how
special I am. Am I weird?

CLARK
No, not at all. But your Mom is
right. You have to keep it a
secret so you'll be safe.

JASON
Like with your glasses?

CLARK
Yeah, like that.

JASON

Jason lowers his head and looks at the floor.

JASON (CONT'D)
But I don't want to be on my own.

CLARK
You won't be.

JASON
So we are the same?

CLARK
We...

Clark stops, looking up at the door as the sound of rustling keys penetrate his senses.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Your Mom.

Jason turns around to look at the door as a breeze blows through the room.

The door to the apartment opens and Lois steps inside.

She stands and looks at the papers scattered across the apartment.

She looks at Jason, who in turn turns back to Clark, only to find that he now standing by an open window.

LOIS

What happened here? Jason?

CLARK

No, I'm afraid it was my fault. I was too warm so I opened a window. I don't know I guess a breeze or something must have blown through.

Clark closes the window and begins to walk across the room, bending down to pick up the various photographs and documents.

He glances up at Jason and grins slightly.

LOIS

Thanks Clark. This is just what I needed.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT

Jimmy is sitting on the couch with a bowl of popcorn in his lap. The room is dark, apart from the flickering of the television. Jimmy turns his head towards the door as he hears a key being pushed into the lock.

The door opens and Clark steps inside, visibly surprised to see Jimmy.

JIMMY

Hey...
(holds the bowl out
towards Clark)
Popcorn?

CLARK

Uh, no...thanks. What happened to your big date?

JIMMY

You know, I'm not really sure.
She said she had to cancel
because her mother was in town or
sick or something...

(pauses, confused)

So how did things go with Lois?
Are you guys ready for tomorrow?

CLARK

I don't know, I hope so. Lois is
very determined to take Luthor
down.

JIMMY

Or obsessed.

CLARK

Yeah...well I think I'd better
turn in. The press conference at
LexCorp is on pretty early in the
morning and Lois wants me to pick
her up her recorder at the Planet
before I get there.

JIMMY

Sure. There's a pretty cool
documentary about sharks on in
twenty minutes so I guess I'll
watch that.

INT. CLARK'S ROOM

Clark enters and locks the door behind him. The room is
dark and Clark moves his hand to flip the switch on but he
stops, instead walking towards the window.

He pulls the net curtain on the window to one side and
looks out.

INT. HALLWAY

Jimmy walks by, stopping outside Clark's door, hearing a
noise coming from inside.

Jimmy listens for a moment, shrugs and then moves on
towards the bathroom, shaking the popcorn crumbs from his
shirt as he walks.

INT. CLARK'S ROOM

Back inside, the room is empty and dark, the window is open
causing a slight breeze to blow against the curtains.

EXT. HYPER SECTOR

Superman flies high above the city. He starts off above the clouds and then dives down gracefully, his body twists his body upright as he approaches LexCorp.

He floats with his arms crossed, and stares stares through the window on the top floor at Lex Luthor.

Lex stares back at him through the window for a moment. He smirks and closes the blinds.

EXT. SUICIDE SLUMS - WAREHOUSE

The entire area around the warehouse is dark, aside from a few street lights, constantly flickering.

The streets are almost empty, with a few drunks walking by, they stagger with each step.

The warehouse itself is old, falling apart. The windows are boarded up to hide the faint glow of light coming from inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Inside, the warehouse contains a few boxes, containers for various weapons, ammunition and explosives.

In the centre, five people, four male - JACOBS, GARCIA, MITCHELL and GRANT and one female - STACY dressed in military outfits stand by a table, with another - JOHN CORBEN, standing across from them, his hands on the table, staring at a blueprint of Metropolis City Hall.

CORBEN

Can I assume that everybody knows
their job? Or do I have to go
over it again?

Everyone shakes their head, prompting Corben to stand back and grin.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Alright then. I suggest you all
get some shut-eye. Tomorrow is a
big day and we can't afford any
slip ups.

The group begins to disperse, apart from Corben and the woman, Stacy, who stand and watch each other.

They wait for the others to reach the far end of the warehouse.

STACY

I don't know about this John.
This one just feels wrong.

Corben walks around table to stand next to Stacy.

CORBEN

Relax, we've done this a dozen
times before. As long as everyone
does their job, we'll be fine.

STACY

It's too high profile. The world
will see our faces. We won't get
another job after this. We'll
have to leave the country.

CORBEN

Babe, when we pull this off we
won't need another job. We'll
retire to some island in the
Pacific with a stack of cash and
no extraditions.

Corben kisses Stacy's forehead.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Our clients want a show and we'll
deliver with a bang.

STACY

But this is Metropolis. What if
he shows up?

CORBEN

Old Blue Tights? Let him. I've
planned for everything. You just
make sure to keep that engine
running.

Corben smiles and leans in to kiss Stacy. She hesitates for
a moment, but eventually returns the kiss.

EXT. DAILY PLANET - MORNING

Sunlight creeps up the east side of the building as the
surrounding city begins to come to life, with traffic
gradually increasing.

Superman flies overhead. He drops down into an alleyway
across from The Planet.

A few moments later, Clark Kent emerges from the alley,
ignorant of the traffic as he runs across the busy road,
fixing his tie into place.

INT. DAILY PLANET - NEWSROOM

Clark enters the already busy newsroom and rushes towards Lois Lane's desk, almost knocking people over as he moves across the floor.

Spotting him, Perry White emerges from his office and approaches Clark.

PERRY

Kent? Shouldn't you be at the press conference? It starts in thirty minutes.

CLARK

I'm sorry Mr. White, Lois called me this morning and asked me to pick up her tape recorder...

Clark(opens a desk drawer to find that it's a complete mess.

LOIS

Uh...she's not the tidiest person...

PERRY

Forget that, do you have your own?

Clark checks his pocket and nods back.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Then you can share. This isn't a Lois Lane exclusive Clark. It's a simple press conference. You just make sure that you and Lois ask Mr. Saviour of Metropolis the right questions.

CLARK

Right Chief.

Clark turns to leave and begins to head towards the door.

PERRY

And don't let Lois push you around either.

CLARK

(turns back)
Uh, right Chief.

Clark stands still for a moment, as if waiting for Perry to let him go.

PERRY

What are you standing around for?
Go.

Clark nods, and turns, rushing towards the door. On his way, he knocks a bundle of papers from a desk and stops, bending down to help the reporter at the desk to pick them up.

Looking up for a moment, he spots Perry staring at him.

Clark grabs some of the papers, puts them on the desk and rushes out.

EXT. CITY HALL - ROOF

A modified military transport helicopter descends through the city. It lands on the roof of City Hall.

The thugs from the warehouse are inside, with John Corben, though Stacy is nowhere to be seen.

Garcia and Mitchell leave the helicopter with Corben and head towards the door leading inside.

Mitchell has a black sports bag draped over his shoulder, while he carries an assault rifle. Garcia also has an assault rifle while Corben is holding a smaller handgun.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

The MAYOR sits at his desk, looking over paperwork. He looks up at the clock on the wall which reads 9:40, prompting him to lean forward and press the intercom button.

MAYOR

Susan, is my escort ready?

He waits for a reply that doesn't come.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Susan?

Frustrated, the Mayor stands away from his desk and walks towards the door, opening it.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Susan what are--

He stops as a gun is pushed against his chest, being held by John Corben.

The Mayor looks over his shoulder to see his assistant, SUSAN, being tied up and gagged by Garcia.

Corben grins as he pushes the Mayor back into his office.

CORBEN

(grins)

I'm afraid you're going to have to cancel your appointments.

MAYOR

What do you want?

CORBEN

From you? Nothing. It seems there are some people who don't like your policies. Now personally I prefer the democratic approach, but violence can work just as well.

MAYOR

I don't respond to threats.

CORBEN

Oh this isn't a threat. Call it a...demonstration.

(to Mitchell)

Make the call.

EXT. LEXCORP

A crowd of journalists are gathered at the bottom of the steps outside the LexCorp building, including Lois Lane.

All of them wait as Lex Luthor walks out of the main doors, smiling as he approaches the podium at the top of the steps. Kitty and Mercy walk out and stand just behind him.

LEX

(quietly)

Where's the Mayor?

MERCY

(approaches and whispers
in his ear)

I'm afraid he didn't show up,
Sir. I thought it best to remove
the ribbon.

KITTY

I guess he's not a fan.

LEX

I'm not impressed Mercy. This was supposed to be handled. I don't make campaign contributions just for the hell of it. Mercy, see that the cheque bounces.

MERCY
Yes Mr. Luthor.

In the crowd, Lois Lane looks around anxiously as Clark appears behind her, tapping her on the shoulder, giving her a fright.

LOIS
Dammit Clark, don't sneak up on people like that.

CLARK
Sorry.

LOIS
Did you find it?

CLARK
It wasn't there.

Clark reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small recording device.

CLARK (CONT'D)
But I brought mine.

Lois grabs the recorder from Clark's hand and turns back to face the podium.

LOIS
Great.

A hush falls over the crowd of reporters as Luthor adjusts the microphone.

LEX
Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming. I'm sure you have questions, so I'll keep this short. Metropolis has always been a city at the forefront of new ideas and today sees the realisation of one such idea...no, a dream. As we move further into this technological age and as our understanding of the world we live in expands...

EXT. CITY HALL

Police sirens ring out as dozens of police cars, SWAT vehicles and helicopters swarm into the area.

As they pull up, one of the thugs, Grant, can be seen through the window of the Mayor's office, breaking the glass. He points his assault rifle towards the cars and begins to fire.

The cops to get out and take cover behind their vehicles.

Eventually, the shooting dies down as an unmarked car pulls up.

The driver and passenger doors open. MAGGIE SAWYER and her partner, DAN TURPIN, emerge. They survey the scene.

DAN
Another wonderful day in
Metropolis. Blue skies, birds
singing...

MAGGIE
Bullets flying...

One of the uniform cops approaches the duo. They show him their badges.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Who's in charge here?

COP
I guess you are.

DAN
The Commissioner won't show until
they run out of bullets.

MAGGIE
He's probably still in bed. But
he'll be here for the photo-op,
you can count on that.

DAN
Who called it in?

COP
(points to City Hall)
They did.

Maggie and Dan look up towards the Mayor's office where they see Corben looking back at them.

DAN
Is that...?

MAGGIE
John Corben.
(to Cop)
I want this area sealed off. And
get me a line to that office.

Across the street, Stacy sits in her car. She watches events unfold, keeping her head down to go unnoticed.

EXT. LEXCORP

LEX
...to build a better tomorrow.

LOIS
(under her breath)
So much for keeping it short.

LEX
Now I'll take your questions.

The crowd of reporters raise their hands and Lex points to a female reporter, prompting her to ask her question.

GEMMA PRYCE
Gemma Pryce, Gotham Times...Mr. Luthor, despite the Not Guilty verdict in your trial, a lot of people still hold a resentment towards you, especially in Metropolis. How do you expect to gain their trust?

LEX
I'm glad you asked me that. I'm not perfect...I've made some mistakes in my life, but as you pointed out, attempted murder isn't one of them. The jury found me innocent--

LOIS
But what about claims that you manipulated the jury, that you bribed some, and intimidated others?

LEX
Ah Miss Lane, still trying to find guilt where there isn't any I see. Frankly I resent the accusation that my trial was anything but fair. The jury weighed up the evidence and saw the truth. That's all.

LOIS
Superman testified against you. Are you saying he lied?

LEX

I respect Superman. He has done much for this city. I don't believe he intentionally lied, he was simply wrong. He may be a great hero, but even heroes make mistakes. Unfortunately, the only piece of evidence that could end all doubts about my innocence is somewhere between Mars and Jupiter.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mitchell stands at the door to the office, weapon in hand.

Garcia looks out through the window at the waiting police. Corben is sitting across from the Mayor, who has been gagged and tied up.

On the desk, the phone rings and Corben takes his time picking it up.

He puts the receiver to his ear.

CORBEN

Yeah.

EXT. CITY HALL

Maggie has a cell phone which she holds to her ear as she looks up towards the Mayor's office.

MAGGIE

This is Inspector Sawyer--

INTERCUT BETWEEN MAGGIE AND CORBEN

CORBEN

Maggie Sawyer? Well this is a pleasure. You've been after me for a long time.

MAGGIE

What do you want Corben?

CORBEN

What everybody wants - the American dream. Money, power, success.

MAGGIE

Get a job then.

CORBEN

My way is much more fun.

MAGGIE

What are you doing Corben? This isn't your style...it's much too high profile for you.

CORBEN

I have a client that wants a show, and I'm happy to oblige.

MAGGIE

And who is this client? Or is that privileged information?

CORBEN

Oh no, they want you to know who they are. You might have heard of them - Intergang.

MAGGIE

Why am I not surprised...so I guess this is where you make your demands? What do you want...money? A plane?

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

CORBEN

I have no demands...this isn't your typical hostage situation. Intergang just wants you to enjoy the show and get the message.

Corben hangs up the phone and grabs the Mayor, pulling him from his chair and throwing him onto the floor next to Susan.

Taking the sports bag from Mitchell, he points to the hostages.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

If they move, kill them.

EXT. CITY HALL

Maggie puts her phone back in her pocket as Dan glances up at the office window.

DAN

I don't like this. Are we just going to stand around and wait for them to kill the Mayor?

MAGGIE
We need Superman.

DAN
Well I don't see him, do you? We need to get SWAT into position.

MAGGIE
I don't want to go in until we absolutely have to. The last thing we need is to have the Mayor's body being wheeled out live on the lunchtime news.

EXT. LEXCORP

LEX
How long are we going to play this game Miss Lane? I believe I have been very patient despite your publications slanderous accusations against me.

LOIS
You may have the money makers fooled Lex, but not the people of this city. You tried to kill Superman and that has consequences.

Across the street, a police car passes by, it's siren blaring.

The sound is picked up by Clark's ears and he slowly starts moving back through the crowd of reporters, as he focuses on the sound of the police radio.

POLICE DISPATCHER (O.S.)
(filtered)
...Proceed to City Hall. The officer in charge wants all roads in and out of the area blocked off...the Mayor and possibly his secretary...assailants are armed...

Clark runs now, down the street away from Lexcorp. He pulls at his tie, letting it hang loose from his neck as he turns into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY

Clark looks around to make sure nobody is watching. His coat and jacket fall away from him as he easily removes them.

His hands move to his chest and he RIPS the buttons of his shirt as he takes it off, revealing the S-SYMBOL of Superman.

Clark steps out of his shoes as he removes his shirt, his trousers falling to the ground.

He pauses, looking at a reflection of himself in an old, dirtied mirror. He removes his glasses and he sets them down on top of his clothes.

he rises up into the air, no longer Clark Kent. SUPERMAN's hair is blown back by the wind, setting itself as a few strands fall down, curling against his forehead. His cape falls down his back.

In a sudden rush of speed, Superman blasts off, upwards out of the alley and into the skies of Metropolis.

EXT. CITY HALL - ROOF

JACOBS stands on the roof, next to the dormant helicopter as GRANT sits inside in the pilot's seat.

Jacobs glances over the edge of the roof, watching the significant police presence below. He grins and steps back.

A BOOMING SOUND in the distance draws his attention, and Grant looks across the city to see Superman approaching fast. He reaches into a pocket, pulling out a small radio communicator.

JACOBS
Boss, he's coming.

INT. CITY HALL - UNDERGROUND PARKING

Corben places a small explosive on one of the support pillars holding the building in place.

A look across at the other pillars reveals more explosives that have been put in place.

Corben takes out his radio.

CORBEN
I'm not ready yet.

JACOBS (O.S.
(filtered)
What do we do?

CORBEN
Take off. Lead him away.

JACOBS (O.S.
(filtered)
We can't out-fly Superman.

CORBEN
You don't have to do it for long.
I just need enough time to set
the last explosives. Once he
realises what's happening, he'll
let you go and turn back. We'll
be long gone by then. Stick to
the plan.

JACOBS (O.S.)
(filtered)
Got it.

Corben puts the radio back in his pocket and returns to
setting the explosive.

CORBEN
Idiot.

EXT. CITY HALL - ROOF

Jacobs climbs into the back of the helicopter, leaning into
the cockpit where Grant is sitting.

JACOBS
Start her up.

EXT. LEXCORP

LEX
Now if you don't mind, there are
others who I'm sure would like to
get a question in.

Lex points to another reporter as Lois glares at him for a
moment.

LOIS
He's some piece of work...

Lois turns, confused as Clark is nowhere to be seen.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Clark?

Looking through the crowd, she fails to spot Clark, instead shrugging her shoulders, she holds the tape recorder up towards the podium.

EXT. CITY HALL - GROUND

Superman flies low across the city, eventually slowing down to land next to Dan Turpin and Maggie Sawyer.

DAN

It's about time you showed up.

SUPERMAN

How can I help?

MAGGIE

They've got two hostages in there. One of them is the Mayor. If we go in, I think they'll start shooting.

DAN

You don't know that. I say we go in with a full incursion. They won't know what hit them.

SUPERMAN

That could be dangerous.

MAGGIE

It's a bad idea. I've had dealings with one of these guys before. John Corben. He's a gun for hire, a mercenary. He won't hesitate to shoot everyone in there, including his own people if he has to.

Superman picks up the sound of a helicopter taking off with his SUPER-HEARING.

He looks up and spots the helicopter rising up into the air, moving off across the city.

Superman launches himself into the air, flying after them.

DAN

There he goes. Now what?

MAGGIE

We wait.

EXT. METROPOLIS

The helicopter flies through the city, moving between buildings as Superman follows behind at speed.

INT. HELICOPTER

Grant is in front piloting the helicopter, as Jacobs straps himself in behind, leaning out with an assault rifle.

GRANT

Shoot him out of the sky.

EXT. METROPOLIS

Jacobs is leaning out of the fleeing chopper. Taking aim, he begins to SHOOT at Superman, who is CLOSING IN FAST.

Superman doesn't flinch as bullets harmlessly BOUNCE off him, ricocheting away.

One stray bullet WHIZZES past Superman's ear, heading down towards the street.

In an instant, Superman stops and flies backward, turning around to chase after the bullet.

Down and down he goes, speeding up and CATCHING the bullet just before it impacts with a passing woman.

Superman opens his palm and smiles at the woman.

She takes the bullet from his hand before he shoots off, back towards the helicopter.

As Superman approaches the helicopter again, Jacobs starts SHOOTING once more.

This time though, Superman's hands are MOVING FASTER THAN THE EYE CAN SEE, catching every single bullet.

INT. HELICOPTER

JACOBS

Dammit.

Jacobs leans back inside, tapping Grant on the shoulder.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

This thing has rockets, right?

GRANT

Sure. But do you really think they'll stop him?

JACOBS

You won't be aiming at him.

EXT. METROPOLIS

The rocket launchers on the protruding wings of the helicopter begin to heat up as THREE ROCKETS are FIRED across the city.

Superman is forced to turn and chase after the first rocket as it blasts its way towards a high rise office building.

He flies ahead of it, STOPPING IN MID AIR outside a window, twenty floors up.

The rocket SLAMS into his chest and EXPLODES, but Superman doesn't move, as workers inside, peer through the window.

He flies after the second rocket, chasing it downtown towards a large group of pedestrians.

His eyes start to BURN as he unleashes a focused BLAST of HEAT VISION, that DISINTEGRATES the rockets.

Superman turns around just in time to see the third rocket EXPLODE against the tail of a local news-copter.

The news-copter begins SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL, falling out of the sky. The blades on top BREAK OFF and fall dangerously towards the people below.

Using his FREEZE BREATH, Superman freezes the blades before flying THROUGH THEM, SHATTERING them. Then moving quickly, Superman flies after the news copter, CATCHING THE TAIL as it burns, steadying the falling helicopter as he brings it under his control.

He BLOWS softly, using his SUPER BREATH to put out the flames, as he carries the helicopter towards a nearby rooftop.

he places it gently on a helipad and moves to the front to check on the pilot, camera man and reporter inside.

SUPERMAN

Are you all OK?

They nod back, breathing a sigh of relief as Superman scans the skies, his eyes searching for the military helicopter that has caused all the trouble.

INT. HELICOPTER

GRANT
I think we lost him.

JACOBS
Good. Let's get to the
rendezvous.

Suddenly, Superman appears in front of the helicopter,
looking inside, sternly.

GRANT
Uh...we surrender?

EXT. METROPOLIS

Superman GRABS the helicopter with ONE HAND and reaches up
with the other.

The rotating blades CRASH against his hand and STOP
spinning.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

The Mayor and Susan are sitting on the floor as Mitchell
and Garcia sit on the desk, aiming their guns at the
hostages.

CORBEN (O.S.)
(filtered)
Mitchell, come in.

Mitchell puts his gun down and takes a radio from his
pocket.

MITCHELL
I'm here Boss.

CORBEN (O.S.)
(filtered)
I'm all set down here. It's time
to leave.

MITCHELL
What about our friends here?

CORBEN (O.S.)
(filtered)
Kill them.

Mitchell puts the radio back in his pocket and stands up,
picking up his weapon.

Garcia stands with him, both of them aiming at the Mayor
and Susan.

GARCIA

Well, it's been entertaining. But
you heard the man.

MITCHELL

That's all folks.

Time seems to SLOW DOWN as the thugs FIRE THEIR GUNS.
Bullets move across the room heading towards their targets.

But Superman, FLYING FASTER than the speeding bullets,
CRASHES through the window and CATCHES the bullets.

It's over in an instant as Superman grabs the guns and
SNAPS them easily, breaking them in half.

The SWAT team come through the door, followed closely
behind by Dan and Maggie.

MAYOR

Thank you Superman. You saved our
lives.

MAGGIE

Where's Corben?

MAYOR

I'm not sure.

Superman LISTENS with his SUPER-HEARING for the slightest
sound.

Using his X-RAY VISION, he searches through each floor,
then down below ground where he sees Corben standing, with
a remote detonator in his hand.

SUPERMAN

Get everyone out now.

In a flash, Superman is gone, flying back out through the
window.

DAN

You heard him, let's move.

The SWAT team guide the Mayor and his secretary quickly out
of the room, with Dan and Maggie bringing up the rear.

INT. CITY HALL - UNDERGROUND PARKING

Corben walks towards the exit, holding the detonator in one
hand and the radio in the other. He lifts the radio to his
face.

CORBEN

Stacy, be ready, I'm coming out
now.

Dropping the radio, he steps on it, crushing it with a smile.

A gust of wind fills the structure as Superman flies in, blocking Corben's path.

SUPERMAN

It's over.

CORBEN

You think so?

Corben grins as he shows Superman the detonator. His finger is on the trigger.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Look around. This whole place is set to go. Now get out of my way.

SUPERMAN

If you press that, you'll be caught in the blast.

CORBEN

I always see the job through. Besides, I'm pretty safe here. But you're not. I wonder if you can survive a building falling on you? Let's find out.

Corben laughs as he presses the trigger.

Explosions ripple through the structure as each pillar is brought down. Dust and ash fill the air as the ceiling collapses, large chunks of brick and cement falling to the floor as a fire starts to rage.

A strong gust of wind blows through, caused by Superman's SUPER BREATH.

As the dust clears, Superman is floating, holding the weight of the ceiling and the entire building on his shoulders.

Corben is lying on the ground, bleeding but still conscious. He looks up to see Superman holding the building up.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Damn. That hurt.

He laughs again, but pieces of the ceiling breaks off and falls down on him, crushing his body and knocking him out.

Superman looks at him and closes his eyes for a moment.

MAGGIE (O.C.)

Superman?

Superman opens his eyes and turns his face to see Maggie standing by the exit.

SUPERMAN

Stand back.

Maggie takes a few steps back, watching as Superman takes a DEEP BREATH, then EXHALES.

He unleashing his FREEZE BREATH across the entire ceiling, creating a layer of SOLID ICE to hold it in place.

He descends, landing on the floor. He scans Corben's body with his X-RAY VISION.

MAGGIE

Is he...?

SUPERMAN

He's alive, barely. I couldn't stop him.

MAGGIE

Not everyone wants to be saved.

EXT. CITY HALL - GROUND

News vans and reporters have gathered around the area, while police continue to guard the scene.

Superman stands by the Mayor, shaking his hand before flying away.

JIMMY OLSEN is stands by the police barrier, busily taking photographs.

Across the street, Stacy sits in her car, watching as Corben is wheeled out on a stretcher and placed in an ambulance.

She starts the car and drives away.

EXT. LEXCORP

The press conference continues, with notably less journalists than before.

Clark slips back through the crowd, bumping into Lois. She glares at him, surprised.

LOIS

Where were you?

CLARK
Bathroom.

LOIS
You took your time.

CLARK
Uh...

LOIS
I warned you. This is what
happens when you let Jimmy cook.

CLARK
Did I miss anything?

LOIS
Oh just the usual company line
from Mr. Man of Metropolis up
there.

Lex is still on the podium, answering questions.

LEX
This is an age of advancing
technology. What's state of the
art today will be outdated and
obsolete six months from now. To
succeed, LexCorp will go beyond
state of the art...

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

Brainiac stands, watching the press conference on a
HOLOGRAPHIC SCREEN.

LEX
(screen)
...We will work to advance
technologies to improve all
aspects of life for years to
come.

BRAINIAC
Such ambition.

Another holographic screen is broadcasting live images of
city hall.

Brainiac looks at it for a moment, before waving his hands
over the crystals on the control panel.

The screens disappear and are replaced by a single, larger
screen, showing internet pages.

Brainiac scans the page, then another appears, and more following, all relating to Lex Luthor's history and his encounters with Superman.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

Perhaps it is time to see how far
this human is willing to go.

EXT. DAILY PLANET - EVENING

The sun hangs low behind a peaceful Metropolis as the large globe on top of the Daily Planet building spins, slowly.

INT. PERRY'S OFFICE

Lois and Clark are sitting across from Perry, while Jimmy stands near the door.

JIMMY

You should have seen it. The ice
is so thick it still hasn't
melted. It's doing a great job of
holding up the building while
they get the supports in place.

PERRY

Never mind that. Lois, what were
you thinking, going after Luthor
like that? We're lucky he hasn't
filed a suit against us.

LOIS

Everyone in this room knows what
kind of man he is.

PERRY

Yeah...he's smart. You want to
take him down, I get that. But
you have to be smart too. Lex
Luthor isn't going to confess his
sins on live TV.

He turns turns to Clark.

PERRY (CONT'D)

And I'm surprised you let her
take it that far Clark. I teamed
you two up because I thought some
of your common sense would rub
off on her. But I think she might
be a bad influence on you.

LOIS

Oh Clark ran off half way through the press conference. Jimmy's cooking must have upset his bowel movements again.

JIMMY

Hey don't look at me. It's not my fault he can't handle my famous breakfast taco's.

PERRY

Forget Luthor. What's the story with the City Hall raid?

CLARK

The police aren't saying much.

PERRY

What about the rumors that Intergang are behind it?

JIMMY

You think they'd have learned by now that going up against Superman is a bad idea.

LOIS

Well if they are behind it, it was clearly a message to the political establishment. They're dangerous, even with Superman around.

PERRY

I want you both on this.

LOIS

But what about the press conference?

PERRY

Give it to Gill.

LOIS

But...

PERRY

I don't want to hear it Lois. I know what Luthor did to you, but you can't waste your career on him. His time will come.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lex is standing in front of a series of screens on the wall, each screen showing a different TV news station. They are all broadcasting reports on Superman's deeds at City Hall.

Kitty is sitting back in a chair in front of the desk while Mercy stands near the door.

LEX
He did it again. He stole my headlines.

MERCY
Does it really matter? Our projections still show increased support for you right across the business sector, despite hostility from the press.

LEX
Of course it matters. Image is just as important as substance.

KITTY
Face it Lex. You'll never be as popular as Superman.

The screens start to flicker, each one turning to static.

LEX
I don't need to be...

He glances at the screens then turns to Mercy.

LEX (CONT'D)
Find out what's happening.

Mercy leaves, closing the door behind her as the static fades to black.

KITTY
Wow...they cut you off. Even you have to pay your bills Lex.

An image begins to fade into view on the screens. Every screen is filled with the BRAINIAC SYMBOL as a small camera, used for conference calls, comes to life and starts to focus on Luthor.

The screens then flicker again, eventually forming a single image between them - BRAINIAC.

Kitty stands and moves away, nervously.

KITTY (CONT'D)
What is that thing?

LEX
Get out.
(glares at Kitty)
Now.

Kitty rushes to the door. She looks at Lex for a moment, visibly afraid.

Lex doesn't return the look. He is now staring at the screen.

Kitty hurries out.

One of the screens switches its picture, showing Lex Luthor in his office. Lex looks up at the camera to see that it is switched on.

LEX (CONT'D)
You can see me.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
Indeed I can.

LEX
You're not human. That much is obvious. How have you done this?

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
I have taken control of one of your orbital satellites. I then integrated my systems into your internal networks,

LEX
You're a machine...

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
I am a sentient program. My primary function is to monitor all planetary systems of the planet Krypton and to record all relevant data in ensuring its legacy and to preserve life. To that end I have been designated - Brainiac.

LEX
Just what I need. Another freak from Krypton.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
I have studied you Lex Luthor. I am aware of your encounters with Kal-El. The one you call Superman.

Lex moves around his desk to sit in his chair. He glances at the computer screen, noting that it has the same image of Brainiac.

LEX
You want something from me.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
You are perceptive. And you are correct. Kal-El is of great importance to me. You must bring him to me.

LEX
And in return?

Lex watches the screen as Brainiac holds up a large crystal.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
Knowledge, Lex Luthor. The means to advance human technology shall be yours.

Lex stares at the crystal for a moment and then grins.

LEX
It was you. You're the one who altered the structure of that dead replica of Krypton - a structure I created.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
So, you have knowledge of the crystals then. My offer must surely interest you.

LEX
Oh it does. But you don't just walk up to Superman and stab him in the back. Believe me, I've tried.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
I do not want Kal-El destroyed.

LEX
Well I'm the last person he would even consider trusting.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
I am sure you will find a way.

Lex turns in his chair, looking out through the window at Metropolis.

The sky has darkened, but the bright lights of the city have created an eerie glow.

Lex turns back into the office, smirking.

LEX
He...has a son.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)
(surpised)
A son? Bring me this child. Kal-
El will surely follow.

LEX
How? Superman won't let him go
without a fight.

Lex's computer screen shows a download of information, and soon the screen is filled with schematics and designs for a mechanical body.

Lex's eyes widen as he scans through the designs. He smiles.

INT. LEXCORP - CORRIDOR

Mercy approaches the door to Lex's office. Kitty is blocking the door.

MERCY
Get out of my way.

KITTY
You can't go in there. You don't
want to see--

Mercy shoves Kitty aside, knocking her to the floor. She opens the door.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE

Mercy steps inside. Lex is sitting at his desk. The screens on the wall are now blank.

Lex looks up at Mercy as Kitty walks in behind her, holding her face in pain.

LEX
I hope you two are getting along.

KITTY
(sarcastic tone)
Oh we're the best of friends.

LEX
Mercy. I want you to go to the
advanced robotics division at
STAR LABS and find Professor
Emmet Vale. I have a project he
just might be interested in.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

New Krypton has completed it's transformation. Crystal structures are scattered around the edges, while in the centre, a giant, smooth dome dominates, stretching out across the reborn world.

The whole of New Krypton glistens in sunlight, a shining jewel against the background of space.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

Brainiac stands at the control panel, his metallic hand pressing down over one of the embedded crystals. The whole control panel lights up.

EXT. SPACE - EARTH ORBIT

Dozens of satellites are pulled by an unseen force out of Earth's orbit, shooting off into deep space.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT

Clark is at a small desk in the corner, working at his laptop, while Jimmy sits in front of the TV.

The image on the TV flickers and then turns to static.

JIMMY
Great...

Jimmy picks up the remote control, lying beside him and begins searching through channels, each one of them showing static.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
TV's out.

Clark looks up from his laptop to glance at the TV as Jimmy stands, stretching.

INT. NEWSROOM

Perry is locking the door to his office. The room is almost empty, with just a few journalists scattered around, working at their desks.

GILL is at his desk near Perry's office.

The screens hanging from the ceiling are all showing static.

PERRY

Gill, call the supplier. I want those feeds back up.

GILL

Right away Chief.

INT. LOIS' APARTMENT

Jason is sitting in front of the TV, remote control in one hand, a glass of water in the other. He is using the remote to flip through the channels, each one showing static.

Lois is sitting at the table, typing at her laptop.

JASON

Mommy, the TV isn't working.

Lois glances up from her laptop and looks towards the TV.

LOIS

It's almost time for you to go to bed anyway honey. I'm sure it will be back on tomorrow.

Lois goes back to typing up her latest article. The SOUND of BREAKING GLASS alerts her and she looks back up.

Jason is standing now, looking at the floor.

Lois follows his gaze to the broken glass scattered around Jason's feet.

She stands, rushing across the room to Jason's side.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Honey are you ok?

JASON

It broke.

LOIS

Let me see your hand.

Jason stretches out his hand. It's a little wet from the water inside the glass, but there are no signs of any cuts.

Lois examines his hand and then looks up at Jason's face.

JASON
I'm sorry Mommy. I...I didn't
mean to...

LOIS
It's OK, it's not your fault.

JASON
It just broke.

Lois hugs Jason close.

LOIS
It's OK honey, it's OK. It wasn't
your fault.

JASON
I'm sorry.

Lois pulls back to look at him.

LOIS
You don't have to be sorry. It
wasn't your fault, ok? Now why
don't you go get cleaned up and
get ready for bed.

Jason nods and heads off towards the bathroom.

Lois bends down and picks up a piece of broken glass.

She studies it for a moment then looks up at the TV. Still
nothing but static.

EXT. SPACE - APPROACHING NEW KRYPTON

The satellites are pulled across space at rapid speed,
being dragged towards New Krypton.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

They crash on to the surface and are dragged by some
unknown force towards the GIANT DOME in the centre of the
floating land mass.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

Brainiac stands at a holographic control screen, his hand
moving against the 3d images, inputting commands as the
crystals on the main panel are glowing.

Satellites are moving across the floor, piling up into a massive heap of metal on the platform where Brainiac was transformed into human form.

The clear crystal tube comes down to cover the satellites, followed by a wave of energy.

The pieces of each satellite are separated into their individual parts and broken down into chunks of material and then reforged into something new.

BRAINIAC

Primitive materials. But they
will have to suffice.

The tube rises, revealing six ROBOTIC DRONES, all fully functioning, each one of them floating above the floor, equipped with ENERGY CANNONS attached to robotic arms.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

More satellites approach, crashing into the ground, being dragged towards an opening in the dome.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

EMMET VALE is sitting in Lex's chair, his eyes fixed on Lex's computer screen.

Lex is standing beside him, watching Vale's reactions as he views the blueprints and data for a cybernetic body.

On the wall, all but one of the TV screens are showing static. The one that is still functioning is tuned into the local news station.

VALE

This is astounding. Where did you
get these plans?

LEX

I have my sources.

VALE

I've never seen anything like it.
There isn't anyone on the planet
with research this far advanced.
It's far beyond human
capabilities. I must know where
you obtained this.

LEX

Focus Professor. Can you make
sense of the designs? And more
importantly, can you use them?

VALE

I...I think so. The medical applications alone are something to think about. And you can bet the military will want to get in on the action as well. I'll get to work on starting the lab experiments first thing in the morning.

LEX

That's not good enough. I need a full working model as quickly as possible.

VALE

That just can't be done. This blueprint is designed for human input and we need FDA approval before we can even think about human trials and we won't get it without significant study and research.

LEX

I don't need excuses, I need results. You can't make progress without breaking a few rules. If you succeed, nobody will care how you did it. You'll be the most celebrated scientific mind on the planet. Forget about a Nobel Prize, every institute in the country...in the world will pay through the roof for the chance to fund your research.

VALE

And LexCorp will make a fortune...right?

LEX

Don't worry, you'll get your fair share.

Vale glances up at Lex than back at the computer screen.

VALE

No. I..we can't. It can't happen this quickly no matter how much money you throw at it. Who would be crazy enough to undergo the procedure?

On the only working TV screen, Lex spots a news report regarding the incident at City Hall. John Corben is being wheeled on a stretcher towards an ambulance.

LEX

I have someone in mind.

EXT. DAILY PLANET - MORNING

A cab pulls up outside the Daily Planet building. Jason climbs out of the back seat, followed by Lois who walks around to the driver's window and hands him some cash before turning to find Jason.

LOIS

Jason honey, don't wander off.

Jason is walking towards the entrance.

JASON

I'm here.

Lois catches up to Jason and leads him by the hand to the entrance.

INT. DAILY PLANET - NEWSROOM

Clark is sitting at his desk. Richard and Jimmy are standing nearby.

RICHARD

We're still trying to confirm it.
I mean there are dozens...maybe
hundreds of them up there and
some of them just seemed to
disappear.

JIMMY

That's weird. Good thing it
wasn't during sweeps.

RICHARD

Well everything seems to be back
online now. They must have
rerouted the signals to other
satellites.

CLARK

Was there any sort of pattern?
Any clue as to what caused it?

RICHARD

That's the strange thing. It all seems to be pretty random. TV satellites, weather...the Pentagon aren't saying anything but we think some defence satellites were lost as well. NASA are blaming it on increased solar activity but frankly I don't think they have a clue what's going on.

Lois and Jason walk through the doors to the newsroom. Jason spots Richard and runs towards him.

JASON

Daddy.

RICHARD

Hey kiddo.

Richard lifts Jason up onto his shoulders just as Lois approaches.

Jason is looking down at Clark, who smiles back, while Lois and Richard stare wordlessly at each other for a moment.

LOIS

Jason, why don't you stay here with Clark, Mommy has to talk with Daddy.
(to Clark)
Is that ok?

CLARK

Yeah, uh sure.

Richard puts Jason down next to Clark as Perry emerges from his office.

PERRY

(shouts across newsroom)
Olsen, get in here.

JIMMY

That doesn't sound too good.

Jimmy heads off towards Perry's office as Lois bends down and kisses Jason on his forehead.

LOIS

We'll be right back honey. Be good for Clark.

JASON

I will.

Lois and Richard head towards the other side of the newsroom, to Richards office.

Jason climbs up and sits on Clark's desk.

CLARK
So...how is school?

Jason bows his head, looking at his feet as they dangle from the table.

JASON
(whispers)
It happened again.

CLARK
Something at school?

JASON
No, last night. I broke a glass.

CLARK
It was just an accident. I'm sure your Mom wasn't mad.

JASON
I...I squeezed it. I didn't mean to. I just felt like I had to hold it harder so it wouldn't fall, but it broke.

CLARK
Oh...

JASON
That's why Mom and Dad are fighting.

Clark rests his hands on Jason's shoulder, prompting him to look up.

CLARK
Hey, I'm sure they're not...

JASON
I can hear them...and Uncle Perry and Jimmy.

We HEAR WHAT JASON HEARS, his SUPER HEARING is LOUD but UNFOCUSED at first, constant noise drowning out the voices. It gradually clears and we hear TWO DISTINCT CONVERSATIONS.

RICHARD (O.S.)
(filtered)
I don't understand why you're being so protective. I know how to take care of my own son.

LOIS (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 It's not that. He's just fragile
 right now...

JIMMY (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 I know I was there to take
 photographs Chief, but it was a
 party. I only had a couple...

PERRY (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 You have to be professional
 Olsen.

LOIS (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 ...maybe he should stay at home
 with me, just for a few days.

CLARK
 (soft, distant)
 Jason...listen to my voice...

JIMMY (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 I'm sure I've got some good
 shots...

RICHARD (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 I'm leaving for Europe next week.
 I won't see him again for a
 month..

PERRY
 You're in every one of them.

CLARK
 (getting louder, more
 focused)
 Listen to my voice....let the
 others just slip away. Don't hold
 on to them...hear me...hear my
 voice...Jason.

Jason looks at Clark's face, amazed.

JASON
 How did you do that? You made
 them go away.

CLARK
 I didn't do anything. You did it.

JASON

My Mom doesn't want me to stay
with Daddy. She's afraid I won't
be able to...

CLARK

I'll help you.

JASON

(his face light up with
wonder)
Really? How?

CLARK

I went through the same thing
when I was your age. I didn't
know what was happening or how to
stop it.

JASON

What did you do?

CLARK

I...I made a big hole in the
kitchen door.

Jason smiles as Clark looks around to see if anyone is
nearby while adjusting his glasses.

CLARK (CONT'D)

But I learned to control it. And
you will too. You can feel it.
When something is going to
happen, you feel different,
strange.

JASON

Yeah.

CLARK

When that happens, you tell
yourself to stop. Just shut your
eyes and think about how you're
not going to do anything.

JASON

Then what do I do?

CLARK

Then, when you can do that, and
it stops, you can learn to
control it. Make your body do
what you want it to do.

JASON

And then I can be like you?

CLARK
You can be whatever you want to be.

JASON
Like a doctor?

CLARK
(chuckles)
Yeah, like a doctor.

Lois approaches from Richard's office.

LOIS
Everything OK?

CLARK
Yeah, we were just talking.

LOIS
Are you ready to go with Daddy?

Jason nods and looks at Richard who closes the door to his office and walks towards them.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Do you remember what we talked about honey?

JASON
Uh-huh.

LOIS
Just try not to do anything...

She glances at Clark, then looks back at Jason.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Be careful.

JASON
I will Mom.

Jason leans over and hugs Lois as Richard moves beside them.

RICHARD
You ready squirt?

JASON
I'm hungry.

RICHARD
We'll have to do something about that.

LOIS
No more burritos.

JASON
Aww Mom...

RICHARD
Mommy's right, no burritos.

Richard winks at Jason, a move that Clark sees, causing him to smile.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Come on, let's make sure you have everything.

Richard picks Jason up and puts him over his shoulder, walking away towards the exit. Jason looks back and waves.

JASON
Bye Mom. Bye Clark.

LOIS
Bye honey, be good.

Clark waves goodbye to Jason as he leaves, on Richards shoulder. Lois is staring after them.

CLARK
Are you OK?

Lois doesn't respond as she watches her son disappear through the exit.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Lois?

LOIS
What? Yeah. I'm fine Clark. It's just...parent stuff.

CLARK
I uh...I don't think you need to worry. He's a great kid.

LOIS
Yeah, he really is.
(beat)
Well we aren't paid to stand around chatting all day Clark, Perry will have a field day if we don't figure out what Corben was up to.

CLARK
Uh, right. We should go down to S.C.U. and see if Inspector Sawyer can fill us in.

LOIS

Wow, that's actually a good idea.
You wouldn't be trying to upstage
me, would you Smallville?

CLARK

It's not easy but I do my best.

Lois smiles and shakes her head and Clark stands, picking
his coat up from the back of his chair.

EXT. STAR LABS

A limousine pulls up outside the front entrance to the
building.

Mercy Graves steps out of the car from the driver's side
and walks back to open the passenger door. Kitty climbs out
first, followed by Lex.

KITTY

What are we doing here?

LEX

Checking on an investment.

Mercy walks back and opens the trunk. Reaching inside, she
takes out a small silver briefcase and hands it to Lex.

LEX (CONT'D)

Stay with the car.

MERCY

Yes Mr. Luthor.

Lex walks towards the door, followed by Kitty who turns her
head back to smirk at Mercy.

Lex speaks without even looking back.

LEX

Both of you.

KITTY

What? I'm not the hired help Lex.

LEX

Stay here.

Lex continues walking and enters through the door as Mercy
walks up behind Kitty.

MERCY

So. I guess you're not his
favourite pet after all.

INT. STAR LABS - ROBOTICS ROOM

John Corben is lying motionless on a table in the centre of the room. His limbs have been removed and a large metal plate is resting where his chest should be, with a small, empty chamber near his heart.

A pair of robotic arms lie on an adjacent table.

Professor Vale is standing over Corben, with a saw in his hand. He switches it on and starts to press it against Corbens skull.

He stops suddenly, as the door behind him opens.

VALE

This is a restricted area.

LEX (O.C)

I should hope so.

Vale turns around to see Luthor stepping inside, closing the door behind him.

LEX (CONT'D)

After all, you are being paid to be discreet.

VALE

Mr. Luthor...uh, I'm making good progress. This metal alloy is surprisingly light yet durable and conductive. I've never seen anything like it. The formula you gave me...nobody on the planet is developing anything anywhere near this advanced. And these designs...I think you owe me some answers.

LEX

You weren't hired to ask questions Professor.

VALE

I understand your desire for secrecy, but the more I understand about this alloy and these robotic, the more efficient I can be.

LEX

Very well, but there will be consequences if I discover that you have been blabbing to anyone about this, understood.

VALE

Yes, of course.

LEX

On Krypton they called it metallo. It's a synthetic alloy, hundreds of times stronger than titanium.

VALE

K-Krypton? Superman's home world?

LEX

Exactly. Their society thrived on crystal-based technology, but it was not always suited to their endeavours. Particularly during war. Crystals shatter. But metallo provided protection against all but the most powerful of weapons. It's strong but light, and can be easily adapted serve many functions and as you have no doubt discovered, manufacturing the substance is surprisingly easy.

VALE

But how do you know all of this?

LEX

I know many things that your mind could never comprehend. Now tell me what progress you've made.

Professor Vale puts down the saw and walks towards the metal chest plate.

VALE

As you can see, rather than building the mechanical structure separately, I am using own Corben's skeletal structure as a base and fitting the robotics around it.

LEX

How long?

VALE

It's hard to say. Keeping his brain functions intact is proving difficult. I fear if I move too quickly, all you will get is an empty shell.

LEX

I don't want excuses. Get it done.

VALE

And there's another issue. There is nothing to power the robotics. These machines are so advanced, you would need a dedicated power station to keep them running.

Lex puts his briefcase on the table and opens it. Inside is a lead box, which he also opens, prompting Vale to walk over and take a look.

Inside is a perfectly smooth green sphere, about the size of a human heart.

VALE (CONT'D)

Is that...?

LEX

Kryptonite. Its properties are quite amazing. Just this one piece emits enough energy to power Metropolis for a year.

VALE

Do you know what that means? With enough of this stuff we could solve the worlds energy problems within a year.

LEX

Unfortunately, harnessing that energy is beyond the human race. That mechanical body is the only thing in the world that can absorb and use the energy. Besides, there isn't enough Kryptonite around to solve all the worlds problems.

VALE

But still, with these designs, maybe we could find a way. We may even be able to replicate the energy in the future. It's far more important than this science project.

LEX

No. This is what's important.
(points at Corben)
This is all that matters. Get back to work.

Lex closes the briefcase and takes it with him as he heads for the door.

VALE

If I didn't know any better I'd wonder if you saw this thing as a weapon.

Lex pauses for a moment. He doesn't look back, he just stands by the door.

LEX

You work for me Professor, don't forget that.

Lex opens the door and steps out, closing it behind him as Professor Vale picks up the saw and goes back to work on Corben.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Officers and detectives enter and exit the building. A police car pulls up next to the sidewalk.

The officer gets out and opens the back door, helping his handcuffed suspect get out.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT

Phones are ringing, cops are working and talking amongst themselves. At the far end of the room a closed door leads to a private office.

The glass on the door has an insignia that reads:

INSPECTOR SAWYER - SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT

INT. SAWYER'S OFFICE

Maggie Sawyer is sitting at her desk. Lois and Clark are sitting across from her while Dan Turpin sits on the window sill behind her.

Clark is holding a pen and a small note pad, taking notes as they converse.

MAGGIE

I've had dealings with Corben before. The Special Crimes Unit was set up catch criminals like him.

DAN

The guy's scum. He'd kill his own mother for the right price.

LOIS

And he had no links to Intergang before this?

MAGGIE

None. That's what's so strange. Corben likes to play it quiet. Sure he'll blow up the occasional federal building for the right price, but he always makes sure he's far away when the bomb goes off. This is too public for him.

DAN

Maybe he wants to be famous. Guys like that get off on seeing the pain they cause.

CLARK

What about Intergang? Why would they want to get involved in something like this?

DAN

Who knows...we've been trying to track them for months and we've found nothing. We don't know where they came from, who's involved...

MAGGIE

Or if they exist at all. There's just no place for organised crime in Metropolis, not on the level we're talking about. Maybe in Gotham, but not here. Not with Superman watching over the city.

DAN

I'm not so sure about that.

LOIS

I take it you're not a fan.

DAN

Don't get me wrong, I appreciate what the guy has done but he ain't no cop. I guess he means well, but he tends to undermine the police presence in the city. Cops get complacent and that's the last thing we need.

MAGGIE

He probably saved our lives yesterday. And the crime rate is lower than it's ever been.

DAN

And what happens if he decides to leave again?

MAGGIE

This isn't the time. The fact is we don't know if Corben was telling the truth or not about Intergang and the last thing we need are unfounded rumors.

CLARK

Where's Corben now?

MAGGIE

Metropolis General.

LOIS

Any chance we could talk to him?

DAN

You're welcome to try.

MAGGIE

He's been in a coma since City Hall. But Lane, if you do manage to get anything out of him, bring it here first.

LOIS

What about freedom of the press?

MAGGIE

It's an ongoing investigation. Besides, if Intergang are behind this, we need all the information we can get.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DUSK

The sky has turned red as the sun drops down behind the sky-reaching buildings of Metropolis. Street lamps flicker as they are switched on.

Lois and Clark exit Police Headquarters, walking down the steps to the sidewalks as cops drag suspects in the opposite direction.

CLARK

I guess we should head over to the hospital.

LOIS

(glances at her watch)
No, they'll never let us in now.
We'll have to wait until morning.

CLARK

In that case, do you want to maybe uh, I don't know, maybe get something to eat?

LOIS

Sure, why not. I could murder a hot dog...wait, no I can't. Lucy is on the red eye to Houston tonight and I said I'd take her to the airport.

CLARK

That's alright. How is Lucy?

LOIS

Oh she's great. Doesn't stop talking. I think you'd like her. Maybe I could set you up or put in a word for you.

CLARK

Isn't she married?

LOIS

Divorced, twice. Try to keep up.

CLARK

Well I don't think...I mean I don't have time to...

LOIS

You know what your problem is?

CLARK

Don't tell me. Self confidence, right?

LOIS

Yeah well, that too. But you're biggest problem is that you're addicted to your work. You need to take a break, see the sights. The right girl isn't just going to fall out of the sky for you to catch her you know.

CLARK

Sure Lois...

LOIS

Look, I gotta go. Call Perry and tell him what's happening. And I'll see you outside Metropolis General at 10 tomorrow.

Lois starts to hurry away towards a nearby taxi.

CLARK
Give Lucy my best.

Lois keeps walking as she looks back and waves before climbing into the taxi as Clark looks on, slightly bemused.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lex is standing at the open window, as Kitty sits behind him at his desk, sipping on a Martini.

KITTY
It's wrong Lex.

LEX
What did I tell you about questioning me?

KITTY
Have you no compassion?

LEX
Corben will become stronger than he has ever been. He will feel no pain, know no fear. I've given him a chance to live. Is that not compassion?

KITTY
No, it's you using someone to get what you want. You told me that all I had to do was be a good little servant to that old Vanderworth hag and I'd get a cut of the money. Instead you go off and build yourself an island.

LEX
And?

KITTY
It's been four years Lex. Four years and I haven't seen a dime.

LEX
I gave you everything a girl could want. I even fed your dog.

KITTY
Until you killed it.

LEX
Sacrifices have to be made.

KITTY

You really are a monster.

Lex turns in from the window to face Kitty.

LEX

Then why don't you leave?

KITTY

I have nowhere else to go. You made sure of that.

LEX

Exactly. You'll stay with me until I say otherwise. And don't presume to think you're in a position to dictate to me.

The door opens and Mercy enters the room.

KITTY

What do you want?

Mercy glances at Kitty then focuses her attention on Lex.

LEX

You have news from Professor Vale?

MERCY

Yes Mr. Luthor. He says that project activation should be ready by tomorrow.

LEX

Good. You will drive me to Star Labs at 9am. Don't be late.

MERCY

Yes sir.

Lex walks past Kitty and Mercy, leaving the office. Mercy turns to Kitty and smirks.

MERCY (CONT'D)

Lovers tiff?

KITTY

It's none of your business. You're just the driver.

MERCY

And you're the whore.

Kitty stands and slaps Mercy across the face.

KITTY

Don't you dare say that to me.
You're just out to cause trouble,
a witch trying to put a spell on
Lex. Well it won't work. He sees
through your game. And so do I.

Mercy grabs Kitty by the hair and starts pulling her
towards the window.

KITTY (CONT'D)

(screaming)

No...stop...psycho bitch...let go
of me.

They stop at the window and Mercy lifts Kitty's head up to
look out at the city.

MERCY

Look at that. Look at the lights,
the towering sky scrapers. This
whole city will belong to Lex.
And I'll be there. I'll help him
get what he wants.

KITTY

(struggling to break
free)

Let go!

MERCY

But you...you see money, you see
an opportunity. And there's
nothing wrong with that. Ambition
is good. But you're a
distraction. You'll hold him
back. And I won't let that
happen.

Mercy begins pushing Kitty out towards the edge as Kitty
tries to fight back.

KITTY

What are you doing...stop...let
go...no..

MERCY

It's the only way.

With a final shove, Mercy pushes Kitty through the open
window.

EXT. LEXCORP

Kitty falls, screaming as Mercy peers out from above, grinning, watching as Kitty falls to the ground below with a heavy thud.

She lies on the ground, motionless, her head rolls to one side. Her eyes are open but she is clearly dead.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE

Mercy steps back from the window and turns to see Lex at the doorway.

LEX
What did you do?

MERCY
What had to be done sir. She was
a liability.

Lex walks past Mercy and looks out through the window.

Mercy watches as he comes back inside, closing it. Lex walks towards her.

MERCY (CONT'D)
I thought...

Lex grabs Mercy by the throat and slams her against the wall, gripping her tightly.

LEX
If I wanted someone who could
think I would have hired an
accountant. Your job is to do
what I order you to, that's all.

MERCY
(choking)
I only...I only did what I
thought was...was best. She would
have betrayed you.

LEX
Who I choose to associate with is
none of your concern. If this
gets back to me...

MERCY
It..it won't.

Lex lets go and Mercy falls to the floor.

LEX

See that it doesn't. I want that mess cleaned up. Don't ever act without my say so again. I'll kill you myself if I have to...is that clear?

MERCY

Yes...yes sir.

Mercy rubs her throat, grimacing in pain as she sits on the floor against the wall like a wounded animal.

LEX

And for future reference, the next time you decide to kill someone, don't throw them out a window. In this city you never know who might come along and catch them.

Mercy doesn't answer. She follows Lex's gaze as he looks out through the window.

LEX (CONT'D)

Goodbye Kitty.

Lex then turns and leaves as Mercy struggles to pick herself up.

EXT. METROPOLIS GENERAL HOSPITAL - MORNING

Clark is standing outside the hospital watching as an ambulance pulls up.

A PARAMEDIC emerges from the drivers side and hurries to the back, opening the rear door, allowing another paramedic to step out.

Together they pull a stretcher out, putting the wheels on the ground. Lying on the stretcher is an injured man, his chest bandaged.

Clark uses his X-RAY VISION to check the injuries.

CLARK

No internal bleeding. He'll be OK.

PARAMEDIC

Yeah sure, whatever you say buddy. Can you move?

CLARK

What? Oh, right sorry.

Clark steps out of the way as the paramedics wheel the man inside.

Clark looks up and spots Lois rushing across the street, just managing to avoid being hit by a car.

LOIS

I know, I said 10 but I don't have
a car thanks to those juveniles
and the cabs in this city get
slower by the day.

(beat)

So are we going inside? You don't
get a story by just standing
around Clark,

Lois brushes past Clark, who follows, heading towards the entrance.

CLARK

You know you really should be
more careful Lois. That car
almost hit you.

LOIS

Who are you, my father? Now
that's a disturbing image.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION

LOIS

What do you mean he's not here?

Lois and Clark are standing at the front desk. A young nurse, MATILDA, is standing behind the desk.

LOIS (CONT'D)

The guy is in a coma. Last I
heard there wasn't a bone in his
body that hadn't been shattered.
He couldn't have just walked out
the door.

MATILDA

As I said Miss Lane. He isn't
here. Our records show he was
checked out yesterday morning.

CLARK

He's supposed to be under police
guard.

MATILDA

Again, I don't know anything
about that. All I know is what's
on this screen.

LOIS

Who checked him out then?

MATILDA

Hospital policy dictates that I cannot release that information.

LOIS

Listen...

(looks at name tag on
Matilda)

Matilda...John Corben is a criminal and if this hospital let him go, that could mean trouble for your bosses and when the suits get in trouble they look for scapegoats.

MATILDA

What are you--

LOIS

Whatever information you can give us, anything at all. It would help. If you're not sure, call Inspector Sawyer at S.C.U, she'll vouch for us.

Matilda glances at Lois then at Clark. She sighs and starts typing at the computer on the desk.

MATILDA

This is unusual.

CLARK

Is something wrong?

MATILDA

No, it says here that Corben was transferred to Star Labs for an experimental procedure. I didn't know they had a medical facility up there.

LOIS

They don't.

CLARK

Who signed for it?

MATILDA

Uh, a Professor Vale.

CLARK

Emmet Vale?

LOIS

You know him?

CLARK
I've read his work. He's a
leading figure in the field of
advanced robotics.

LOIS
(to Matilda)
Thanks.

Matilda goes back to her work as Lois and Clark start
walking towards the exit.

LOIS (CONT'D)
How well do you know this guy?

CLARK
I don't, not really. I did a
piece on robotic limbs a couple
of years back for the lifestyle
section. I couldn't even get a
quote from him, never mind an
interview.

LOIS
No chance you can get us in to
see him then?

CLARK
I doubt it. He doesn't like
reporters.

EXT. METROPOLIS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Lois and Clark exit through the door walking towards the
street.

CLARK
We should head over there anyway,
we might get lucky.

LOIS
I can't. I've got to collect
Jason in an hour.

CLARK
Oh. After lunch then?

LOIS
Sure. You should head back to the
Planet. Maybe Perry can get score
some points with Professor
Hamilton.

CLARK
The head of Star Labs?

LOIS

Yeah. He and Perry golf together.
Maybe he can get us in to see
Vale.

INT. STAR LABS - ROBOTICS ROOM

Professor Vale stands over the body of Corben, applying a focused laser to his forehead, joining two pieces of skin together.

Lex stands in the corner, his arms folded, watching the procedure.

LEX

How long?

VALE

(doesn't stop working)
You really need to learn patience
Lex.

LEX

Preaching really doesn't suit you
Professor.

VALE

The graft seems to be holding. If
all goes well he won't even know
that there's been any change to
his body. At least not at first.
We're almost ready for the
insertion.

He stops and looks up at Lex.

VALE (CONT'D)

The kryptonite?

LEX

Don't concern yourself with that.
Just concentrate on completing
your work.

Vale moves away from Corben, towards Lex, placing the laser tool down on the table.

VALE

I've followed the instructions to
the letter. But we don't even
know if this is going to work.
What happens if we press the on
switch and nothing happens? We
need to test the kryptonite to
make sure that it has enough
energy to power this...machine.

LEX

No tests. I have assurances that it will suffice. Besides, Corben will need the kryptonite.

Vale stops, looking back at Corben, then again at Lex.

VALE

It's...it's true isn't it...you did try to kill Superman.

LEX

Don't you read the papers? I was acquitted.

VALE

Not guilty and innocent are two different things. Why would you want the inner casing lined with lead? Kryptonite radiation is harmless in such small doses and the metallo alloy is more than enough to shield from any exposure.

LEX

Do your job Professor.

VALE

You're underestimating him. Even with these advances, Corben doesn't stand a chance against Superman.

Lex glances at Corben, before smiling back at Vale.

LEX

You need to keep your mind on your work. Besides, Corben doesn't need to kill Superman, just keep him busy. Get back to work.

lex glares at Vale who relents and returns to Corben, picking up the laser tool, picking up where he left off.

EXT. RICHARDS HOUSE

A small seaplane rests in the river, tied up on the dock. The water is calm, a slight breeze gently blows through the grass on the lawn.

RICHARD (O.S.)

Your Mom's coming to pick you up. Grab your stuff kiddo.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

Richard stands near the kitchen door, leaning out and looking towards the stairs.

RICHARD
Jason, can you hear me? Your
Mom's coming.

Richard stands, waiting for a response but not comes.

INT. HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS

Richard walks out of the kitchen towards the stairs. He leans over to look up the stairs.

RICHARD
Jason?

Again he waits...no answer. He starts to walk up the stairs.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS

Richard gets to the top of the stairs and walks to the closed door of Jason's room. He knocks at the door.

RICHARD
Are you alright buddy?
(knocks again)
Jason.

Richard knocks again and then opens the door, stepping inside.

INT. JASON'S ROOM

Richard steps inside and looks to find Jason crouched on the floor against the wall opposite his bed.

His eyes are tightly shut and he is breathing rapidly.

JASON
(agitated)
No, stop...you're not coming out

RICHARD
Jason?

Jason opens his eyes to look up at Richard standing in the doorway.

Almost as soon as his eyes open, they unleash a BLAST of HEAT-VISION that shoots past Richards shoulder, out the door and starts burning through the wall near the stairs.

Jason turns his head away from Richard and the HEAT-VISION follows, setting fire to the curtains and the wall around the window.

Richard stands, stunned, watching as Jason closes his eyes, as if trying to keep from releasing any more blasts of heat energy.

The flickering of the rising fire catches his eye, snapping him out of his stunned stance.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Jason.

He jumps into action, rushing to Jason and picking him up, carrying him out the door.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS

Richard takes Jason out of the room to find that the area around the stairs are burning, and the fire is spreading.

Richard looks around. The route to his room is being blocked.

He carries Jason across towards the bathroom, opening the door and rushing inside.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

Richard puts Jason down and shuts the bathroom door.

Jason opens his eyes and blinks a few times, as if making sure that there was no more heat energy to release.

JASON

It's gone...it's gone.

Richard stares at Jason for a moment and then looks up at the small bathroom window.

He opens it and bends down to pick up Jason.

RICHARD

You have to climb out.

JASON

I can't. I'm too big.

Richard looks at Jason and then up at the window. He shakes his head then grabs a towel from the rack on the wall.

He walks to the shower, turning it on.

Putting the towel underneath, he gets it as wet as possible then turns the shower off before going to the corner, sitting down under the window and beckoning Jason to sit with him.

Smoke start coming in under the closed door, slowly filling the bathroom.

Richard sits low in the corner, holding Jason close to him. He puts one end of the wet towel to his face and motions Jason to do the same with the other end.

RICHARD
Just breathe through that.

JASON
I'm sorry Daddy, I'm sorry.

RICHARD
Shh, shh it's OK, it will be alright.

EXT. RICHARDS HOUSE - FRONT

A cab pulls up outside the house, which is now visibly on fire, the flames spreading rapidly.

Lois gets out of the cab in a hurry and rushes towards the house.

LOIS
(shouts)
Jason!

A NEIGHBOUR grabs Lois and stops her from running into the house.

LOIS (CONT'D)
(struggling to break free)
Let me go. My son is in there.

NEIGHBOUR
It's too hot. I've called the fire department, they're on their way.

Lois falls out of the neighbours arms, onto the ground. She stares at the burning house, tears running down her face as the fire rages through the house.

LOIS
(crying)
Jason...no.

She stands up and looks up into the sky, not even trying to wipe her tears away.

LOIS (CONT'D)
 Superman...Superman if you can
 hear me...please...help me.
 (shouts)
Superman!

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

Richard is coughing through the towel as he holds Jason close to him. The fire has burned through the door and is spreading towards them.

Jason drops his end of the towel as he coughs and starts breathing rapidly.

The fire is blown back momentarily and then comes towards them only to be blown back again.

Richard looks at the fire, then down at Jason, noticing that every time Jason exhales, the fire is pushed back away from them.

RICHARD
 Jason keep breathing, do it
 harder. Force it out.

Jason nods as he breathes more heavily, releasing short bursts of SUPER-BREATH.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 That's it. Just keep breathing.

EXT. RICHARDS HOUSE - FRONT

Lois spinning around, still crying, searching the skies for any sign of Superman.

LOIS
 Superman please...

She spots Superman FLYING in from across the city at a TREMENDOUS SPEED, slowing RAPIDLY and coming to a stop directly over the house.

LOIS (CONT'D)
 Jason's inside.

Superman hovers over the house, using his X-RAY vision to peer through the smoke and look beyond the roof, into the house.

He sees Jason and Richard huddled together in the bathroom.

Meanwhile, a fire truck and an ambulance are pulling up near the house.

Superman flies straight down, crashing through the roof.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS

Superman lands at the top of the stairs and walks towards the bathroom, the flames not affecting him.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

The door has burned away as Superman walks inside. His cape blows back a little as Jason continues to blow short bursts of SUPER BREATH.

SUPERMAN

Can you stand?

Richard nods and stands, picking Jason up. Jason starts to breathe normally again.

RICHARD

There's no way out.

Superman looks around then up at the ceiling. He walks behind Richard, who is holding on to Jason.

Superman puts one arm around Richard, while straightening the other and pointing it up towards the ceiling, his hand balled into a fist.

SUPERMAN

Keep your heads down and hold on.

Superman takes off, holding onto Richard who is ducking down while he holds Jason who is doing the same.

Superman rises up quickly, ploughing straight through the ceiling.

EXT. RICHARDS HOUSE - FRONT

They fly straight up through the roof and across towards the fire truck, where Lois is now standing alongside a group of fire fighters.

They land gently and Superman lets go and turns back towards the house as Richard puts Jason down.

Jason runs to Lois, who bends down to hug him.

LOIS

Honey, are you OK?

Superman inhales deeply and then releases a strong gust of SUPER-BREATH, blowing out the raging fire.

JASON
I'm OK Mommy.

A FIRE FIGHTER approaches Superman, looking burned remains of the house.

FIRE FIGHTER
Is it out?

SUPERMAN
The fire is gone but there's still a lot of excess heat.

FIRE FIGHTER
Better spray it then. Thanks.

SUPERMAN
I'm happy to help.

Superman turns to face Lois who is hugging Jason. Richard is standing next to them as the ambulance pulls up.

Lois looks up, making eye contact with Superman.

LOIS
Thank you.

Superman nods and steps away, preparing to take off.

RICHARD
Superman, wait.

Superman looks back at Richard who glances down at Lois and Jason before looking back at Superman.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I think we need to talk.

LOIS
Now?

SUPERMAN
You need to checked by the Paramedics. We can talk later.

RICHARD
I don't think this can wait.
(turns to Jason)
Jason, why don't you go over to the ambulance and let them make sure you're OK.

JASON
OK.

Lois lets Jason go, watching him walk towards the paramedics.

She stands up straight and walks towards Superman. Richard walks with her and the three move away from the fire fighters where they won't be heard.

LOIS
What is it?

RICHARD
Jason. He's...he's not my son.

Lois and Superman glance at each other for a moment.

LOIS
What...what do you mean?

RICHARD
The fire...it came from him. From his eyes.

LOIS
I...

RICHARD
How? When?

LOIS
It was before I even knew you.
Before Superman left for Krypton.
We...

RICHARD
But you're not human. How could you have had a child?

SUPERMAN
I didn't know it was possible. As far as I knew, my genes were incompatible with a human being.

Richard looks over at Jason, watching him as he is checked by Paramedics. He shakes his head and turns back.

RICHARD
No, this can't be right. Jason was born a year after you disappeared. He was born premature, the doctors said so. There's a big difference between a month early and three months late.

SUPERMAN
Pregnancy among Kryptonians is 14 months. If Jason's was 12, it must be a side effect of Human and Kryptonian bonding.

RICHARD

Did you know?

LOIS

Of course not, how could I? He was gone, and then you came into my life. I didn't find out I was pregnant until after we started going out. I thought he was yours. It wasn't until after Superman came back that I discovered the truth. Richard, you can't abandon him.

RICHARD

I won't.

(to Superman)

You're his father. But I raised him. He's my son, now and always.

SUPERMAN

I know. All I want is to do what's best for Jason and I know you want the same. I haven't tried to get in the way and I won't. I will be here if and when he needs me and I will do my best to protect him. But he needs you too and I won't interfere with that. You were there when I wasn't. He is your son.

RICHARD

But that's just it. He needs you now.

LOIS

Richard this really isn't the time or the place to talk about this.

RICHARD

He couldn't control it. Something is happening to him. He did what you do, but he couldn't control it, he couldn't make it stop.

SUPERMAN

My abilities started to manifest as soon as I came here. I had years to control them, to adapt. But in Jason, these powers are coming all at once and his body is struggling to contain them.

RICHARD

Can you help him?

SUPERMAN

I think so. I can teach him to control it, like I did.

LOIS

But you can't just go to the park and teach him to fly.

SUPERMAN

There is a place, away from civilisation.

LOIS

The Fortress...I thought it was dead?

SUPERMAN

It is. But the structure is in an isolated area.

RICHARD

Wait...Fortress?

LOIS

It's a place in the Arctic. Superman built it when he came here. It's hidden, far from any towns or cities.

SUPERMAN

Can you fly?

RICHARD

I think so. But where am I supposed to go? How am I supposed to find it?

SUPERMAN

Just head north. I'll find you and show you the way.

EXT. STAR LABS

Mercy sits on the hood of a black limo, parked outside the entrance to Star Labs. A SECURITY GUARD approaches her.

SECURITY GUARD

You'll have to move that. You're blocking the entrance.

MERCY

I'm waiting for someone.

SECURITY GUARD

You'll have to wait somewhere else.

The Security guard puts his hand on Mercy's shoulder, prompting her to get off the hood of the limo.

As she does so, she GRABS the guards arm, pulling it behind his back and SLAMS his head onto the hood.

MERCY

Don't touch me again.

SECURITY GUARD

(struggling)

Jesus lady, no need to get hostile.

Mercy lets go and the security guard stands up, rubbing his arm as if in pain.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Are you gonna move it?

MERCY

Lex Luthor funds half the research in this place. If you walk away now you might still have a job tomorrow.

SECURITY GUARD

This is Lex Luthor's limo? I..I didn't know.

MERCY

Of course you didn't. Now leave before I get really annoyed.

The Security Guard backs away slowly.

SECURITY GUARD

Alright lady, just stay cool.

INT. STAR LABS - ROBOTICS ROOM

Lex is holding the small lead box in his hands. He opens it, revealing the piece of kryptonite.

Vale looks at it for a moment as if in awe, before reaching out and removing it.

He walks over to Corben. Two flaps of skin lie on either side of a metal chest-plate.

In the centre, where the heart would be, is a small chamber, with connections above and below.

LEX

This had better work.

VALE

I followed the plans. If it fails
blame your source, not me.

Vale stands over Corben, placing the kryptonite between the two connection nodes. It slots in perfectly and glows briefly before dimming again.

Vale then slides a panel down from the top of the chamber, closing it off.

He walks to the other side brings the two flaps of skin together before reaching across to the table and picking up the laser tool.

He activates it, running the laser across the two flaps of skin, sealing them together as Lex watches.

LEX

Well?

Vale steps back, placing the tool back on the table. He looks at Corben who is lying motionless, eyes closed.

VALE

I don't know. I guess we just
wait.

Without warning, Corben opens his eyes and he sits up, grabbing Vale around the throat.

Corben stands and SNAPS Vale's neck, killing him. He is visibly surprised as if not realising his own strength.

He drops Vale, who falls to the floor, lifeless.

Corben then looks up at Lex.

CORBEN

I know you...Lex Luthor. What are
you doing here?

LEX

Saving your life.

CORBEN

Well if you want to keep yours,
you won't try to stop me.

LEX

I wouldn't dream of it.

Corben grabs a set of medical scrubs from the bench and puts them on then makes his way towards the door.

Lex steps aside as Corben rushes to the door. He looks at Lex, shoving him back before escaping out into the corridor.

Lex looks across at Vale's lifeless body and smiles.

LEX (CONT'D)
Congratulations Professor.

EXT. STAR LABS

Corben rushes out through the exit, past Mercy and across the street, disappearing through an alley on the far side.

Lex follows through the exit soon after and walks over to Mercy who is standing by the limo.

MERCY
Was that...?

LEX
Yes.

MERCY
It worked then?

LEX
Exceedingly well. I need you to do a clean up.

MERCY
I told you, I didn't sign up to be your maid Lex.

LEX
This one requires subtlety and your unique skills. Our Professor friend hasn't had the best of days.

Mercy opens the passenger door of the limo for Lex to get inside.

EXT. ARCTIC

A small Sea Plane flies across the Arctic, with nothing but ice in every direction.

INT. SEA PLANE

Richard sits in the pilot's seat, while Lois sits next to him.

Jason is in the back, strapped in and looking out through the window at the ice below.

RICHARD
You've been to this place before?

LOIS
A couple of times.

RICHARD
Maybe you could look at the charts then. I can't afford to waste fuel going around in circles.

LOIS
I didn't come up here by plane.

Lois looks out and spots Superman flying towards them.

LOIS (CONT'D)
There he is.

EXT. ARCTIC

Superman flies towards the plane, stopping in mid air. He hovers, letting the plane go past before flying after it.

Jason waves through the window as Superman flies past, causing him to smile.

Flying up to the front he matches his speed and direction to that of the plane and signals to Richard to cut the engine.

INT. SEA PLANE

Lois and Richard glance at each other then out at Superman.

RICHARD
Is he serious?

LOIS
It's Superman. He won't let us fall.

Richard shrugs and switches the engine off as Superman disappears underneath the plane.

RICHARD
Well, we're not falling.

EXT. ARCTIC

Superman is underneath the plane, holding it up on his back as he flies north towards a large cliff face in the distance.

INT. STACY'S APARTMENT

Stacy sits on her couch, watching the news, almost in a trance. A knock on the door causes her to jump.

She stands and walks to the door with caution.

STACY
Who is it?

CORBEN (O.S.)
Stace...

STACY
John?

Stacy opens the door to find Corben standing there.

She steps back in shock as Corben walks in and closes the door behind him.

CORBEN
How much cash do you have? We
need to get out of Metropolis.

STACY
Wh...what happened to you? They
said on the news that you were in
a coma. They said your bones were
broken...that...that you were on
life support.

CORBEN
I don't know baby. I woke up in a
lab. I think they must have fixed
me somehow...it doesn't make
sense to me either.

Corben is agitated. He walks to the window, looking outside before drawing the curtain.

CORBEN (CONT'D)
You know those guys who lose an
arm or a leg, but it feels like
it's still there? I feel the
exact opposite. I can see my arm,
I can move it...but it's like
it's not there. My whole
body...it's like it's not really
there.

STACY
You need to see a doctor.

CORBEN

No, no. I can't risk it. We need to leave today. We'll take your car, drive to the Canadian border. I've got some friends up there. We can lay low for a couple of weeks and catch a ride on a freighter to Europe.

STACY

John you need to calm down. I haven't...I thought I'd never see you again.

John walks to Stacy. He looks at her and then leans in, kissing her. Stacy returns the kiss but Corben starts to kiss her harder, almost forcing his lips through hers.

Stacy starts to struggle and protest, fighting against him.

She scratches Corben's arm and he responds by pulling back and hitting her clean across the face, knocking her to the floor across the room.

Corben looks down at her. She isn't moving.

CORBEN

Stace? I'm sorry I just...I couldn't feel it. I needed to feel your lips but I couldn't. I didn't even feel you scratch me, I just...I reacted.

(beat)

Stacy?

Corben bends down beside her. He shakes her gently but she doesn't react.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Stacy? I didn't mean to...wake up. Wake up Stace.

He shakes her again...once again, no reaction. She isn't moving, she isn't breathing.

Corben stands and steps back, shocked.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

No. This can't be...I didn't hit you that...

Corben has his head in his hands.

He glances at his scratched arm, seeing what appears to be metal under the wound. There is no blood.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

What the...? What did they do to me?

Corben walks to the kitchen counter.

Reaching underneath he opens a drawer and pulls out a knife. He places the blade against his forearm and hesitates for a moment.

Corben then grits his teeth, preparing for pain as he jams the knife through the skin and creates a tear along the forearm.

His eyes widen in shock as he sees no bone or tissue, just metal.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

No...no what did they do? I can't feel it, I can't...Lex Luthor...

Corben drops the knife and steps over Stacy's body as he exits the apartment in a hurry, not even bothering to close the door behind him.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

Jason, Richard and Lois stand in the Fortress. It is dark, with only faint beams of light from the sun providing any illumination.

RICHARD

Wow...I didn't know there was anything like this here.

LOIS

Nobody does...well, almost nobody. Superman told me once that it's based on the design of an ancient fortress on Krypton.

Superman descends from above, floating down to the floor slowly.

As soon as his feet touch the ground, the entire Fortress lights up, the crystal walls emitting a soft glow.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You told me the crystals were gone. Don't you need them to power the Fortress?

SUPERMAN

It can survive on solar power. Although without the crystals, it's not much more than an empty space.

Jason is walking around the central floor of the Fortress, in awe of his surroundings.

LOIS

Jason honey, be careful.

SUPERMAN

It's alright. But I think we should get started.

RICHARD

How long will it take?

SUPERMAN

I don't know. I've had my whole life to adapt. It will take years for him to master his abilities but maybe I can give him a degree of control.

Lois walks to Jason and bends down in front of him.

LOIS

Jason honey, I want you to whatever Superman says, OK?

JASON

OK Mom.

Superman walks to the centre of the Fortress and Jason follows as Lois goes to stand next to Richard.

RICHARD

(whispers)

Four years? You've know for four years? Why didn't you tell me?

LOIS

How could I? I didn't know how. I could barely make sense of it myself.

RICHARD

Is that why you've hardly spoken to me?

LOIS

It's a lot of things. I didn't mean to push you away, it just happened, and really it's not your fault. I just couldn't...I don't know.

Superman and Jason stand together in the centre of the Fortress, facing each other.

JASON

You said I could tell myself to stop, so it wouldn't happen, but it didn't work.

SUPERMAN

I know. It takes time. But I'm here to help you, to guide you. OK?

JASON

OK.

Superman takes off, flying to the top of the Fortress, he starts to spin and descend at the same time until he lands back where he started, facing Jason.

SUPERMAN

Do you see how I did that?

JASON

No.

SUPERMAN

I just did. I didn't have to think, I just flew.

JASON

Will I be able to fly like you?

SUPERMAN

I don't know. A part of you is like everyone else, so I don't know if you will be able to do everything I can do. But with time the things you can do will come just as easily as how I just flew.

JASON

I don't understand.

SUPERMAN

OK. Wave to your Mom.

Jason looks over to Lois and waves. She waves back.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

How did you do that? How did you wave?

JASON

You told me to, and then I just did.

SUPERMAN

That's how your powers will be.
You'll just be able to use them,
like walking or waving...it's
just something you do.

JASON

Oh, I see.

Superman smiles and walks over to Lois and Richard.

RICHARD

Is everything OK?

SUPERMAN

Yeah, I think he understands.
Could you whisper?

LOIS

Whisper?

SUPERMAN

Yes. Very quietly. Talk to Jason.

RICHARD

But he won't hear us from there.

SUPERMAN

He will.

Lois nods and Superman walks back to Jason.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

I want you to close your eyes OK.
And just listen.

JASON

Listen to what?

SUPERMAN

Nothing, just relax and listen
for a sound.

Jason closes his eyes and remains still.

Across the room, Lois and Richard are whispering quietly.

LOIS

Jason...Jason honey we love you.
And we're proud of you.

RICHARD

We love you Jason...

Jason remains still, trying to listen.

JASON

I don't hear anything.

SUPERMAN
You're Mom is saying something.
Listen for her voice.

Jason's SUPER-HEARING suddenly becomes active as he starts to hear Richard and Lois speaking as well as a THUMPING SOUND.

JASON
I can hear her and other things too.

SUPERMAN
Now forget the other sounds and just listen to your Mom. What's she saying?

Jason listens. His SUPER-HEARING starts to pick through the sounds until only the voice of Lois and the thumping, which is softer, more distant now, can still be heard.

LOIS (O.C.)
...We love you honey...and we're proud of you...

JASON
She says she loves me.

SUPERMAN
That's good.

JASON
But I still hear a different sound, like drums.

SUPERMAN
That's your heart. Focus on it.
Listen to it beating.

The rhythmic thumping grows louder drowning out every other sound.

JASON
I hear it.

SUPERMAN
Now let it go. Listen to my voice. Let your heartbeat just fade away.

JASON
It's gone.

Jason opens his eyes and looks up at Superman.

SUPERMAN
You did great.

JASON

Is everything like that?

SUPERMAN

More or less. Your body is made up of lots of muscles that let you do things like walk and talk and even blink. Your powers come out because of your muscles. When you learn to control them, you can control your powers.

JASON

But how will I remember what to do?

SUPERMAN

You won't have to. Your mind controls every muscle in your body and tells it what to do. But it doesn't know how to control your powers. So we need to teach your mind how to do it. And when it can, you won't need to think about it, it will happen when you want it to.

JASON

That sounds hard.

SUPERMAN

I'll guide you through, one step at a time.

EXT. METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON

Lex sits alone in his office, looking at his computer screen. The face of Brainiac is on the screen.

Lex positions the small PC microphone on his desk.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)

I have traced two Kryptonian signatures to the an area covering the northern pole of your planet. I thought I had come across a third but the magnetic interference at the pole make exact readings impossible. I cannot pinpoint a location.

LEX

It must be the Fortress.

BRAINIAC

Fortress?

LEX

His home away from home. He won't go down easy.

BRAINIAC

My intention is not to kill him. Kal-El must join with me. It is his responsibility to preserve the last legacy of Krypton.

LEX

And what exactly does that mean?

BRAINIAC

Knowledge, Lex Luthor. Krypton was perhaps the most advanced society in the known galaxies. The history of Krypton, the knowledge its people obtained over many centuries, is contained within me. Not even Jor-El's impressive library came anywhere near the level of knowledge embedded within my program.

LEX

Then why the need for force?

BRAINIAC

The responsibility would take him away from the humans he protects and I fear that having done so once before, he would be reluctant to leave them again. Indeed he may be hostile towards the idea.

INT. LEXCORP - CORRIDOR

Mercy stands outside Lex Luthor's office, like a bouncer, standing straight and tall.

John Corben approaches from around the corner. He rushes Mercy, knocking her back against the wall.

Mercy tries to fight back, hitting Corben with a strong punch to the jaw, but he doesn't flinch.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE

Lex is still sitting at his chair, talking to Brainiac.

BRAINIAC (SCREEN)

What about your messenger?

The door swings open and Mercy walks in, with Corben behind her, his arm around her neck, squeezing tightly, choking her.

LEX

He'll be there.

The signal turns to static and Lex switches off the screen before looking up at Corben.

CORBEN

I want answers Luthor. And you're going to give them to me. Or else I'll snap her pretty little neck. You've seen me do it before. Don't think I won't do it again.

LEX

John, John...there really is no need for this. I could have answered all your questions at the lab had you not killed poor Mr. Vale and rushed out. In fact I should thank you. You saved me the trouble of killing him myself. Now can you please release my assistant?

Corben looks at Lex then at Mercy. He releases his grip, allowing Mercy to get free.

She coughs as she tries to breathe normally, slowly recovering.

Corben then lifts his forearm, showing Lex the metal under his skin.

LEX (CONT'D)

Oh dear. Mercy, when we're finished here, take Mr. Corben down to medical and get that arm stitched up. And find him some new clothes.

CORBEN

What the hell did you do to me?

LEX

As I tried to tell you in the lab, I saved your life. Your body was broken John, beyond repair...at least beyond any normal methods.

CORBEN

So you turned me into some sort of lab experiment? A machine?

LEX

More like a cybernetic
augmentation. An improvement.

CORBEN

Improvement? I snapped that guys
neck. I don't have any hangs up
about killing, it's my job. But
it's not what I intended. And
Stacy, what about her? I hit
her...barely...and she fell to
the floor like she'd been
flattened by a sledgehammer to
the skull.

LEX

Interesting. It may take some
time to adapt to your new level
of strength. You are beyond human
John. You'll never feel hungry,
out of breath...you won't even
need to breathe. You won't feel
pain.

CORBEN

What about the taste of a womans
kiss? The smell of her perfume,
the touch of her skin? I can't
feel.

LEX

A necessary sacrifice.

CORBEN

No. Change me back. Make me
normal again.

Lex stands and walks out from behind his desk.

LEX

I'm afraid that's impossible. You
have no internal organs, no
heart, the metal alloy has been
melded to your bones, your
muscles stripped and augmented.
There is no going back.

CORBEN

I don't buy it. There has to be
something you can do. I need to
feel...something.

LEX

Unfortunately you killed the only
human being on the planet who may
have been able to help you.

CORBEN

Then maybe you should join him.

Corben advances on Lex, his fists clenched.

Lex retreats backwards, stooping suddenly, his desk in the way.

LEX

Now wait John don't be rash.
There may be a way. The one who
designed your new body. He may be
able to fix you, give you
feeling.

Corben stops and stands still. He glares at Lex.

CORBEN

What do you want from me?

LEX

Just a small favour.

CORBEN

You want me to kill someone?

LEX

Not kill, just...distract.

CORBEN

Alright Luthor. I'll play along.
Who's the target?

LEX

Well that's the interesting part.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

Brainiac stands over the crystal control panel. In front of him, a crystal space pod, around the same size as Kal-El's baby ship from Superman The Movie, is in the final stages of being formed.

Six DRONES surround Brainiac, hovering above the ground.

As the ship is completed, Brainiac looks at the drones and they immediately fly around the small ship, picking it up and carrying it towards the exit.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

The drones carry the ship across the surface of New Krypton, rising higher and higher before shooting off into space at tremendous speed.

EXT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - EVENING

Light from the sun glistens across the crystal exterior of the Fortress, surrounded by an icy cliff-face below a clear blue sky.

The sea plane rests on the pure white snow adjacent to the magnificent structure.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

Lois and Richard sit on a crystal outcropping, watching as Superman and Jason train together in the centre of the Fortress.

SUPERMAN

Feel the muscles around your eyes
and push them outwards.

Jason squints his eyes, almost blinking but not letting them close fully.

His TELESCOPIC VISION triggers and he sees right across the Fortress until he has zoomed in on a crystal wall on the far side.

JASON

I'm seeing the other side again.

SUPERMAN

Like looking through binoculars?

JASON

Yeah

SUPERMAN

That's telescopic vision. Your
eyes focus on something and zoom
in on it.

JASON

How much?

SUPERMAN

Well I can see on a microscopic
level. If I look hard enough, I
can see the cells on a piece of
skin, even further if I try.

JASON

And I can do that?

SUPERMAN

I don't know. It may not be as
much for you. But with practice
you'll be able to combine your
abilities.

JASON
Can you show me?

Superman takes off and flies backwards to the far end of the Fortress.

He holds his hand out in front of him for Jason to see.

SUPERMAN
Can you hear me?

Jason is listening, using his SUPER-HEARING.

JASON
Uh huh.

Superman uses his own SUPER-HEARING to listen to Jason's replies.

SUPERMAN
Alright, look at my hand, focus on the palm and zoom in like you did before.

Jason looks. At first there is no change in his perceptions.

But as he squints his eyes, his vision zooms in quickly on Superman's outstretched palm.

JASON
Ok.

SUPERMAN
Now let your eyes widen and hit my palm with your heat vision.

JASON
But...

SUPERMAN
It's OK, you won't hurt me.

Jason starts to widen his eyes, his sight suddenly zooming back to normal as he releases a short burst of heat energy.

The blast travels across the Fortress, hitting Superman on the S-shield on his chest before fizzling out.

JASON
I'm sorry, I lost it.

SUPERMAN
It's alright. It takes time. Right now your muscles are reacting to the position of your eye lids. With practice you won't need to widen or close your eyes.

JASON
I want to try it again.

Superman puts his hand out again.

SUPERMAN
Take your time.

Jason focuses again, zooming in on Superman's hand.

He waits a few moments, his pupils seems to be glowing red. His eyes widen suddenly.

He shoots a POWERFUL BLAST across the Fortress, striking Superman's palm, forcing him back a few steps before going out.

JASON
I'm sorry.

Superman flies back across the Fortress to Jason.

SUPERMAN
Don't worry about it. Learning to control the level of power is the hardest part.

Superman guides Jason back to Lois and Richard who both stand to greet them.

LOIS
How is he?

SUPERMAN
He's fine. He's a quick learner.

RICHARD
Jason is the number one kid in his class.

SUPERMAN
That's not surprising. A Kryptonian brain works faster than that of a human being.

LOIS
What, so we're dumber than you?

SUPERMAN
(laughs)
No, not at all. You're just a younger species. My people have had countless centuries to evolve our understanding of the mind.

RICHARD

But how do you do the things you do? How does Jason? Your powers come from the sun, I get that. Are we talking about photosynthesis? How does solar radiation give you laser eyes?

SUPERMAN

It's difficult to explain. Essentially it comes down to evolution. The early years of Krypton were volatile, ranging from extreme heat to extreme cold. The gravity was immense compared to the Earth. That life began there at all is extraordinary.

RICHARD

But shouldn't you be green or grey, with large black eyes and a huge head? You look human.

LOIS

Richard!

SUPERMAN

It's OK Lois. It's a valid question. The odds of two species on separate worlds experiences such similar evolutions are slim.

RICHARD

Like one in a million?

SUPERMAN

More. But it's not impossible. I don't know much about early life on Krypton, but one thing common to all creatures is that they need energy to survive. Human beings need food. As did the people on Krypton. But they also gathered energy from the red sun. Early Kryptonians were also hunters. The solar energy wasn't enough to sustain them. Again they adapted and evolved, developed keen eyesight, advanced hearing, the immense gravity forced increased strength levels, all just to survive.

LOIS

Could a human being survive there?

SUPERMAN

No. Indeed many species died out in the harsh conditions. Every species on Earth adapts to their conditions to survive but humans learned to do the opposite. You learned to adapt your environment to suit you. The people of Krypton did the same thing and over time, many of the abilities that had once been a necessity became dormant, hidden away and not needed anymore.

RICHARD

And when you came to Earth, they came back?

SUPERMAN

Yes, but they were not only unlocked, they were enhanced a thousand fold, maybe more. While the amount of energy my body absorbs under a yellow sun compared to the red sun of Krypton is increased, the difference is relatively small. However there are some unique properties in the radiation from stars like Rao...

RICHARD

Rao?

SUPERMAN

That's what the people of Krypton called their sun. That unique energy seemed to almost dilute the abilities of those on Krypton. Yellow stars don't have that type of radiation.

LOIS

So if you or Jason were to come in contact with radiation from a red star...would it kill you?

SUPERMAN

No, but constant exposure to it would decrease our abilities, and could even cause us to lose them altogether.

Richard and Lois look at each other as Jason tugs at Superman's cape.

JASON

Can we practice some more? All this talking is boring.

SUPERMAN

Sure, if it's OK with your Mom and Dad.

Richard looks up at Superman upon hearing the word "dad". Superman nods silently at him and Richard smiles.

LOIS

OK honey. But be careful.

Jason runs back towards the centre of the Fortress to wait for Superman.

RICHARD

Wait, what about Kryptonite?

LOIS

Jason's immune.

SUPERMAN

Are you sure?

LOIS

(nodding)

Lex Luthor had it in front of his face and but Jason didn't react to it.

SUPERMAN

Was it pure? The Kryptonite on New Krypton was combined with Earth-bound minerals. The effects weren't as immediate.

LOIS

It was pure.

SUPERMAN

It must be because of his human DNA. I don't think Jason will ever be as strong or as fast as I am, indeed there are some abilities he may never develop. But the same can be said for weaknesses.

RICHARD

Wait, where is Jason?

They look off towards the centre of the Fortress. Jason is nowhere to be seen.

LOIS
(worried)
We have to find him.

Superman uses his X-Ray vision to scan the Fortress,
looking through massive crystals.

Hiding behind one of the huge pillars of crystal, he spots
a man, his back turned.

Looking through the man, he sees Jason being held
forcefully by him.

SUPERMAN
There is no point in hiding, I
can see you. Come out now.

The man emerges, dragging Jason with him.

It's John Corben, wearing a pair of jeans and a t-shirt.
The skin on his arm has been stitched back together.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
John Corben?

LOIS
That's not possible.

CORBEN
Oh but it is. And what do we have
here...the son of Superman? Well
isn't this just great. Maybe we
can all play happy families.

SUPERMAN
Let him go.

CORBEN
Or what? We've been through this
before. You're faster than a
speeding bullet. You could have
stopped me back there, you could
have saved me.

SUPERMAN
I couldn't take the chance that
you'd use the detonator.

CORBEN
But I did anyway. I always
wondered if you could have
survived having a building
dropped on your head. But you had
to be the hero and save
everybody...everybody but me.

SUPERMAN

I couldn't. If I had moved the building would have collapsed and everyone would have died.

CORBEN

So you watched it fall down on me. I know, it's my own fault, right? And I don't hold grudges, I just kill people.

LOIS

Let my son go.

SUPERMAN

Lois, stay back.

CORBEN

Hey hotness, what's it like to bang Superman? Did he respect you in the morning? And what's with the kid? Does the Man of Steel pay child support?

RICHARD

Let him go or I'll--

CORBEN

What? Face it, you're the odd one out here. Little Superboy is gonna go flying with Mommy and Daddy while you're left to pay the rent. Sound about right?

Corben throws Jason to the floor.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Take him. I don't care about the brat. I'm here for the so called Caped Wonder.

Jason stands, looking back at Corben.

He backs away and turns to run to Lois and Richard.

LOIS

You're OK now honey, come on.

Lois picks Jason and up and walks with Richard towards the crystal wall, moving away from Superman and Corben.

CORBEN

It's just us. This is a nice place you got here, although you really need to bump up the security.

SUPERMAN

What do you want?

Corben walks towards Superman, stopping just in front of him, face to face.

CORBEN

I'm here to beat you down.

SUPERMAN

A lot of people have tried.

CORBEN

None of them were me.

Corben pulls back and then swings forward with a strong punch, causing Superman to go off balance, taking a step backwards to regain his stance.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Surprised? And for my next trick...

Corben punches Superman again, causing him to falter once more.

Superman retaliates with a punch of his own, knocking Corben off his feet.

Corben starts to laugh, as he stands up, pieces of skin have been torn from his face, revealing the metallo shell underneath.

SUPERMAN

What's happened to you?

CORBEN

I've had an upgrade.

Superman uses his X-RAY VISION to scan past Corben's skin to the metal body underneath.

He scans closer, ZOOMING in to a molecular level.

SUPERMAN

That metal, it's metallo.

CORBEN

Metallo? I like that.

SUPERMAN

Who did this to you?

CORBEN

You did. You let that concrete ceiling fall on me. You made a choice to save many at the price of one. I understand that, but you're Superman. You're supposed to save everyone.

SUPERMAN

That technology is from Krypton. Tell me, who made you like that?

CORBEN

Patience. First, we dance.

Corben RUSHES at Superman, DRIVING his fist into Superman's chest. Superman falls backwards, then BURSTS FORWARD like a blur, faster than the eye can see.

He HITS Corben and sends him flying across the Fortress.

Corben CRASHES into a crystal wall, shattering it.

Superman stands, watching as Corben starts to stand, the stitches on his arm ruptured, revealing more of the metal alloy.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

There is a downside. I can't feel anything. I've been told that I can be fixed, made to feel again, if I take you down. Although, I have to say I'm liking the no pain part.

Corben walks to Superman, fist clenched.

He PUNCHES Superman HARD in the face, once, twice...he swings with both arms one after the other.

But Superman stands firm, not moving as Corben hits him again and again until on the final punch, Superman blocks and unleashes a powerful UPPERCUT, which throws Corben into the air.

As Corben starts to fall, Superman uses his SUPER-BREATH to BLOW him across the Fortress. Corben SLAMS into a wall.

Superman then BLASTS him with a powerful burst of HEAT VISION, which BURNS through Corben's T-shirt and burns some of the skin on his chest.

SUPERMAN

Stay down.

CORBEN

Why? You don't want to hurt me?
Don't you get it? You can't. I
don't feel pain, I don't feel
anything.

SUPERMAN

I'm sorry.

CORBEN

(standing)

Spare me your pity. I don't need
it. Once I'm done with you,
Luthor will give me what I want.

SUPERMAN

Luthor?

LOIS

Why am I not surprised?

Corben again starts to walk towards Superman as Lois tries
to shield Jason from seeing the violent encounter.

CORBEN

Humiliate him. Make him suffer.
That's what Luthor said. And
that's what I plan to do. That's
the price for being able to feel
again. But I'll be honest, I'd do
this for free.

Corben LASHES OUT with a strong PUNCH. Superman DODGES
though and KNOCKS Corben to the floor.

SUPERMAN

Stay down. You can't win Corben.
But I can help you.

Corben rises to his feet again.

CORBEN

My God, how arrogant can you be?
Do you really think you are so
invincible?

Corben reaches into his back pocket, pulling out a small
pocket knife.

RICHARD

What's he doing?

Corben presses the knife against his chest, TEARING down
through the charred skin. He throws the knife away and
starts PULLING the skin back, revealing the metallo chest.

CORBEN

You've probably noticed that part of my chest is lead-shielded. Something to do with the radiation from the power source for this body. I'm not a science whiz, I don't care why something works, just that it does.

Corben pushes in on his chest, triggering the small lead panel which slides up, revealing the kryptonite heart.

Superman backs away in agony almost straight away.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

I don't know why this stuff is supposed to hurt you. I just know that it does.

LOIS

(whispers)

Oh no...

Corben GRABS Superman by his hair, forcing his head down, while bringing his own knee up to meet Superman, and STRIKES him HARD in the face. He does it AGAIN, and AGAIN before letting Superman fall to the floor in pain.

CORBEN

Where is your arrogant tone now?

Corben KICKS Superman as he lies on the floor, then drags him to his feet.

RICHARD

We have to do something.

CORBEN

Stay where you are. Unless you want junior there watch you bleed out.

(to Superman)

Come on fly boy...hit me again.

Superman swings at Corben, catching him in the face. It's a weak punch and Corben doesn't even flinch.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Is that it? They say you can fly into the heart of the sun and not even get a tan, yet this little green rock turns you into a weak and pathetic mortal?

Superman looks up at Corben, clenching his fist.

He punches straight through Corben's head, causing the exposed metallo to dent significantly, forcing him backwards.

Superman himself falls to the floor as he follows through, crashing to his knees.

CORBEN (CONT'D)
There's some fight in you after all.

The entire Fortress starts to shake, pieces of crystal start falling from above.

CORBEN (CONT'D)
It's about time.

Suddenly, the six Brainiac drones, carrying the crystal space pod, crash through the ceiling of the Fortress.

RICHARD
What the hell is that?

JASON
Mommy?

LOIS
It's OK honey. I'm here, it's OK, just stay close.

Superman crawls across the floor towards Corben, grabbing onto him, trying to lift himself up.

CORBEN
You want more?

Corben sends his fist through Superman's face, sending him falling back to the ground.

SUPERMAN
(struggling)
What are those?

CORBEN
Well...I don't actually know. Lex told me to expect company but I didn't see this coming. Oh don't worry, they're not here for you. They're here for the kid.

SUPERMAN
Corben you can't...

CORBEN

Let them take him? I'm not his father, I don't give a damn what they do. My only interest is in giving Superman a gloriously meaningless end.

Two of the drones open the space pod while one of them, hovers high above, scanning everyone in the Fortress.

After it identifies Jason, the other three drones advance on the child.

One of them grabs Lois with its mechanical arm and throws her to the floor.

Richard stands in front of Jason, trying to shield him, but is knocked clean across the Fortress, landing behind Corben, unconscious.

LOIS

Richard!

Two of the drones pick Jason up and start dragging him towards the space pod, as Lois gets up to chase after them.

LOIS (CONT'D)

No! You can't take my son.

She is hit again and knocked back down.

Meanwhile, Superman tries to get up and go after them but Corben catches his cape and throws him back down.

CORBEN

Sorry Superman, you're staying right here.

Jason kicks out as he is carried to the pod, but to no avail.

He is forced inside as it closes around him.

The drones then pull back, circling the pod, each of them holding on to it as they lift off into the air, rising out of the Fortress.

Lois can only watch as the drones disappear with the pod. She looks across at a beaten Superman.

He looks back, clenching his fist as he starts to drag himself to his feet.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

Oh no you don't.

Corben KICKS Superman in the stomach, forcing him back down.

LOIS

Please, don't do this. He's the only one...

CORBEN

The only one who can save your son? Sorry, I'm not interested.

Corben lifts Superman onto his knees and then PUNCHES him in the face, knocking him back down.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

You see, I was only supposed to distract you, keep you busy while those things grabbed the boy. That was the job Lex gave me. But now that I'm here, maybe the trade off is worth it. No feeling in exchange for the power to kill a god...it's not a bad deal.

Corben KICKS Superman again, while behind him, Richard is waking up. He looks across at Lois, then at Corben.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

I'm thinking maybe I went too far. Maybe I wasn't in complete control of my newfound strength. Maybe I threw one punch too many and killed Superman. I was supposed to retire after the City Hall job. But with this strength, I think I'm just getting started.

Corben goes to kick Superman again, but Superman CATCHES his leg and PUSHES him back...straight into Richard who is now on his feet and coming up behind Corben.

Corben turns in surprise, allowing Richard to reach into the chamber in his chest and GRAB a hold of the kryptonite.

RICHARD

Aahhhh!

CORBEN

What are you doing? No..stop it.

Surges of electricity run through both men's bodies as Richard tries to pull the kryptonite out of Corben's chest.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

No you can't...NO!

Corben starts hitting Richard, who refuses to let go until a wave of energy rises up, BLASTING both men back in opposite directions.

One one side, Corben is lying on his back, unable to move, the kryptonite gone from his chest.

CORBEN (CONT'D)

(faint)

I just...wanted to feel...

His head turns to the side, powerless as he dies, his eyes open but cold and lifeless.

Across the other side, Richard is holding the kryptonite in his hand as he struggles to stand.

Shaking, he throws the kryptonite far across the Fortress before collapsing to the floor while Lois runs to his side.

Superman crawls to a beam of sunlight shining through the Fortress. He is breathing heavily as he slowly starts to stand up.

Lois kneels down next to Richard, lifting his head, she puts her arm underneath.

LOIS

Richard, you're...you're OK. You saved us.

RICHARD

I had to..I..

Superman stands, his breathing slowly returns to normal as he absorbs the solar energy from the sun outside.

LOIS

Is he OK?

Superman uses his X-RAY VISION to scan Richard's body. He doesn't respond.

LOIS (CONT'D)

No, do something. You have to do something.

RICHARD

It's alright...Superman...save him.

SUPERMAN

I will.

(beat)

Lois?

LOIS

Go.

Superman nods to Lois then takes off, flying straight up, out of the Fortress.

Lois continues to hold Richard in her arms as his breathing becomes slower and he struggles to keep his eyes open. Lois is crying.

RICHARD
Don't cry...don't...

LOIS
Please, don't say anything, just hold on.

RICHARD
Lois I'm...I'm...

He doesn't finish his sentence as he stops breathing and his eyes close as he falls dead in Lois' arms.

EXT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

Superman hovers high over the Fortress, spinning around slowly, his TELESCOPIC VISION searching everywhere.

Finding nothing but ice and snow in every direction, he descends back into the Fortress.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

As Superman lands softly, he's silent as Lois hugs Richard in her arms.

LOIS
You should have saved him. That's what you do. You save people.

SUPERMAN
Lois...I'm sorry.

Lois takes a deep breath as if calming herself.

LOIS
No, I'm sorry. It wasn't your fault. Where's Jason?

SUPERMAN
Gone. I couldn't see him or hear him.

LOIS
Lex Luthor. He'll know. Corben said he was behind it. Why can't he just leave us alone?

SUPERMAN
I'll take you back to Metropolis.

LOIS
No. You'll be faster on your own.
I'll be OK here.

SUPERMAN
Are you sure?

LOIS
Just bring him back...please.

Superman nods and takes off again, flying out of the Fortress as Lois continues to hold on to Richard.

EXT. LEXCORP - DUSK

Mercy stands next to the limo as Lex emerges from LexCorp, walking towards the car.

MERCY
Any word?

LEX
No, but I suspect we shall not
hear anything until...

Lex doesn't get to finish his sentence as Superman swoops in at SUPER SPEED, picking Lex up and flying him high into the air.

Mercy stands by the limo, in shock.

EXT. METROPOLIS

Superman floats high above the city, one hand outstretched, holding on to Luthor by his collar.

SUPERMAN
We need to talk.

LEX
What do you think you're doing?
Put me down now.

SUPERMAN
You're in no position to be
making demands. Your little
science project has failed. I
have two questions. If you answer
them, I'll let you down gently.

LEX
And if I don't? Please, we both
know you're not a killer
Superman, so stop this charade
and put me down.

SUPERMAN

Whatever you say.

Superman lets go and Lex starts falling rapidly towards the ground below.

Superman wait a few seconds, watching before flying after Lex, catching him and bringing him back up.

LEX

Are you insane? You could have killed me.

SUPERMAN

Let's try this again. Two questions...

LEX

Go save a kitten.

Superman lets go again, this time waiting a little longer before swooping down to catch Lex and rise back up into the air.

SUPERMAN

We can do this all day if you want, but there's always a chance that at some point I won't catch you in time. Now...

LEX

Yes, yes...two questions. Just get it overwith.

SUPERMAN

That's better. Now, where did you get the technology to create that Metallo shell? It didn't come from the crystals.

LEX

You can thank your people for that. It came from a computer A.I. from Krypton. It calls itself Brainiac.

SUPERMAN

Brainiac? How did it get here?

LEX

Is that your second question?

SUPERMAN

Tell me.

LEX

I'm afraid you'll have to ask it
yourself. It wouldn't share that
information. Is there anything
else?

SUPERMAN

Just one more thing.
(angrily)
Where is my son?

LEX

With Brainiac.

SUPERMAN

Where?

LEX

New Krypton.

Superman drops out of the sky, taking Lex with him.

EXT. LEXCORP

Mercy watches as Superman and Lex land next to the limo.

SUPERMAN

This isn't over Luthor.

LEX

It never is. Brainiac knows your
coming. It's what he wants.

SUPERMAN

If any harm comes to my son, I
won't catch you next time.

Superman takes off, flying into the distance at speed.

MERCY

He seems pissed. Shouldn't you
warn Brainiac?

LEX

Why? This is what he wanted.

MERCY

But he's about to face an angry
god.

LEX

I know.

Lex grins as he looks up in the sky for a moment before
climbing into the back of the limo.

EXT. METROPOLIS

Superman flies at speed, rocketing high up above the city, breaking through the sound barrier as he ploughs into the upper atmosphere.

EXT. SPACE

Superman shoots out of Earth's atmosphere and into space, moving faster and faster as he approaches the fires of the sun.

He plunges into the heart of the yellow star.

EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE SUN

A flaming streak explodes out of the sun, pushing closer and closer to the speed of light. As the flames disappear, a blur of blue and red fly into the deep unknown of space.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

Brainiac stands in front of the crystal control panel, a holographic display in front of him that looks like a futuristic radar, showing an object approaching at speed.

BRAINIAC

He is coming to save you.

Brainiac turns around and looks at Jason, who is strapped down to table, grown from crystal, bound by metallo restraints.

EXT. SPACE - JUPITER

Superman races around the giant gas planet at tremendous speed, orbiting in just a few seconds before breaking orbit and flying directly at New Krypton, which is visible in the distance.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

Superman begins to slow as he approaches, stopping suddenly as a dozen drones come at him from all sides.

Superman sends his fist through one of them, while at the same time using a full powered blast of HEAT VISION to disintegrate two others.

Two more approach from each side, grabbing his arms but Superman slams them together, shattering them.

A sixth drone charges from the front.

Superman flies straight at it, his fist out in front of him as he ploughs straight through the machine.

The other six then surround him but back off suddenly dropping away to the surface.

Superman then flies across the surface of New Krypton, scanning with his X-RAY VISION until he comes upon the large dome structure in the centre.

Without hesitating, Superman flies straight at it, crashing through the dome.

INT. DOME - CENTRAL CHAMBER

As Superman lands inside the dome, the hole left where he crashed through seals itself as the area around it seems to grow, covering the hole.

Superman looks up to find that it is as if the hole was never even created.

BRAINIAC (O.C.)

Most impressive.

Superman turns to see Brainiac walking towards him.

SUPERMAN

Brainiac?

BRAINIAC

Indeed. I must apologise for greeting your arrival with hostility. It was important for me to gauge your strength for the task that lies before us.

SUPERMAN

Where is he?

BRAINIAC

Your son is unharmed, I assure you. Please, come with me Kal-El. I will take you to him.

SUPERMAN

You know who I am?

BRAINIAC

Of course. The record of your birth is contained within my database. I was also present during your exploration of what remains of Krypton.

SUPERMAN

You set all of this up...why?

Brainiac begins walking and Superman follows, towards a door on the far side of the chamber.

BRAINIAC

Like you, I am a survivor of Krypton's demise. I was designed as a sentient intelligence, with the task of preserving its legacy and its people. When the sun went supernova, I uploaded my program and database to an orbiting military satellite. I believed I had failed to preserve Kryptonian life, but I would ensure that the legacy, all of the knowledge and wisdom, would not disappear.

SUPERMAN

What does that have to do with me?

They step through the door, which has opened out on all sides, crystals retracting into the walls.

INT. DOME - CORRIDOR

The door closes behind them as they walk through the crystal corridor.

BRAINIAC

When you returned to Krypton, I knew then that I was not alone, that there was still a chance to preserve life. And so I followed you to the world you call Earth, hoping to fulfill my task. I studied your exploits on this world.

SUPERMAN

And you kidnapped my son?

BRAINIAC

I feared your attachment to the humans would keep you from coming here. Believe me Kal-El, I have no interest in bringing harm to your son. He is far too important.

SUPERMAN

A good man is dead because of what you've done.

BRAINIAC

Again, I can only apologise. You must understand Kal-El, everything I have done has been for Krypton, for you. As you have seen, I have reformed this desolate place into a shining monument to our lost world. The poison has been purged from the ground.

SUPERMAN

You still haven't answered me. Why are you here? Why have you done all this?

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

So that Krypton and it's people can be reborn. That is my ultimate task.

They reach the door at the far end of the corridor, it opens like the last and they step through.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

SUPERMAN

Reborn? What do you...

Superman stops cold, as he notices Jason lying on the table, strapped down and unconscious.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

What is this? Let him go at once.

Superman flies to Jason's side.

BRAINIAC

I told you, he is unharmed. I have enduced a sleeping state for his protection.

SUPERMAN

Let him go.

BRAINIAC

Of course. But please Kal-El, hear me out.

Superman checks on Jason then turns and nods to Brainiac.

SUPERMAN

Fine. But you must release him.

BRAINIAC

I will. He is vital to the future of Krypton.

SUPERMAN

Krypton is gone.

BRAINIAC

Sadly yes. But you live on. The last son of Krypton. And your son...

SUPERMAN

What's so important about him?

BRAINIAC

Do you not see? He is proof that it is possible. Proof that your genes are compatible with that of humans.

SUPERMAN

What?

BRAINIAC

The legacy of Krypton isn't a planet, it is the people and the knowledge they have obtained over centuries of discovery. When your existence was confirmed, I had hoped that you would lead humanity to a new existence.

SUPERMAN

You wanted me to rule them? I'm not interested in being a king.

BRAINIAC

I have seen this. But through your son, Krypton can live again. There is no need for you to rule. Humanity will give birth to a new generation of Kryptonians.

SUPERMAN

You're talking about...breeding them?

BRAINIAC

Now you understand. Human females are capable of conceiving and carrying Kryptonians to term, your son is proof of this. Your race can live again.

SUPERMAN

And what about human beings? Are they to be tossed aside?

BRAINIAC

No, humanity will live alongside the new race of Krypton. They can be guided towards their potential. Eventually the new race will come to dominate the population.

SUPERMAN

Until the human race disappears...this is insane.

BRAINIAC

I am a sentient program, I am neither sane nor insane. This is the next logical step in the fulfilling of my prime function.

SUPERMAN

And will humanity have a choice?

BRAINIAC

Choice is irrelevant. You are the superior species. Simply put, it is survival of the fittest.

SUPERMAN

No. I refuse. You said it yourself. I'm the last. You can't do this without me. And even if I agreed, there is the lack of genetic diversity.

BRAINIAC

I have considered this. I have followed every path to its conclusion and it has led here.

SUPERMAN

You're wrong.

BRAINIAC

I do not believe so. It was your father who discovered the doom that was to befall Krypton. It was your father who sent you to this world, of all worlds. The one world in the known galaxies where you and the native sentients were compatible. It was your father who discovered the gateway to the Phantom Zone. Do you not see? This is why you are here.

SUPERMAN

The Phantom Zone? What does that have to do with this?

BRAINIAC

You are the last living survivor of Krypton's destruction. But there are others, sentenced to living death in the Phantom Zone for their crimes on Krypton. We can release them. They will provide the genetic diversity needed. Your father surely knew this.

SUPERMAN

You can't be serious. They're criminals. They will tear the Earth and its people apart.

Superman glances up at the control panel, where he sees the crystals from the Fortress in place.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

You have the crystals. You must have seen my father's messages. He said nothing of this. In fact, he warned against opening the gateway to the Phantom Zone.

BRAINIAC

Regardless, it is the only way to ensure that Krypton lives on. They may be criminals, but they are the last of a great race. I will not fail them.

SUPERMAN

No. You're going to stop this. I am from Krypton, your duty is to me and I'm ordering you to release my son.

BRAINIAC

You have been corrupted by
humanity. You no longer have the
capacity to show logic and
reason.

SUPERMAN

You're the one who is corrupt
Brainiac. Release my son and shut
down.

BRAINIAC

I cannot do that.

Brainiac moves QUICKLY across the chamber. He GRABS
Superman and THROWS him against the wall.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

I had hoped you would be able to
put your feelings for humanity
aside and see things logically.
Unfortunately this isn't the
case. I am sorry Kal-El but you
cannot be allowed to interfere.
For Krypton to live, you must
die.

Brainiac charges at Superman, pushing him hard against the
wall.

Superman strikes back with a blow of his own, punching
Brainiac in the torso, then following up with some rapid
punches to the face.

He unleashes a powerful blast of HEAT VISION at close range
that sends Brainiac flying through the ceiling, out to the
surface of New Krypton as the breach seals itself before
the atmosphere escapes.

Superman rushes to the crystal controls, using them to free
Jason, who remains unconscious.

Superman works fast, pressing down on two of the crystals.
The space pod lies on a platform beyond and it opens up.

Gathering up all but one of the crystals, Superman flies to
the pod, placing the crystals inside.

As he is doing so, Brainiac comes up behind Superman, ready
to pounce, but is struck by a blast of energy.

He turns around to see Jason, sitting up on the table.

Superman turns and punches Brainiac, sending him hard into
the wall.

SUPERMAN

Are you alright?

JASON

Uh huh.

SUPERMAN

Come on. I need to get you out of here.

BRAINIAC

You are not taking him Kal-El.

Brainiac LEAPS through the air, twisting and turning.

He KICKS Superman in the chest, flooring him.

Brainiac turns to Jason who backs away in fear.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

Do not fear me child. I will not harm you.

SUPERMAN

Stay away from him.

Superman flies at Brainiac, grabbing on to him.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Jason, get inside.

Jason climbs into the crystal space pod as Superman pushes Brainiac back and takes a deep breath.

He EXHALES with a powerful wave of FREEZE-BREATH, covering him in an ice shell, freezing him in place.

Superman then rushes over to the control panel. He pulls the only remaining crystal out half way, causing the pod to start closing.

JASON

What's happening?

SUPERMAN

It's alright, trust me.

Superman smiles at Jason who nods back as the pod closes around him.

Superman then removes the crystal entirely and places it in an adjacent slot.

The space pod stirs into life and the room begins to shake as it takes off slowly, reminiscent of Kal-El's take off in Superman The Movie.

The pod breaks through the ceiling, which repairs itself rapidly as the pod blasts off away from New Krypton.

Superman sighs with relief, then pauses as his SUPER-HEARING picks up a sound behind him.

He turns to see the ice cracking around Brainiac, before shattering completely.

BRAINIAC

Did you believe that shell of ice
would contain me?

SUPERMAN

It kept you there as long as I
needed it to.

Brainiac looks beyond Superman, then straight at him.

BRAINIAC

He will not escape. Once I have
beaten you, I will find him again
easily enough.

SUPERMAN

You don't understand. I wasn't
just getting him away from you. I
was getting him away from this
place, from me.

BRAINIAC

What is the relevance of that
statement?

SUPERMAN

Now I don't need to worry about
him getting hurt. In other
words...

In the blink of an eye, Superman flies across the room,
grabs Brainiac and SLAMS him into the ground.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

I don't have to hold back.

Brainiac kicks Superman and flips up onto his feet.

Superman hits back and starts delivering a BARRAGE of RAPID PUNCHES, his arms a blur as his fists drill into Brainiac's torso at incredible speed.

Eventually, Brainiac stops one punch, catching Superman's fist.

BRAINIAC

You cannot win. This form is
designed to learn and adapt. Even
as you strike me, I am
formulating an adequate counter.
Such as this.

Still holding Superman's fist, Brainiac shows amazing agility, spinning his body around to kick Superman in the face before throwing the Man of Steel across the room.

Superman starts to stand as Brainiac starts to rush him.

Superman strikes out, connecting with a DOUBLE-FISTED blow that sends Brainiac through the ceiling, CRASHING out of the dome.

Superman follows, flying outside.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

Brainiac flips and lands on his feet, looking up to see Superman fly at him, his arm pulled back.

Before Brainiac can react, Superman sends him flying and crashing through crystal structures.

Superman flies high over him and unleashes a huge HEAT VISION blast from his eyes.

Brainiac leaps away just in time, leaving behind a MASSIVE crater.

Superman then descends at speed, hoping to charge into Brainiac, but the six remaining drones appear and surround Superman.

They attack him viciously and knocking him to the ground as Brainiac pounces and starts ramming Superman's head into the ground again and again while the drones try to hold him down.

Brainiac turns Superman onto his back and a long spike emerges from the topside of Brainiac's wrist.

As he goes to stab Superman's skull, Superman manages to kick the drones off and roll away, causing the spike to slam into the ground.

Brainiac seems to be stuck but pulls his hand away, disconnecting the spike from his wrist, which allows Superman enough time to stand.

He gives Brainiac a POWERFUL UPPERCUT which sends him flying back across the surface of New Krypton and crashing through the dome.

INT. DOME - CENTRAL CHAMBER

Brainiac lands with a thud and Superman follows, descending gracefully.

The six drones follow and start attacking again but this time, Superman uses his HEAT VISION to burn through one of them, then turns his FREEZE BREATH on another.

He RAMS his fist through the frozen drone and SHATTERS it.

The other four drones hover together, their mechanical arms outstretched, with small cannons rising up on each.

The drones fire PLASMA BLASTS at Superman, which Superman doesn't flinch at, as they dissipate against his chest.

BRAINIAC

(standing)

Impressive. But as I have already said, you cannot win. I now have extensive data on your capabilities and have adapted my systems to combat them.

SUPERMAN

We'll see.

BRAINIAC

Such confidence in your voice. But it is futile. The original form of this body was that of a military satellite, specifically a weapon's platform, decommissioned after the war against General Zod. I have reactivated the primary weapons protocol.

Brainiac reaches out with his arm, his hand balled in a fist.

Surges of energy flow through his arm, resulting in an extremely powerful ENERGY WAVE that OBLITERATES the remaining drones and strikes Superman.

Superman crashes into the wall, his suit beginning to tear itself apart.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

You may find yourself starting to feel weaker. That blast was infused with synthetic solar radiation inherent to a red sun.

Superman stands and strikes with his HEAT VISION.

He tries to sustain it but it starts to fizzle out until it is gone completely.

BRAINIAC (CONT'D)

Yield Kal-El. It need not be this way. You can still lead your people.

SUPERMAN

Never. I won't let you bring chaos and destruction to Earth.

BRAINIAC

Why are you so blind? This is salvation for the human race, not destruction.

SUPERMAN

If you release those criminals from the Phantom Zone, with the powers they will have here, they will be unstoppable. They will burn the planet until it is nothing but ash and dust. Is that the legacy you want for Krypton?

BRAINIAC

I have no desires. I am merely fulfilling my function. It is the logical option.

SUPERMAN

No, it's wrong.

BRAINIAC

It is unfortunate you feel that way. Goodbye Kal-El, you will be remembered.

Brainiac begins charging up his arm cannon again, aiming at Superman.

Superman starts taking deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling as Brainiac prepares to fire.

Superman takes a final, HUGE breath, holding it in as Brainiac fires.

Superman can only roll out of the way, his cape being caught in the blast and being burned straight through.

Brainiac turns to fire again but Superman exhales, blowing a massive rounds of SUPER-BREATH directly at Brainiac, sending him through the ceiling and back outside.

The SUPER-BREATH has obviously taken a lot out of Superman as he struggles, flying slowly through the hole left by Brainiac before it can seal him in.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

Superman lands heavily on the surface of New Krypton, visibly weakened.

Brainiac is there, pouncing on him. They exchange blows, with Brainiac coming off better, landing TWO STRONG PUNCHES to the stomach and a KICK to the chest.

They continue to fight across New Krypton, Brainiac getting the better shots in while blocking and dodging Superman's hits.

But Superman is getting stronger and faster with every punch.

Soon they are evenly matched until Superman picks Brainiac up and throws him against a large crystal growth, coming out of the ground.

Superman turns to look beyond New Krypton, seeing the sun in the distance, restoring his power.

He looks back at Brainiac and flies straight at him.

Brainiac tries to counter by flipping out of the way but Superman catches him and flies with him straight up, high above the surface.

Brainiac tries to punch his way free but Superman refuses to let go, flying higher and higher. Eventually he stops, still holding on to Brainiac.

They start to descend rapidly, falling faster and faster, head first towards the ground, SLAMMING STRAIGHT THROUGH.

INT. NEW KRYPTON - CORE

They crash through into a large cavern. The walls are covered in clear, transparent crystals.

Brainiac manages to struggle and break free of Superman's grip.

They begin exchanging blows again. Brainiac's agility is matched by Superman's speed and strength as they fight through the cavern.

Each blow causes the crystals on the walls to shake, which in turn causes the entire cavern to shake.

Superman tries to blast Brainiac with his HEAT VISION but he dodges.

The blast strikes a crystal on the wall, which reflects it to another crystal, and another, heating them up and causing them to EXPLODE.

Superman seems to notice this, as does Brainiac.

A swift upper cut sends Brainiac flying backwards.

Superman closes his eyes as Brainiac tries to stand up.

When Superman's eyes open, the pupils are red, spreading across his eyes.

BRAINIAC

No. The caverns spread underneath
the entire land mass. If you
overheat those crystals,
everything will be destroyed.

SUPERMAN

Thanks for the information.

BRAINIAC

No Kal-El, this is your chance to
save your people.

SUPERMAN

I am.

Brainiac tries to rush Superman to stop him.

But Superman releases a massive wave of HEAT VISION that
burns straight through Brainiac's left arm, destroying it.

The blast keeps going, hitting the crystals, which reflect
them right across the entire cavern, spreading underneath
the entire surface of New Krypton.

Superman takes one last look at Brainiac before flying
straight through the ceiling of the cavern.

Brainiac can only watch as crystals along the walls of the
cavern heat up and explode.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

Superman flies straight up, away from New Krypton.

He hovers, searching space with his TELESCOPIC VISION until
he spots the space pod in the distance. He takes off after
it like a rocket.

On the surface, Brainiac crawls out of the hole left by
Superman when he flew back out.

With just one arm and one of his legs severely damaged by
the heat blast, Brainiac limps across the surface of New
Krypton towards the dome.

EXT. SPACE

Superman flies after the space pod, catching up with it.

He grabs a hold of it and starts flying with it at full speed across space.

INT. SPACE POD

Inside, Jason is crouched down as the pod shakes.

He puts his hand against the inner wall to keep his balance, which triggers the window mechanism as the wall becomes transparent, allowing him to look outside.

He sees Superman, holding on to the pod as he flies it at speed through space, shooting past Mars.

Superman looks into the pod at Jason and smiles, causing Jason to smile back.

INT. CONTROL CHAMBER

Brainiac limps through the door, making his way towards the control panel.

There is one crystal left, which Brainiac removes. The crystal walls are now red with intense heat.

Brainiac tries to shield the crystal against his body as the room EXPLODES, enveloping him in fire.

EXT. NEW KRYPTON

The entire surface of New Krypton is covered in explosions.

Fire rips through from below the surface, crystal structures collapse until a final MASSIVE EXPLOSION rips through the entire landmass.

It blows it apart in a raging expulsion of energy.

EXT. FORTRESS NIGHT

Lois looks up at the night sky, spotting a brief, yet brilliant flash of intense light.

LOIS

Jason.

EXT. SPACE

As Superman flies the pod through space, behind him, a bright flashing light in the distance signifies the destruction of New Krypton.

Superman looks through the transparent wall of the pod and point.

Inside, Jason follows Superman's finger and sees the Earth rapidly approaching.

EXT. ARCTIC - NIGHT

Superman flies the pod down through the atmosphere, gradually slowing as he spots the Fortress in the distance.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

Lois is inside the Fortress now.

She stands next to Richard who is lying still, covered by Lois' coat.

Superman descends into the Fortress, holding the pod over his head.

Lois watches, her eyes fixed on the pod as Superman lays it down to rest on the floor of the Fortress.

LOIS

Is Jason...?

Superman nods, pressing his hand against a small crystal switch.

The pod opens and Lois runs toward it as Jason climbs out.

JASON

Mom.

They hug, and Lois starts checking Jason for injuries.

LOIS

Are you OK? Did they hurt you sweetie?

JASON

I'm OK Mommy. Superman saved me.

Lois looks up and mouths the word "thanks". Superman nods slightly in response.

Jason looks over at Richard's body, covered on the floor.

JASON (CONT'D)

Daddy?

Jason runs over to Richard. pulling away the coat.

Lois goes after him and bends down beside him.

Jason tries to shake Richard awake but it doesn't work.
Jason bows his head.

JASON (CONT'D)

Daddy's dead, isn't he.

LOIS

Look at me.

Jason looks up at Lois, visibly saddened.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Daddy was very brave. He stopped
the bad man who was hurting
Superman so he could go and save
you.

JASON

But why couldn't Superman save
him?

LOIS

Because the bad man wouldn't let
him.

Jason looks over towards the body of Corben, then back at
Lois, wiping his eyes, trying to stop himself from crying.

LOIS (CONT'D)

It's OK honey. It's OK to be sad.

Lois and Jason hug, while Superman removes the crystals
from the ship.

He pauses, looking over at Lois and Jason for a moment
before flying overhead and landing near the control panel.

He places the crystals in each slot, with two slots
remaining empty.

As the last crystal is put in, the Fortress seems to come
to life, shining brightly.

Lois looks up at Superman who is just staring at the
crystals.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Jason, I'm going to go talk to
Superman.

JASON

Ok. I want to stay here with
Daddy.

LOIS

That's OK honey.

Lois kisses Jason on his forehead before standing and
walking up to Superman.

SUPERMAN

Are you OK?

LOIS

Yes...no...I don't know.

(beat)

Is it always going to be like
this? For Jason I mean. Are
people going to try to get to you
through him, or try to use him
for their own gain?

SUPERMAN

I'll be there.

LOIS

But even you can't be around all
the time, not unless you stopped
being...well, you. But what you
do is too important. I just want
him...I want him to have a normal
life, you know?

SUPERMAN

There is a way. With the crystals
gone it was impossible before,
but now...

LOIS

What?

SUPERMAN

There is a way to make him human.

LOIS

How?

SUPERMAN

A device here in the Fortress. A
molecule chamber. He would be
bombarded with radiation from a
red sun to suppress his abilities
while the Kryptonian elements in
his DNA are rewritten.

LOIS

But he wouldn't be a part of you
anymore, would he?

SUPERMAN

No. He would be fully human, no powers, no trace of Kryptonian genes.

Lois looks down at Jason, who sitting quietly next to Richard, then back at Superman.

LOIS

I...I can't. He's lost one father today, he can't lose another.

SUPERMAN

He won't. I'll be here Lois, that won't change. He'll just be human.

LOIS

But he's a part of you, I can't take that away from him.

SUPERMAN

Then ask him what he wants.

LOIS

Do you think he'd understand?

SUPERMAN

He's pretty smart.

They smile at each other and Lois nods.

Superman lifts her up and flies her down to Jason who looks up in surprise as they land.

LOIS

Jason honey, there is something important we need to talk about.

JASON

What is it?

LOIS

Well...uh...

SUPERMAN

There is a way to make you like everyone else.

JASON

What do you mean?

LOIS

You could be like other kids if you want to be.

JASON

You mean I'd have no powers?

SUPERMAN

Yes. And you wouldn't have to worry about hiding who you are.

JASON

But I like being like this.

LOIS

Are you sure?

JASON

Yeah. I don't want to change.

LOIS

It's alright, you don't have to.

SUPERMAN

But if you ever need anything, if you're in trouble or just need to talk, I'll be here, so will your Mom.

JASON

OK.

Lois smiles at Superman, who looks at Jason and then at Lois, smiling back.

SUPERMAN

Come on, I'll take you back to Metropolis.

EXT. METROPOLIS - CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Lois, Clark, Jason, Perry and Jimmy are among those attending the funeral.

Lois and Clark are standing together while Jason places a rose on the coffin.

EXT. CEMETARY - LATER

The group are walking towards the gate, apart from Lois, Clark and Jason who are standing beside the grave.

CLARK

Are you alright?

LOIS

I don't know...I just...I thought he'd be here.

CLARK

I'm sure he's around.

Lois looks up at the sky, as if searching for something.

EXT. SPACE

Amongst the debris of New Krypton, a lone figure floats silently. As the sun hits it, Brainiac is revealed.

It is utterly destroyed with no legs, one arm and much of the torso torn apart, only the head and one arm remains fully intact, along with the crystal in its hand.

As it moves through space, a flicker of light shines in Brainiac's eyes, a sign of life.

EXT. DAILY PLANET - ROOF - DUSK

Lois stands alone on the roof of the Daily Planet, looking over the edge and down over the city.

SUPERMAN (O.C.)
Smoking again?

Lois turns to see Superman descending, landing on the roof.

LOIS
No, this time I actually wanted
some air.

SUPERMAN
How's Jason?

LOIS
He's sad. But I think he'll be
alright. We're helping each
other.
(beat)
I didn't see you at the funeral.

Superman walks towards her, stopping when they are face to face.

SUPERMAN
I didn't think it was a good idea
to be seen, not with the press
around. A circus is the last
thing either of you need.

LOIS
I...

SUPERMAN
What about you? Are you OK?

LOIS
Everyone keeps asking me that.
I'll be fine, I just need time.
What Corben? Where is he now?

SUPERMAN

I gave him to Inspector Sawyer
and her team. She may be able to
find something on Luthor.

LOIS

I wouldn't hold my breath. I'm
sure Lex has already made sure
that nothing can be traced back
to him. But he knows about Jason.
What if he...

SUPERMAN

I'll deal with Luthor.

(beat)

What I said to Jason goes for you
to. If you need anything, just
call.

LOIS

I don't have your number.

They smile at each other as Superman steps back, preparing
to take off.

SUPERMAN

Just call out. I'm--

LOIS

You're always around?

Superman smiles as he takes off slowly, rising into the
air.

SUPERMAN

Goodnight Lois.

Superman speeds up rapidly, taking off across Metropolis as
Lois looks on.

INT. LEX'S OFFICE - DUSK

Lex stands at his desk, staring at his computer screen
angrily.

Mercy is near the door, looking into the office.

LEX

Nothing. Not even a trace of a
signal.

Lex pounds the desk with his fist.

Mercy glances up towards the window and stands back,
shocked.

MERCY

Uh, Lex...

Lex turns around to see Superman hovering outside the window, looking at him sternly, his arms crossed.

LEX

Leave.

Lex waits while Mercy leaves the office, closing the door behind her.

Lex then walks to the window. He opens it and Superman floats inside.

Superman lands gently in the centre of the room, his eyes focused on Lex.

LEX (CONT'D)

I thought you might show up sooner or later.

SUPERMAN

Do you get some kind of sick pleasure playing with peoples lives?

LEX

Don't give me the speech. I know you would love to see me behind bars but I wouldn't count on it. The system that you have so much faith in serves the rich and the corrupt.

SUPERMAN

People like you.

LEX

(he smiles)

Justice only exists for those who can afford to get around it.

SUPERMAN

You may have lied and cheated your way out of prison, but make no mistake...I'll be watching you. You have a chance to leave the past behind and start fresh. I suggest you take it.

Superman turns and walks towards the window.

LEX

You think that's it? You take the moral high ground and expect me to...what? Turn over a new leaf? This game of ours doesn't end here. It will never end.

Superman looks out through the window at the Metropolis skyline.

LEX (CONT'D)

Say hello to your son.

Superman stops, turns back into the room and strides towards Lex.

He lifts Lex by his shirt with ease and pushes him against the wall.

SUPERMAN

You call this a game, fine. But it's you and me Luthor.

LEX

Sorry, it doesn't work like that. I play to win.

SUPERMAN

So do I. Stay away from the people I care about or you might find out just how powerful I really am.

Superman lets go of Lex, letting him drop to the floor.

The door to the office opens as Mercy rushes back inside.

MERCY

Lex, I heard...

She stops as she notices Lex picking himself up from the floor as Superman walks back towards the window.

SUPERMAN

Remember Lex...I'll be watching.

Superman takes off, flying through the window, out into Metropolis.

Lex is looking at the window as he fixes his tie back into place.

MERCY

Are you alright?

LEX

(angrily)
Get out.

Mercy backs away and hurries out of the office as Lex walks to the window...

EXT. LEXCORP

Lex looks out through his office window before closing it slowly.

EXT. METROPOLIS

Superman rises above the city, his cape flowing behind him as he flies, the sun setting behind him.

A muffled sound catches his attention, enhanced by his SUPER HEARING.

CITIZEN IN PERIL (O.S.)
(filtered)
Somebody, please help me...

Suddenly, Superman is moving faster, launching himself across the sky.

He shoots across Metropolis, moving faster than a speeding bullet towards danger, to save the day.

The End