

Superman: Darkseid Rising

Based on "Superman" created by  
Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster  
and characters appearing in DC Comics

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SUPERMAN: DARKSEID RISING

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EXT. KENT FARM - NIGHT

We pan over the Kent Farm, closing in on a barn. A soft BLUE GLOW emanates from within.

INT. KENT BARN - NIGHT

Inside the barn, underneath the FLOORBOARDS, the glow FLASHES BRIGHTLY. A ROBOTIC VOICE is heard speaking in an unknown language.

*FLASHBACK*

INT. KRYPTON - JOR-EL'S LAB - NIGHT

KAL-EL'S POV

BABY KAL-EL sits in a makeshift ROCKET, somewhat crude, but sturdy. JOR-EL is talking to Kal-El, but we cannot understand him. He is speaking in Kryptonian. The building shakes, CRYSTALLINE STRUCTURES collapse around.

Jor-El walks away from us, holding his wife's hand as they move to a CONTROL PANEL. Behind Jor-El, a ROBOT with blue eyes, standing as tall as a man, enters the launching bay of Jor-El's lab. A robotic voice speaks.

Baby Kal-El reaches out for the robot as it walks close to Jor-El's rocket. It transforms into a SMALL SIZED ROCKET with a BLUE EGG-SHAPED NOSE CONE.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The rocket ship fires away from Krypton as it EXPLODES into shards of DUST and CRYSTAL.

INT. ROCKET SHIP

Kal-El sleeps as the rocket increases to hyper speed. Within the craft, a soft BLUE LIGHT grows brighter, illuminating Kal-el. The small rocket seems to be studying his face. The blue light grows brighter and brighter, suddenly a bright FLASH.

INT. CLARK KENT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLARK KENT jumps, SNAPS AWAKE very suddenly, staring straight ahead.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A beaten up mini-van hums along a highway, increasing speed as it takes an exit.

INT. MINI-VAN - DAY

The vehicle is full of thugs, 2 in the front, 2 in the back, gearing up for something big. The LEAD THUG and a guy in a SKI MASK slap full clips into automatic rifles. The man riding SHOTGUN is holding a FUTURISTIC LOOKING CANNON.

LEAD THUG

Listen up. Basement lab, we grab the bearded guy, we get the hell outta there. This is for half a million dollars so don't screw this up.

DRIVER

(setting his wristwatch timer)  
3 minutes I'm rolling out. With or without you.

SKI MASK

(grabs Shotgun's shoulder)  
If we get in a tight pinch chum, you know what to do.

LEAD THUG

Listen. You don't use that thing unless we run into major trouble. And you know *who* major trouble is. Understand?

SHOTGUN

What's it do?

LEAD THUG

Let's hope we don't find out. 3 minutes, in and out.

The van pulls around a corner, increasing speed down a long busy street. Ahead is a building with the large marquee: BATES SCIENTIFIC.

EXT. BATES SCIENTIFIC - DAY

The vehicle skids to a stop. Shotgun jumps out of the van, WHIPS open the sliding door. The 3 thugs exit the vehicle, causing a panic from surrounding people. They storm into the building with guns high in the air.

INT. BATES SCIENTIFIC - DAY

The Lead Thug rips a burst of machine gun fire into the air as he enters the building lobby. Bates employees scream, stunned.

LEAD THUG

Everyone shut up and get on your faces. NOW.

Everyone follows instructions except a COUPLE and a CHILD standing near a side exit, they try to make a break for it. Shotgun aims the cannon.

SHOTGUN

Down on your faces. You understand English?

The child doesn't stop running for the door. The CANNON on Shotgun's shoulder BLAZES with a BEAM OF WHITE ENERGY. The father DIVES for his son, trying to shield him.

We don't see the aftermath of this attack, but its not good. The pitying SCREAM from the mother and the look of disgust and fear on the thugs' faces says it all. They turn to Shotgun, who looks fearfully at his weapon.

SKI MASK

You weren't supposed to use that thing until it got crazy!

LEAD THUG

Forget them. Here it is fellas. Downstairs to the lab.

The door bangs open and the Lead Thug and Shotgun rush down the stairs while Ski Mask handles crowd control.

INT. BATES SCIENTIFIC - BASEMENT LAB - DAY

The thugs trot down a spiral staircase into a long hallway. The hallway opens up into a laboratory that sits behind THICK BULLETPROOF GLASS. A BEARDED MAN in a lab coat reacts, alerting other lab partners.

SHOTGUN

There he is. Stand back.

Shotgun aims the cannon. The Lead Thug slugs him.

LEAD THUG

Put that damn thing down. We need him alive.

The effectiveness of the glass is demonstrated when the Lead Thug tries to blast into it. Bullets ricochet off.

LEAD THUG (CONT'D)

Damn. Gotta be at least 6 inches.  
But I got just the thing for that.

The lead thug whips out a large BOMB. He shoves the shotgun thug aside and jerry-rigs the explosive to the DOOR LOCK.

SHOTGUN

(checks watch)  
Minute-thirty.

LEAD THUG

This is gonna get messy.

Shotgun moves back down the hallway, covering his ears with EAR PLUGS. The Lead Thug runs back down the hall holding the remote. He clicks the TRIGGER.

CU: INSIDE THE BOMB IN SUPER SLO-MO

What would normally happen in milliseconds is shown in super slo-mo. The small mechanisms of the bomb begin to work. Tiny explosions occur within the framework of the device. The bomb EXPLODES!

The Lead Thug turns around, staring in disbelief. The glass door is perfectly intact. Through the haze of smoke, a man stands from a crouched position against a far wall. He dusts some residue from his clothes and walks towards the thugs.

As the smoke clears, a large familiar "S" on the man's chest comes into view and fills the screen.

CUE THEME. ROLL CREDITS.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT: WIDE

PRESIDENT WILSON (O.S.)

Your assistance yesterday was greatly  
appreciated Superman.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

SUPERMAN stands in the Oval Office before the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, HENRY WILSON.

PRESIDENT WILSON

You've done many things for our  
country over the years, but nothing  
(MORE)

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)  
was as personal to me than to save  
my dear friend Robert.

The two men are watching a press conference from earlier  
that day.

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)  
These thugs, these criminals...what  
are they after? 17 geniuses, great  
men...all of them, kidnapped or gone  
missing.

SUPERMAN  
The CIA doesn't believe they are  
dead. It doesn't make sense to kidnap  
them without a ransom or something.

The television monitor flashes with photos of the kidnapped.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
*...including Mary Night the esteemed  
physicist, Nobel prize winning author  
Nigel Greenberg, and Tony award  
winning actor Helen Noel. These  
unusual and high profile  
disappearances over the last 3 months  
has prompted action from the White  
House. President Wilson called upon  
Superman to assist with the  
investigation.*

The monitor switches to a shot of the President at a podium.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
*And I am pleased to announce that  
yesterday afternoon, an attempted  
abduction of Dr. Robert Bates, founder  
and head of Bates Scientific was  
subverted by Superman. Robert is in  
protective custody. His would-be  
abductors are currently undergoing  
interrogation.*

The reporter on scene at the Capitol Building.

REPORTER  
*Not all is going well with Superman's  
involvement in the investigation.  
Some feel that there have been arrests  
made by Superman of men and women  
that had no direct involvement with  
any of the abductions...*

The President grabs the REMOTE CONTROL and clicks off the TV.

PRESIDENT WILSON

No matter how much good you do,  
someone always has something to say.

SUPERMAN

But the intelligence *is* sound, Mr.  
President? Some of the people I've  
arrested so we can gain our leads,  
they say they are innocent.

PRESIDENT WILSON

And some after weeks of detainment  
have finally opened up their mouths.  
Don't let any of that bother you.  
There is a lot I haven't brought you  
in the loop on, but rest assured we  
don't imprison innocent people.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. President...Steve Trevor and  
Diana Prince are here from Military  
Intelligence. They are waiting in  
the Roosevelt Room.

SUPERMAN

I'll show myself out.

INT. KENT FAMILY HOME - DAY

MARTHA KENT sits at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee,  
knitting and listening to the radio. Clark Kent enters.

CLARK

Morning ma.

MARTHA

Clark. I didn't expect to see you  
here until the holidays.

She stands and hugs Clark.

CLARK

I should visit more often. How are  
you?

MARTHA

Oh just fine. Phyllis Gunderson  
wanted me to knit her grandson a  
sweater, like the ones I use to make  
you.

Clark sits, stares outside at the barn.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

What's troubling you?

CLARK

Nothing. I'm ok ma.

MARTHA

Please Clark, a mother knows. Is it the protesters? I watch the news, saw you save that Bates fella last week. I also read what those reporters are trying to suggest...I for one think...

CLARK

No, its not that. I have a question about something else.

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

Martha and Clark walk across the farm towards the large barn.

MARTHA

It could just be a dream Clark. I don't remember seeing anything unusual inside the rocket. Then again, your father and I didn't examine it all that well. I guess finding a baby inside was exciting enough.

INT. KENT BARN - DAY

Clark and Martha enter the dimly lit barn. The floorboards that were earlier illuminated in blue light are dark. Clark reaches down and pulls them up, exposing the KRYPTONIAN SHIP that brought him to Earth.

MARTHA

We both had our reservations on whether we should even keep the ship here. At the end we felt it was the safest place.

Clark stares down the rocket. He moves to open it then stops.

CLARK

Ma, why don't you go on back to the house? Don't want to scare you but just in case --

Martha holds up a hand.

MARTHA

Say no more. I read the newspapers.  
(MORE)



MARTHA (CONT'D)

When you're involved with something things can get messy. Just clean up after yourself Clark. Dinner in 20 minutes.

Martha closes the barn door and the barn grows darker. Clark looks back to the rocket. He reaches in and opens the rocket's HATCH. He hears something faint. It grows louder. Clark focuses into the dark chamber of the rocket.

He realizes he's hearing a police scanner with his super-hearing.

EXT. SMALLVILLE - DAY

A Smallville police car screams down a two lane highway.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

The Smallville sheriff screams into the CB radio.

SMALLVILLE SHERIFF

Calm down Franklin. Tell me again.  
And slowly.

SMALLVILLE DEPUTY (O.S.)

Smallville Pharmaceutical...there are approximately 3 armed suspects. They have some sort of...I don't know...gun thing.

EXT. SMALLVILLE - DAY

Above the police car, a red and blue blur streaks overhead, headed towards Smallville.

INT. SMALLVILLE PHARMACEUTICAL - DAY

A trio of goons chase a man down a hallway. The man cuts around corners, keeping his distance from his pursuers, one of which is carrying a VERY ELABORATE FUTURISTIC RIFLE.

GOON #1

Enough of this running crap.

GOON #1 lifts the rifle to his side, aiming carefully.

GOON #2

Wait a sec, we don't know what that'll do...we need him alive.

GOON #1

He'll live.

The goon fires a CONCUSSION BLAST right at the feet of the man. It lifts him off of his feet and THROWS HIM INTO THE CEILING. The man bounces off the ceiling and CRASHES brutally to the floor, blood spattering. He rolls over groaning, clutching his face.

GOON #1 (CONT'D)

See? Alive. Grab him.

CRASH!

Superman BURSTS THROUGH THE CONCRETE WALL into the hallway, standing between the goons and their victim. Goon #1 fires his weapon at Superman. Superman holds out a hand trying to stop it but is KNOCKED BACKWARDS by the concussion blast.

Superman is lifted of his feet and flies some 30 feet into a wall, shattering the plaster and leaving a HUGE DENT IN THE WALL as his body hits the floor. He stands, shaking off the dust.

Supes' eyes glow bright RED. The goons are scared witless.

GOON #1 (CONT'D)

Ah crap.

HEAT VISION BEAMS strike the gun, and the goon drops it and runs. Superman turns his attention to the fallen man. He turns him over. DAVID CONNOR, older man, 60's, balding. He holds his face.

SUPERMAN

Are you alright sir?

CONNOR

Superman. Thank God.

SUPERMAN

David Connor?

CONNOR

Yes. You know me?

SUPERMAN

Smallville High, you used to teach biology.

CONNOR

Ah, the President must've sent you.

SUPERMAN

(puzzled)

No. No I happened to be in the area, I heard the dispatch call. Excuse me.

Superman jets away as police sirens are sounding off in the background.

INT. SMALLVILLE PHARMACEUTICAL - DAY

The trio of goons stumble around the corner of another corridor. They are trying to escape the building but seem lost. They turn another corner and run right into Superman.

Goon #2 and #3 whip out their guns and fire. Bullets RICOCHET every which way. Superman just shakes his head...when will these fools learn?

The three goons back into an elevator, pushing frantically at various buttons. The doors close as Superman arrives.

EXT. SMALLVILLE PHARMACEUTICAL - DAY

Suddenly the elevator comes crashing through the ceiling of the building, with Superman holding the cab by its cables.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The 3 goons roll around the cab like marbles.

EXT. SMALLVILLE PHARMACEUTICAL - DAY

Superman lowers the cab down to the ground and wrenches the door open.

SUPERMAN

DING! First floor, everyone out.

The goons wobble from the cab, surrounded by a throng of police officers, guns drawn.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to clean up after myself.

EXT. SMALLVILLE PHARMACEUTICAL - LATER

Superman forges a perfect brick out of pieces of debris in front of awed ONLOOKERS. He cools it with his breath and holds it high in the air. Everyone applauds. He leaps up to the roof of the building and places the brick neatly in place, sealing it with heat.

Superman shakes hands with police officers and children. He approaches Connor, who is sitting with an ice pack over his mouth.

SUPERMAN

Well doctor, you look like you can go another 5 rounds.

CONNOR

How'd you know it was me? I only taught at Smallville High for 4 years and I'm sure I would have remember you as a student.

SUPERMAN

(quickly)

Unlike many of your former students, I do my homework. Your ground breaking cancer research work precedes you.

CONNOR

Ah. I was thinking it was Clark Kent, former student. Good pals, you and him. I read his stuff from that paper in Metropolis. I think he missed his calling, but...well I'm glad you were in the area.

SUPERMAN

What did he miss his calling in?

CONNOR

He was a brilliant kid, one of the smartest people I've ever known. Kind of shy though. Would have made a hell of a scientist. I guess reporting's not so bad.

Superman walks over and picks up the concussion gun from an evidence table. Despite being blasted by heat vision, the gun is still in perfect condition. He looks into the sky and pulls the trigger. A concussion blast FIRES into the air.

SMALLVILLE DEPUTY

Hey. Sorry Superman, its evidence.

SUPERMAN

I wanted to take a look at this personally. This is an odd weapon.

SMALLVILLE DEPUTY

Well...I...I'm sure it'd be alright but I gotta check with the sheriff and ask...

SUPERMAN

Don't worry about it son. It can wait.

Superman hands the weapon to the deputy and flies away.

CU: CONCUSSION GUN

A small SLIVER OF METAL has been shaved off of the gun.

EXT. SMALLVILLE - NIGHT

OVERHEAD: SUPERMAN IN FLIGHT

Superman looks at the small sliver of metal he shaved off the gun with his fingernail. He heads north.

EXT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

AERIAL SHOT: WIDE

Superman flies towards the Fortress of Solitude, its crystalline structure gleaming in the moonlight.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

Superman steps down on the icy floor in the fortress of the Arctic. He stops for a moment to look up at a large crystal, ice and stone statue of his parents Jor-El AND LARA holding a globe of Krypton. He leaps up to a landing above, and enters a crystallized archway.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE LAB - NIGHT

Superman sits at a table of PRISTINE CLEAR CRYSTAL. He slides a small hatch on the table, revealing a compartment. He takes the metal shaving and drops it inside. He then slides a blue crystal into a slot on the table.

SUPERMAN

I need an analysis of this metal.

A FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE echoes around. Although the voice has a lilt of humanity, it is still very robotic.

COMPUTER VOICE

Searching now Kal-el.

(beat)

How was your day today Kal-El?

SUPERMAN

Interesting and unique, as always. This sample of metal is from a weapon I encountered today. I could not melt it with heat. First time that's happened.

COMPUTER VOICE

The origin of this metal is unknown to this galaxy.

SUPERMAN

What? That's impossible.

COMPUTER VOICE

The information I have provided to you is correct Kal-El.

SUPERMAN

Are you saying the metal from that gun is not from this planet?

COMPUTER VOICE

That is correct Kal-El.

SUPERMAN

Then where? Your database houses records of everything in the universe.

COMPUTER VOICE

Incorrect. The records in this database are from Krypton's main source of knowledge, the Infinity Complex. Although Krypton housed all knowledge in this galaxy, knowledge outside of this galaxy was unknown to your Kryptonian forbearers. Kryptonians were staunch isolationists, and space exploration missions were severely forbidden.

Superman is lost in thought. He stares at the statue of his parents in the foyer.

COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)

What is your next question Kal-El?

SUPERMAN

Your database contains extensive knowledge of Krypton. Tell me stories of...well tell me something about that planet.

COMPUTER VOICE

That command does not register. If you are searching for historical data of Krypton, please be specific to the nature of the history or select one of the following categories. Battles, great Generals, scientific advances, commerce...

SUPERMAN

Never mind.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Enjoy your day Kal-El.

INT. DAILY PLANET - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

The Daily Planet NEWS FLOOR, chock full of reporters. LOIS LANE stands out, looking her usual knock-out self. The reporters are filing into a briefing room.

JIMMY OLSEN runs right behind Lois as she enters, his trusty camera dangling from his neck. PERRY WHITE, the bull terrier editor, barks at them.

PERRY WHITE  
Ok people hustle, hustle, hustle.  
We don't have all day. Olsen, where  
the devil is Kent?

JIMMY  
I dunno Chief, I haven't seen him  
today.

PERRY WHITE  
Olsen. What have I told you?

Jimmy swings around, SMACKS Perry hard with his camera. Perry stares Jimmy down. Jimmy makes sure his camera is okay.

JIMMY  
Don't eat so much licorice?

PERRY WHITE  
Besides that?

Jimmy looks up, confused. Shrugs.

PERRY WHITE (CONT'D)  
Don't...call...me...CHIEF!!

Jimmy jumps on "chief" and runs into the room.

CLARK  
Looking for me chief?

Perry frowns. Clark smiles.

PERRY WHITE  
Get in here Kent.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Hundreds of reporters cram into the dark briefing room, laptop light and a small spotlight on Perry the only illumination.

PERRY WHITE

Alright, alright two things to start off with. One...We have a new reporter. Cat Grant, all the way from Galaxy Broadcasting in Los Angeles. She's joining the Metro team. Cat say hi.

CAT GRANT, an attractive vixen in her late 20s enters, waves a hand in the air.

CAT GRANT

Morning guys and dolls.

She walks into the pack of reporters. All the male reporters step up to welcome her, grinning ear to ear. All except Clark, who pushes his glasses back to his face as he gets jostled by his anxious colleagues.

PERRY WHITE

And number two, the next person that calls me 'chief' is going to work the Suicide Slum beat for a month. You know that wonderful old guy in the Metropolis Park that makes statues out of pigeon droppings? He's going to be your next assignment. Understood? Good. Now, LANE?

LOIS

(typing, didn't hear him)

Yeah Chief...

White drops his head. The entire room bursts into LAUGHTER.

LOIS (CONT'D)

What? What'd I miss?

Cat ogles Clark, scoots next to him.

CAT GRANT

You're a cutie pie.

Clark smiles, gulps.

PERRY WHITE

Nothing. What's the latest on the Superman protests?

LOIS

Some lady's kid was killed at the Bates Scientific break in. And her...



CLARK

Really?

LOIS

Yeah Smallville, really. And her husband was severely injured. So naturally it's Superman's fault and she's launching her one-woman-war against him.

PERRY WHITE

You're supposed to be finding real stories Lane.

LOIS

Well forgive me if I'm not eager to dig up dirt on the Man of Steel chief. He has actually saved our butts more than once.

CAT GRANT

I got one better for you Perry.

PERRY WHITE

Give it to me.

CAT GRANT

A sweetheart of mine tells me about these two kids, 15 and 16, trying to score some of those fancy guns used at Bates.

PERRY WHITE

So?

CAT GRANT

Their contact was Mike Bones. He was arrested this weekend. In Smallville. One of the three goons Superman nabbed? And around town Bones has been known to deal with a guy named Johnny Denetto.

CLARK

Denetto's a known gun dealer, sells out of Metro.

CAT GRANT

So I'm told. And he and his peeps flew the coop.

PERRY WHITE

See, now there's a story for ya Lane.

LOIS  
Color me envious.

PERRY WHITE  
No, I mean there's a story for YOU.  
Go find out what happened to Denetto.

LOIS  
What???

CAT GRANT  
Excuse me? Hello? Metro? My turf.

PERRY WHITE  
Lane knows the city Cat. Nothing  
personal. You pick up the Superman  
protests.

Both ladies roll their eyes. Lois' head smacks down on her keyboard.

INT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

Cat is at Lois' desk, drops paperwork on her desk. Lois pulls a USB drive from her laptop and hands it to Cat. Cat and Lois look each other in the eye, smile, and hand each other back their work.

Clark walks up to his desk, adjacent to Lois' desk.

CLARK  
Hi Lois.

LOIS  
Smallville enters the big time.  
Heard about the attack in your little  
hamlet?

CLARK  
Yes, it was quite a shock. Who is  
the woman who's son died?

Lois hands Clark a sheet of paper. Clark raises his glasses slightly so he can read it with his own eyes.

LOIS  
Rosalyn Little. Here's the info,  
wanna read? Perry's right, not much  
of a story, just another complainer.  
Superman wasn't even there when it  
happened according to eyewitnesses.  
Whenever Superman does anything right,  
someone's upset.

Clark is into the story deep. Lois is reading intently on her computer. She SMACKS Clark on the arm.

LOIS (CONT'D)

But check this out, this is even more interesting. You know that guy Bates?

CLARK

Sorry?

LOIS

Robert Bates? The guy Superman saved? Well he dismissed his protective custody. I guess the President's Secret Service isn't enough for him.

CLARK

Come again?

Clark looks over Lois' shoulder at the info Lois is showing him.

CLARK (CONT'D)

They moved him quietly to his castle outside Metropolis? Why?

LOIS

Says they interfered with his ability to conduct business. Couldn't work with all the lookie-loos watching his every move. Makes you wonder about what kind of business he's trying to keep a secret.

CLARK

What do you mean?

LOIS

Come on Smallville, read his bio. 20 years ago, he's a mid-level research assistant earning a meager salary and then inside of 2 years he became a billionaire. I gotta let Superman know.

CLARK

I don't see why you have to tell Superman. I mean this doesn't seem like a big...

LOIS

Would you mind telling him I want to talk to him?

CLARK

But don't you think the woman's son  
is more important...

LOIS

You're always able to get in touch  
with him better than I am.

Clark sighs, nods.

CLARK

Wait a minute Lois. This was an  
official communication to the  
President. How do you get this stuff?

Lois smiles and stands, pats him on the cheek gently.

LOIS

I'm Lois Lane kiddo.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOF - NIGHT

Lois walks around on the roof, holding a report in her hand.  
Superman flies overhead, circling. Lois looks up and sees  
him.

LOIS

Finally. Clark told you?

SUPERMAN

Naturally. Whenever you want to see  
me, Clark makes certain I get the  
message. How are you Lois?

LOIS

Splendid. You're looking well.

Superman smiles at Lois' timidity.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I can't believe I just said that.  
God that's lame. I don't know, why  
is it that around everyone else I'm  
a bulldog...but here, when I'm here...

SUPERMAN

Its okay Lois. He said you have  
something on Bates.

LOIS

More than what I gave him. Bates is  
either really dirty or really dense.  
He recently placed a request for a  
hire. Specially trained bodyguards  
from a special group of guys.

She hands Superman a stack of Metropolis PD booking sheets. Each one has a photo of a ugly brute with a screwed up mug that has "career criminal" written all over it.

SUPERMAN

Mahoney. Bartow. Sepulveda. These are all Intergang.

LOIS

What's a billionaire like Bates doing hiring members of a international crime ring?

SUPERMAN

Intergang's no longer a problem. When I jailed Boss Moxie, Manheim turned tail and ran. I heard he was about to move his operations to Central City.

Lois pulls out a photograph. Metropolis Harbor. Two men talking in front of a freight liner.

LOIS

He's still here. Look at this. Olsen took this yesterday. They are shipping out something in those crates. There's Bruno Manheim, and there's the elusive Mr. Johnny Denetto. And Manheim's area is Metro, same as Johnny Denetto and Denetto's been dealing in guns, special guns. Manheim's buying those guns from Denetto, I know it! The guns that killed that child.

(off look)

Oh...I'm sorry.

SUPERMAN

Its okay. Part of me blames myself. I understand that I create a much greater problem. Criminals have gotten more sophisticated. Although I don't think these guns are from Denetto.

LOIS

Where then? You don't think Lex...

SUPERMAN

Luthor? I doubt it. Its right up his alley, but its not him. This is something else.

LOIS

What? What do you know that you're not telling me?

SUPERMAN

In Smallville, I encountered one of those weapons. They're made from an alloy, a metal that doesn't appear to be from this planet.

LOIS

Alien?

SUPERMAN

Not sure. It could be a synthetic compound. But if Bates is connected to this...well, there's only one way to find out. Good night Lois.

Superman takes off.

LOIS

Leaving so soon?

SUPERMAN

Yes. And keep your distance with this one Lois. Until I know more.

LOIS

Yeah. Right.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President is walking with his staff. He holds a hand up to Secret Service agents as Superman flies onto the White House lawn.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Superman? You said you had something important to talk about.

SUPERMAN

I need a moment of your time sir.

The president's staff walks ahead.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President and Superman walk through the White House hallways.

SUPERMAN

After the attempt on his life...and that doesn't seem unusual to you.

PRESIDENT WILSON

I know Robert's actions were unorthodox, but I don't believe that he is somehow involved in dealing illegal weapons. He is a great American, one of the biggest philanthropists this country has ever seen. He's fought for the very things that you stand for. Truth and justice...

SUPERMAN

And I'm not denying that Mr. President. But I have reasons to believe that Bates is either directly or indirectly involved with these weapons. And at the very least he's contracted work from known associates of Intergang.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Intergang? You dealt with them months ago.

The President STOPS, squares up to Superman.

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)

How did you come by this information? How did you even know Robert requested my men called back?

SUPERMAN

My source of information is just as good as military intelligence.

PRESIDENT WILSON

You aren't...spying on Americans, are you Superman?

SUPERMAN

Listen Mr. President, you should put someone on to him to watch him. If not the Secret Service --

PRESIDENT WILSON

Someone like yourself right? X-ray vision, can slip in and out quietly, no one would know. Superman, the Patriot act is one thing, and your assistance is greatly appreciated and necessary. But this is not what our partnership was intended for. Now, this is not a discussion we're going to have. Robert Bates is not to be touched. Are we clear?

SUPERMAN

Of course.

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

OVERHEAD: SUPERMAN IN FLIGHT

Superman flies over the city, contemplating. He swoops past the Daily Planet, sees Lois working late at her desk. He swoops off.

EXT. BATES CASTLE - NIGHT

A palatial estate rises from the center of a thick forest, reminiscent of a Victorian era castle. The METROPOLIS SKYLINE is distant. Three trucks pull up the hill quietly. Superman lands gently atop the castle.

BRUNO MANHEIM, a charismatic, but tough and shrewd man in his 40s exits the first truck up the hill. He looks around. BUGS and MAHONEY walk up behind him.

MANHEIM

Nice place.

BUGS

(whistles)

How much they say this Bates is worth?

MANHEIM

Coupla billion. Not as rich as Luthor but he does okay.

Several goons unload heavy machinery.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

Get that stuff up here. In case big blue shows his ugly face again. Its a shame I cannot count on my boys to make sure a job is done right.

One of the machines is a HOVERTANK, a large Hovercraft VEHICLE WITH A CANNON ATTACHED is piloted by JOHNNY DENETTO (25), a young, but seasoned street tough. He grins as he passes Manheim.

DENETTO

Hey Bruno. Where were you last night? Me and the boys, you said you was meeting us at the docks.

Manheim SHUDDERS, stares blankly ahead. Something in his mind is genuinely bothering him.



MANHEIM

Thanks to the screw up at Bates, I had different meeting. One I couldn't miss.

He tries to light a cigarette but his hand is shaking too hard.

DENETTO

With the new boss?

MANHEIM

Yeah. At his place.

DENETTO

You should've told us so we could go along.

MANHEIM

Nah I don't think you would've wanted to.

Manheim finally gets his cigarette lit. He takes a LONG DRAG.

BUGS

I thought you said your new boss' equipment would take down Superman.

MANHEIM

I don't know enough about this stuff to know what it will or won't do to Superman. Look, let's just go grab Bates and let's mozey on outta here.

Mahoney walks up, carrying a large CANNON slung over his shoulder. He is followed by 6 other men walking up the hill to the castle, each holding SHIMMERING SILVER rifles.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

Mahoney, you take the south end. You two cover the back. Bugs, you watch the front.

(grabs Bugs' gun,  
points it up)

No, idiot. If Superman's comin, he ain't gonna walk up the road. Look up in the sky.

SUPERMAN (O.S.)

Gentlemen...Bruno...

Manheim and Bugs TURN, looking back, much to their displeasure. Superman is there, hovering about 20 feet up.

MANHEIM

Dammit...I knew it.

SUPERMAN

Rather late for a house call Manheim.  
I think Mr. Bates is trying to get  
some sleep.

MANHEIM

I don't wanna play games with this  
guy. Let him have it!

The men open fire, blasting away with their advanced weapons.  
COLORFUL BOLTS tear through the night, all striking Superman  
at once. He's blasted BACKWARDS into Bates' castle courtyard.

INT. BATES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robert Bates JUMPS UP in his bed, awakened by the commotion.  
His ace bodyguard, NIKO, runs into his room.

NIKO

Mr. Bates. They've come. Again.

EXT. BATES CASTLE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Superman hits the ground rolling. He stands up. Grins.

EXT. BATES CASTLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Heat vision beams out from the courtyard, striking Mahoney's  
gun. It heats up, singeing Mahoney's hands. Mahoney drops  
it and runs.

Almost as fast as Mahoney drops it, Superman zips in and  
grabs it before it hits the ground. He checks it. No damage  
from the heat. He snaps it in half.

EXT. BATES CASTLE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Denetto hops off the hover tank, takes aim with another  
weapon, a LONG BRIGHT RED rifle.

EXT. BATES CASTLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Superman swoops out of the courtyard and grabs Mahoney,  
tossing him into the bed of the truck. Then he lifts the  
truck into the air, slamming the tail end of it down into  
the earth, EMBEDDING IT INTO THE GROUND.

From behind Superman gets slammed in the back by the force  
of Bugs' concussion gun. He hits the ground. Denetto fires  
the silver rifle and a BLACK NET shoots out, wrapping Superman  
from head to toe.

Superman struggles against it, but he seemingly is wrapping himself tighter and tighter like a fly trying to escape a spider's trap.

DENETTO

Its called Strangle. Go ahead  
blue...fight. It takes your power  
and uses it against you. The stronger  
you fight, the stronger it gets.

Superman is suffocating within the grip of the ever-tightening net. He tussles and writhes on the ground, but to no avail. His eyes BLAZE RED. He looks down to the net, and it BURNS with heat. Denetto hops back aboard the hover tank.

The heat vision EVAPORATES part of the net, and Superman breaks through the remaining lacerated bands. He turns to Denetto, who aims the hover tank's cannon and fires.

INT. BATES CASTLE - LOWER HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bates runs into the lower hallway, where his staff is gathered.

BATES

You all have got to go. Everyone  
leave.

BUTLER

Sir, we're not leaving you at a time  
like this.

BATES

You must. This place is no longer  
safe. I'm a danger to all of us.  
Go with the bodyguards.

The bodyguards stand behind Bates, intimidating and cold. His staff is disconcerted. Some of the maids wipe away tears, but everyone complies. All exit the main hall, all except Niko and Bates. They nod to one another and head downstairs.

EXT. BATES CASTLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Superman anchors his feet in the ground as Denetto fires HUGE SONIC PULSE WAVES at him from the hover tank's cannon. Wave after wave pounds the Man of Steel, pushing him to a knee.

Superman begins to get his footing, starts to push ahead determinedly, like a man fighting a mighty wind. Denetto is undeterred. He cranks the cannon's power up a couple of notches. The tank hums voraciously.

Nothing doing. Superman reaches the tank and grabs the shaft of the cannon, swinging it up, around, and SMASHING IT INTO THE GROUND. Denetto spills over the side and onto his back. Superman snatches him off the ground.

INT. BATES CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Manheim comes around the corner, meets the group of staff members and bodyguards. He freezes.

MANHEIM

Hello boys.

Half of Bates' bodyguards turn around, aim their weapons at the remaining bodyguards and staff members and open fire.

Smoke clears. Manheim steps over body after body, heading towards the staircase.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

Let's go!

Manheim trots up the spiral staircase.

INT. THE OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

A large planetary observatory tower room. Bates and Niko enter, closing the door behind them. Bates reaches in his robe pocket for something and runs over to a table in the far corner.

NIKO

They'll be here soon sir.

BATES

It must end Niko, before there is any further damage.

NIKO

Sir?

Niko turns and watches Bates pulling fluid into a long hypodermic. His face saddens.

BATES

Niko...

NIKO

I understand sir.

BATES

I cannot be taken. I cannot allow them to learn what I know.

(MORE)

BATES (CONT'D)

I've made many mistakes, done horrible unforgivable things, but that would be the greatest error of all.

NIKO

I'll hold them as long as I can.

Niko grabs TWIN SAMURAI SWORDS from the wall. He walks over and embraces Bates and bows to him. Bates watches as he carefully exits.

EXT. BATES CASTLE - MAIN HALLWAY - NIGHT

Niko posts himself against a wall, focusing as Manheim's cronies thunder up the steps. As they enter the hallway and round the corner, Niko strikes.

EXT. BATES CASTLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Superman rounds up the remaining goons outside into the bed of the truck, trapping them inside. He flies back into the castle courtyard.

EXT. BATES CASTLE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Superman glances upwards, looking up into the belly of the castle.

THROUGH X-RAY VISION

Superman sees Niko valiantly battling against Manheim's thugs. He glances over and sees Bates sitting in the observatory at his desk, needle in hand.

INT. BATES CASTLE - NIGHT

Superman rockets up into the castle, smashing through the castle floors and walls, crashing into the observatory.

INT. THE OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

He quickly ignites his heat vision, incinerating the needle just as Bates is about to plunge it into his arm. Bates screams, falls out of his chair.

BATES

No!

INT. BATES CASTLE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Niko crashes to the floor, shaken by Superman's entrance into the observatory. He swipes at the surrounding thugs with his blades.

As they close in around him, the HALLWAY FLOOR GIVES WAY. Niko hastily plunges one of his swords into the wall as the goons plummet, CRASHING THROUGH THE 5 FLOORS BELOW.

Niko looks down, seeing Intergang thugs sprawled across the lower levels. He carefully swings himself over to solid footing.

INT. THE OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

Bates is backing away from Superman, looking out the window.

BATES

You idiot! You don't understand.

SUPERMAN

What's going on here Bates? That was potassium cyanide in that syringe.

BATES

I...you don't understand. No one understands. This must be done.

Bates runs and takes a flying leap out of the observatory window.

BATES POV

Bates plummets headfirst, 5 stories to the stony castle courtyard. Just before he hits, he shuts his eyes. Suddenly his body is halted. Bates opens his eyes, he's hovering mere inches from the ground. He looks upwards.

Superman is holding him by his robe. Bates deflates.

SUPERMAN

Let's talk.

Superman scoops Bates under his arm and flies off.

INT. BATES CASTLE - NIGHT

Niko staggers down the spiral staircase, looking every bit like crap. He points his remaining sword around blind corners. He enters the courtyard, looking towards the HORIZON, sees Superman zoom away with Bates.

He eyes something large to his right. DENETTO'S HOVER TANK.

Niko climbs aboard the tank. Grimaces, clutching his side in pain. He looks down at his stomach. He is bleeding profusely.

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

OVERHEAD: SUPERMAN IN FLIGHT

Superman, with Bates tucked under his arm, flies past the Daily Planet. He soars over the city, leaving it behind him, approaching a hilly region.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Superman touches down near a small secluded cliff. He sets Bates down neatly on the grass and enters an elaborate doorway, adorned with the "S" insignia.

INT. THE SECRET CITADEL - NIGHT

A dark, cobweb covered room. No one has been in here is years. Bates coughs as dust rains down from above. Superman takes a slight breath and blows a puff of air out, which is enough to clean the room.

BATES

Where are we?

Superman stands before a table of lab equipment. He turns a crystal on the table and the room is illuminated in a soft blue glow.

SUPERMAN

My Secret Citadel...used to be my home away from home. You're safe here.

BATES

None of us are safe. Not as long as I am alive. Superman, do you know what the Anti-Life Equation is?

Superman frowns.

BATES (CONT'D)

About 20 years ago, I was on the science team at LexCorp. We were working on using electronic signals in suggestive advertising...enhancing the power of certain frequencies that speak directly to the part of the brain that controls desire. It was tiring and dull work for 2 years. But in my 3rd year, I made a breakthrough. We experimented on primates and I discovered that after using a series of various...pain receptors, the primates not only

(MORE)

BATES (CONT'D)

accepted my suggestions, they embraced them. I reverse engineered the experiment, gleaning the data from their tortured minds and synthesizing a signal that could be forced into the mind.

SUPERMAN

Mind control.

BATES

No, much worse. Desire. Even when you control a man's mind, he is still himself, underneath the exterior. But the will? The desire of a man is who he is. It's what make us human! It was then that an alien visited me.

SUPERMAN

An alien?

BATES

He wasn't evil. He actually came to warn me. He was the member of some police force, can't remember what he called it. His name was Abin Sur. He told me I discovered the Anti-Life Equation and that it was the most dangerous force in the galaxy. To not take its power lightly. I didn't heed his words.

SUPERMAN

What happened?

BATES

I discovered through the mind of an influential man I could manipulate thousands. Through his will, I could manipulate millions.

SUPERMAN

Or amass billions?

BATES

I started in the stock market, influencing buyers, movers, shakers to see things my way, to embrace my vision of their companies.

(off look)

You don't need to hate me. I hate myself. My legacy of philanthropy?

(MORE)



BATES (CONT'D)

It followed my legacy of seduction, deception, and death. I stopped using it almost as soon as I started. But there is someone else Superman...

SUPERMAN

How many Bates?

BATES

...someone who seeks my knowledge.

SUPERMAN

How many have you brainwashed? Who else have you manipulated? The President?

BATES

Dammit no! Superman don't be naive. You've seen what's going on. Those weapons, the technology. That isn't our technology we're dealing with, its 100s of years more advanced. There's someone else, someone far more dangerous. And he's not playing games here. He's here. Those kidnappings. At the science lab, in Smallville. Tonight. This is bigger than me, its bigger than you.

Bates sinks in his chair, overcome with grief.

SUPERMAN

Who is he? Bates?

BATES

I don't know. But I get the feeling he doesn't want to use what I know to start a pharmaceutical company. Whoever he is, he's capable of far worse than I could have ever done.

SUPERMAN

The kidnappings?

BATES

Yes. He's processing the formula. And if I were going to try and duplicate my process at a faster rate, I would use human test subjects. Find the finest brains in the world that I could. Geniuses. Wherever they are, they're being tortured.

(MORE)

BATES (CONT'D)

Its the only way to compose the equation. Its not going to take him 3 years to figure it out. I started seeing who he was targeting months ago...the weaponry that was used. We're talking Armageddon Superman, a world wide disaster.

SUPERMAN

Where are they...the hostages? Bates?

BATES

Look I don't know. And the information is wrong. The number of people that have gone missing over the months isn't 17, its over 100. So he needs a large lab. It would be generating a ton of power. But I had my men look into it but I couldn't locate any place pumping out that much power. Listen. He's not going to give up on me. I know the whole formula. He needs to extract the components from their minds, and synthesize the equation into the right sequence for it to work. That could takes months, years. Or he could come to me and get it tomorrow. I'm not safe anywhere.

SUPERMAN

No one knows this place exists but me. And you.

BATES

You think you can keep me safe? I've been trying to fall off the radar for months, and he keeps getting closer. He's seeking the equation. He desires it more than anything. He is drawn to it like a magnet. Nothing will stop him from finding it and making it his own. And its right

(pointing to his head)

Here!

INT. KENT BARN - NIGHT

The barn is once again illuminated by a soft blue light.

It is coming from a small rocket ship with a blue egg shaped sphere on its nose. The rocket ship hovers for a moment, then suddenly TRANSFORMS INTO A ROBOT FORM.

It examines its arms and legs, flexing its fingers across the Kryptonian "S" insignia across its chest. It murmurs something incomprehensible. The robot then transforms back into a ROCKET SHIP and noiselessly flies away.

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

Superman flies over the Daily Planet, setting down on the rooftop, where Lois waits.

LOIS

This is a first. Usually I'm the one coming to you with information.  
(eyes the rips in his clothes)  
What happened to you?

SUPERMAN

Bates. I have him, under my protection. He is...he's in a lot of danger.

LOIS

Nothing you can't handle I hope.

SUPERMAN

I'll be fine. But Bates says there is someone else. He was unsure of who, but he says he's the one supplying those weapons.

LOIS

The weapons you said aren't from earth? That means the supplier...

SUPERMAN

Lois, I'm pretty sure I'm not the only alien out there. Listen. I just came to tell you to stop your investigations, at least until I know more.

LOIS

That's the second time you've said that. What makes you think I'm going to...

SUPERMAN

Because I know you.

He smiles, touches her cheek, gently, softly. Then leaps into the air.

LOIS

What's he want, this 'someone else'?

SUPERMAN  
Nothing good. Good night Lois.

Lois watches her hero soar off into the night sky.

INT. THE SECRET CITADEL - NIGHT

Bates walks near the back of the Citadel, examining some of Superman's old equipment. Suddenly, the door to the Citadel BANGS open. Bates swings around. A shadow walks in.

Niko.

BATES  
Resourceful as always Niko.

NIKO  
Indeed sir. Superman? Does he know?

BATES  
I told him everything we know.

NIKO  
And you are protected here? This location is safe from...

BATES  
No. No, there's no safety here. Or anywhere.

Niko stumbles, falls to a knee.

BATES (CONT'D)  
Niko...you're hurt.

NIKO  
I know. My wound is deep sir. I don't have much time left.

He shows Bates a laser gun he lifted from Manheim's men.

NIKO (CONT'D)  
It appears to be quick and accurate...perhaps less painful than the cyanide.

Bates nods. Stands. Niko slumped over, takes aim.

EXT. THE SECRET CITADEL - NIGHT

A BANG and then a bright flash illuminates the interior of the Citadel. Seconds, then Niko totters out. He passes the hover tank he used to follow Superman and reaches the edge of the cliff, then tumbles over the side.

EXT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

Paper boys are STREAMING out of the Planet with stacks of newspapers, tossing them into their cars.

CLOSE UP FRONT PAGE

ROBERT BATES DEAD: SUPERMAN QUESTIONED

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - DAY

The city bustles with foot traffic. Nearly everyone is reading a copy of the Daily Planet. Newspaper stands are full of discussion and argument.

INT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

The news floor a buzz, Perry White marches through it like an army drill sergeant.

PERRY WHITE

Listen, you signed up for this folks, and this is the news game. I don't care if its good news or bad news. And frankly I don't believe this malarkey about Superman being responsible for Bates' death, but we're going to cover it. Where's Lane?

JIMMY

She didn't come in today.

PERRY WHITE

Well get her on the phone. Tell her to bring her cute little keester down here. Superman's her guy and we need to be the first to interview him. Kent! Where's Kent?

CLARK

Right here.

Clark is looking noticeably disturbed.

PERRY WHITE

There ya are. What's the matter with you?

Clark stares up at the television monitor.

CLARK

I think you're too late about that Superman interview.

White looks up. The news floor is hushed, all eyes are on the television.

ON SCREEN: A TELEVISION ANCHOR at a news desk.

TELEVISION ANCHOR  
Here is exclusive footage of that private press release by Superman.

A shaky shot of Superman on camera.

SUPERMAN  
I want to first offer my sincere condolences to the Bates family for the death of Robert Bates. I assure you as well as the rest of the world that I had no involvement in his death. Nevertheless at the request of the President, I am removing myself from the investigations of the 17 missing persons...until such a time that my services are desired again. Thank you.

TELEVISION ANCHOR  
While President Wilson was brief in his comments as well, he did explain that Superman had violated a request to not get involved in the protection of Robert Bates.

President Wilson stands at the President's podium.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
Superman acted on his own accord and against my direct request to discontinue any investigation into Robert Bates. The tragedy of this is that our country has lost a great patriot.

TELEVISION ANCHOR  
The talk show circuits have already been buzzing this morning with talks about Superman...how much trust can we put in the Man of Steel?

The cast of THE VIEW appears on screen.

WHOOPI GOLDBERG  
But why should we listen to the President? Superman has been doing a lot more for this country a lot longer than he has.

(MORE)

WHOOPI GOLDBERG (CONT'D)

*In fact, last I checked, our taxes  
have gone up ever since he got into  
office.*

*Audience applause.*

BARBARA WALTERS

*Superman doesn't have boundaries.  
We're talking about a being...an  
ALIEN being who can stop tanks, knock  
missiles from the sky...*

*The camera pans to Lois Lane.*

LOIS

*Superman has overstepped his so called  
boundaries before and no one  
complained then.*

ELIZABETH HASSLEBECK

*But it never resulted in anyone's  
death.*

LOIS

*And who's to say that Superman has  
anything to do with it? Whatever  
happened to 'Innocent until proven  
guilty'?*

*Perry White is aghast.*

PERRY WHITE

*What's she doing on TV? LANE!!!*

*Perry SLAMS down a stack of papers on a desk and storms into  
his office.*

INT. THE SECRET CITADEL - NIGHT

*Superman sits at the crystal table, rotating the blue crystal  
on the table.*

SUPERMAN

*Replay footage...step 11.*

*The entire table becomes a giant MONITOR, showing Bates  
shortly before his death. A FLASH from the gunshot slightly  
throws light on Niko's face.*

*Superman taps the table and the footage FREEZES. He draws a  
square around the darkened face of Niko.*

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

*Enhance selection.*

The image starts to improve, but is still dark.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)  
Remove graininess. Incorporate  
lighting. Eliminate shadows.

The image is still fuzzy, unclear. Superman sits back.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)  
Sketch a rough estimation of bone  
structure and simulate.

Superman looks up, sees the rocket ship from his barn. He  
BLASTS it with heat vision. The rocket spins quickly,  
DEFLECTING THE BEAMS back at Superman with his hand.

The nose of the rocket brightens with its familiar BLUE.  
Superman pauses.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)  
From the barn.

He jumps over to the rocket, examines it carefully. He hears  
the faint incomprehensible language from before.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)  
You're...you're speaking. You're  
speaking Kryptonian.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE LAB - NIGHT

Superman rushes into the lab, carrying the rocket under his  
arm. He sets it down at the crystal table. He slides the  
blue crystal into the slot on the table again.

SUPERMAN  
I need a translation of this language.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Searching now Kal-El. The language  
is Kryptonian. Translating:  
"Eradicator. Objective Critical.  
Requesting Activation."

Superman reaches out to the glowing blue sphere on top of  
the rocket. He grasps it, twists it slightly. The rocket  
ship springs to life, taking on its robot form. Superman  
eyes the "S" insignia.

ERADICATOR  
Hello Kal-El. I am the Eradicator.  
Thank you for activating me.

SUPERMAN  
What are you?



ERADICATOR

You and I Kal-El, we represent the last bastion of Kryptonian life in the known universe. My name derives from my objective. To preserve and protect Krypton, all Kryptonians, and Kryptonian culture by eradicating threats to our way of life. On your planet, I was one of several beings with artificial sentience and intelligence, but the only one to be honored with such a noteworthy objective.

The robot walks forward, out of the laboratory. It looks around the large foyer of the Fortress.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

This is a perfect replica of a Kryptonian sanctuary, a place of high honor for our people. A place of quiet meditation and reflection and solace. I trust it has served as such for you.

The Eradicator looks back to Superman. Studies his face carefully.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

You are indeed your father's son. You have his likeness. For 400 years I was an acting member of the council of Krypton, and my primary assignment was assisting the scientists with their research. The last man I was assigned to work with was your father, Jor-El.

SUPERMAN

You worked with my father? You knew him?

ERADICATOR

It was the greatest pleasure of my existence to work side by side with Jor-El. His intelligence was beyond measure.

SUPERMAN

You've been here all along, inside the rocket ship, when I came to earth. Couldn't wake up and say hi until now?

ERADICATOR

Yes. In order to preserve my power cells. Initially I believed after arriving on this planet I could build a habitation for you and I, but the materials I needed to power myself proved inadequate on my cursory scan of the planet. I shut down my neural net and all processors except one. The "Objective Critical" processor.

SUPERMAN

So that's what's waking you up?  
What is it?

ERADICATOR

I am detecting a threat Kal-El. You represent the last of the Kryptonian race. It appears that circumstances are unfolding that will place your new home in peril, and thus you are in peril. This is a critical stage to my objective. A better explanation is warranted.

The Eradicator walks over to the crystal column control panel. He removes a red crystal from behind his "S" insignia and inserts it.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

Exactly as I remember it. This is not just a replica of any Kryptonian sanctuary. It is your father's.

The large holographic image of Jor-El covers the ceiling. The Eradicator looks up reverentially.

JOR-EL

This is a report concerning the Kryptonian discovery of the Anti-Life Equation. What was once considered scientific mythology throughout the galaxy was at last discovered in the year 6530. The Anti-Life Equation is a complex formula designed to remove and replace the power of an individual to master his own will. The very nature of this equation is insidious. Its calculation and creation are far worse. If you were to bring a being to the fullness of despair, the point in which he loses all will of life and for himself, where he sees nothing

(MORE)

JOR-EL (CONT'D)

but hopelessness and unworthiness, at that point, his subconscious mind would yield a part of the Anti-Life Equation: a formula which establishes that nothing in life is of any worth. If all of this knowledge is gathered and synthesized into a mathematical equation in the proper order, it could be infused into the mind of any sentient being, thus ending the freedom of the will. However every being needs a will. And the will would be whatever the Equation replaces it with. Thus a man could be manipulated to think as another thinks. To act as another would act. To live and die under the allegiance of another.

The grimness in Jor-El's voice sends chills through the room.

SUPERMAN

Bates.

JOR-EL

Though Krypton has remained neutral and isolated from universal affairs, off-world data continues to surface on the search for the Anti-Life Equation, leading many to Krypton. Extra dimensional rulers who have deemed themselves gods on the planet called Apokolips have been most persistent. For this reason, the Kryptonian Council has decided to remove information regarding the Anti-Life Equation from the Infinity Complex and other assorted Kryptonian records.

Jor-El's image disappears. The Eradicator hovers next to Superman.

SUPERMAN

Robert Bates said it was the most dangerous force in the galaxy. He says someone just as dangerous is here, searching for it.

ERADICATOR

He who wishes to obtain the Anti-Life Equation cannot be taken lightly. I am afraid this planet is in grave danger Kal-El.

EXT. BATES CASTLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Lois walks towards the dilapidated castle, partially destroyed from its encounter with Superman and Intergang. She picks up a piece of the burned Strangle. It comes to life, wrapping itself around her finger. She shakes it off of her.

INT. BATES CASTLE - NIGHT

Lois descends a staircase into a dimly lit basement. Voices are just around the corner. She stifles a gasp as she sees the raspy voiced BOSS MOXIE and Manheim.

Surrounding the crime bosses are cohorts from all reaches of the globe. Russian, Jewish, Chinese, African thugs, the ugliest and nastiest group of criminals you'd ever have the displeasure of meeting: INTERGANG.

BOSS MOXIE  
Disgusted! Absolutely disgusted!

MANHEIM  
Put a sock in it Moxie.

BOSS MOXIE  
When I started Intergang 10 years ago, I vowed to never take a back seat to no one. Not Interpol, not Superman. Nobody!

MANHEIM  
And then what happened? Then Superman locked you up. So shut up! Be happy I sprung your sorry ass from the pen.

Moxie shakes a finger in Manheim's face.

BOSS MOXIE  
Look here you little rat faced jerk. You sprung me cause you need me. You wouldn't-a done it otherwise! You need me because you need Intergang.

Manheim walks away, MIMICKING Moxie.

BOSS MOXIE (CONT'D)  
You need them to pull your little stunts, you can't go into China without going through the Chungs or Russia without Ivanov. Because Intergang don't listen to you, they don't respect you. They respect me!  
(MORE)

BOSS MOXIE (CONT'D)

And you know why they listen to me and not you Bruno? Because I never answered to nobody but me!

MANHEIM

You ain't seen this guy.

BOSS MOXIE

You may be a big believer in this guy but I ain't Manheim. I mean aside from these weapons, which absolutely kick butt, these clowns haven't done squat and you've done everything. Intergang don't work that way. We don't work for nothing.

The surly Intergang members nod their approval.

MANHEIM

They're the new game in town. The only game from now on. They'll be here in a minute, you can judge for yourself.

BOSS MOXIE

Impress me please. Superman wiped the floor with your people, even with the fancy gadgets. When are you gonna learn Manheim? The Blue Boy is indestructible. Luthor couldn't put him down with toys either.

MANHEIM

I don't think our esteemed benefactor would appreciate you comparing himself to Luthor. And trust me, he ain't gonna need the toys to deal with Superman.

Manheim face is grim.

Lois eyes a futuristic looking crate next to her, decked with alien markings. She reaches for it, finds a small latch. She lifts the latch and tries to quietly take a peek in the crate.

BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!

A thunderous boom shakes the entire room. Makes Lois jump. She looks. Its not from the crate...

A LARGE GLOWING SPACE PORTAL, a BOOM TUBE, opens to Lois' right.

She scampers out of the way, crawling on hands and knees. She hides behind a crate, out of sight.

TWO ENORMOUS BEINGS emerge from the boom tube, each easily standing over 7 feet. Frightening and fearsome. One is tall, with a purple-gray hue to his skin and long flowing locks of hair. There is a stately, almost pompous air about him. This is GRAYVEN. The other is a bit shorter, hairy, hunched back, with massive teeth. KALIBAK.

BOSS MOXIE

JEEZUS!!

MANHEIM

Not quite, but close.

GRAYVEN

Your shipment as requested Mr. Manheim.

A troupe of pale and ghoulish, bald henchmen, LOWLIES, exit the tube, each one carries a large crate on their shoulders. They place the crates at Moxie's feet. The old boss is clearly shaken.

BOSS MOXIE

What the hell are you guys?

GRAYVEN

Manheim. Explain to this creature he stands in the presences of deities.

MANHEIM

Boss Moxie, Intergang, meet Grayven and Kalibak from the planet Apokolips.

Boss Moxie cringes. The Intergang members back away from them. Denetto seems the only one unafraid, stands by Manheim.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

The old boss is a little slow on the uptake. That's why he was able to get ran out of the city so easily. But he's useful.

KALIBAK

He needs to understand his place. We are here to check the status of the experiments. Your time is running short.

BOSS MOXIE

What? What experiments?

GRAYVEN

We expected you to be further along. Our data tells us your supply of human subjects has depleted and you have yet to replace them.

BOSS MOXIE

Human subjects? What's going on here Bruno?

MANHEIM

Don't worry about it.

BOSS MOXIE

What are you doing? You're experimenting on people?

MANHEIM

Shut up.

GRAYVEN

The exceeding incompetence of humans is growing wearisome.

MANHEIM

We had a slight mishap. That Bates guy you told us to nab bit the big one.

GRAYVEN

Bit the big one? You mean to tell me that the one man who held all the knowledge that was necessary to end this pitiful alliance is dead?

Kalibak eyes the broken weapons that were destroyed by Superman.

KALIBAK

Slight mishap Manheim?

GRAYVEN

What happened to these weapons?

DENETTO

Seems Superman is immune to your superior technology.

KALIBAK

Who?

MANHEIM

He said Superman.

GRAYVEN

Who is this...Superman?

DENETTO

Come on...you know. Superman.  
Strange visitor from another planet  
who came to Earth with powers and  
abilities far beyond those of mortal  
men.

GRAYVEN

This Superman is not a denizen of  
this planet?

BOSS MOXIE

Nah, he's from Krypton. Some planet  
that blew up. Maybe you heard of  
it.

Kalibak turns to Grayven, each of them look astonished.

KALIBAK

The last son of Krypton? So...the  
legend is true. There was a survivor.

GRAYVEN

Kryptonians unraveled the secrets of  
Anti-Life. If this is true, he would  
have the information we seek.

Grayven turns to Manheim.

GRAYVEN (CONT'D)

Your failure to deliver Bates as you  
promised might be alleviated by  
capturing this Superman.

Laughter bursts from the members of Intergang.

BOSS MOXIE

HA! Capture the Man of Steel? You  
don't know Superman.

MANHEIM

That might be a tad more difficult,  
as you can see by the condition of  
your of hardware, Superman's no joke.

KALIBAK

You've yet to realize your place  
human. Despite what your limited  
minds and bodies can accomplish,  
Kryptonians are no match here. Super  
or not, steel or not, he is a man,  
whereas we are gods.



MANHEIM

Hey, I'm all for it. Word has it that Superman's the one that offed Bates. Maybe he knows what you're up to.

GRAYVEN

(to Kalibak)

We should return and report this information brother. Continue your experimentations.

BOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!

The boom tube re-opens. Kalibak and Grayven enter the portal, followed by the Lowlies, who limp quickly after them. The tube closes with a large WHOOSH, blowing the hats off some of the gang members' heads.

BOSS MOXIE

What are you getting us into here Manheim? Human experiments? Who the hell are these guys? What the hell is Intergang doing messing around with guys like this?

MANHEIM

Get out of my face Moxie. The rest of you, now do you understand what I'm working with? The world's passed this old geezer by. With these guys backing me, I'm gonna rule this planet.

BOSS MOXIE

You trust these guys? Manheim, you're insane. They're gonna gut you like a fish as soon as your done doing their dirty laundry.

MANHEIM

Don't cry for me Virginia...

Manheim flips his wrist around and produces a vial of clear liquid, seemingly out of thin air.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

I got an ace up my sleeve.

Lois still sits in the corner of the room, listening to the commotion of the men leaving the basement. The door clicks shut. She rises.

Coming around the crates, she meets an impressive GALACTIC HOVER TANK. She pulls a disposable camera from her pocket.

Suddenly Lois is taken off her feet, slammed into the wall. She is wrapped in the sticky black Strangle net. Moxie steps forward holding the weapon that fired it. Lois struggles but is overcome easily.

BOSS MOXIE

Guess this crap is good for something huh? Lois Lane...intrepid reporter for the Daily Planet. You're the one that brought down the thunder on me from Superman. I guess the question now is, what happens next?

EXT. APOKOLIPS

A bleak landscape. Large volcanoes and deep firepits surround enormous steel buildings which rise into a blood red sky. Thousands upon thousands of balding Lowlies stalk along, carrying different contraptions and devices.

One group of lowlies is hauling a large piece of a statue, a gigantic helmeted head, towards another group of lowlies who are erecting a statue in the center courtyard of a vast stone temple.

INT. DARKSEID'S STRONGHOLD

Kalibak and Grayven walk along the interior of the temple, decorated with similar statues as the one being erected outside. Kalibak stops Grayven as he begins to enter a large room.

KALIBAK

The eldest shall announce this information to our father.

Kalibak struts ahead, Grayven sneers.

INT. DARKSEID'S THRONE ROOM

The two enter a cavernous room. Atop a high flight of stairs that seems to go on forever is a large silver throne backed by a scenic view of Apokolips. A lone figure stands, facing the window, his arms folded neatly behind his back.

Kalibak and Grayven ascend the stairs. DESAAD, a small man in a dark gray cloak runs up aside them.

KALIBAK

Not now Desaad, we have to address my father on an urgent matter.

DESAAD

His patience is thin at this time  
Lord Kalibak. Perhaps we should  
consider another time.

Grayven shoves Desaad to the floor.

GRAYVEN

Stand back you coward. These are  
matters that do not concern you.

Kalibak and Grayven reach the throne. They kneel before the  
large figure who is standing on some sort of hovering disc.

The disc rotates to reveal a enormous gray-skinned man. His  
eyes are sunken into his face like two black bottomless pits.  
Deep cracks splinter across the dome of his skull. This is  
the Apokoliptian overlord, DARKSEID.

KALIBAK

News father. Manheim has reported  
to us, the man called Bates. He is  
dead.

Darkseid looks pissed.

DARKSEID

Was this death the result of  
extracting the Anti-Life Equation  
from his mind?

KALIBAK

No father. He was destroyed by  
someone else.

DARKSEID

Ah. So the death of Bates was nothing  
more than the result of your utter  
incompetence, correct?

Suddenly, without warning, Darkseid launches a sphere of  
electrical energy, the AGONY MATRIX, at his eldest son. It  
strikes him, violently shaking him and dropping Kalibak to  
the floor. He writhes in pain, screaming.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Suffer your pain quietly.

Kalibak attempts to stifle his screams, whimpering and  
grimacing.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Your instructions could not have  
been clearer Kalibak.

(MORE)

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

You were to obtain the Anti-Life Equation from this man, not destroy him through your clumsiness.

GRAYVEN

Honestly father...leaving any measure of this operation in the hands of these Earth men was bound to result in catastrophe.

DARKSEID

I have experienced no problem with Manheim or his associates. They have performed capably even for Earth men. It is when I place my faith in my offspring that my plans are undermined.

KALIBAK

A...a...another...d...de...velopment  
...a...MAN...

He waves his hand forward, snatching the electric cage from the air, releasing Kalibak from his punishment. Kalibak rolls on the ground in pain.

DARKSEID

On your feet. What is it you mean Kalibak?

GRAYVEN

I can explain more succinctly father.

DARKSEID

No, let him speak. He is the eldest.

KALIBAK

Supposedly...he was...k...killed by a...a Kryptonian.

DARKSEID

You idiot. A Kryptonian? Certainly you didn't believe that nonsense Kalibak. Krypton exploded years ago, along with every man, woman and child. The dust of their arrogant society is spread across the cosmos.

KALIBAK

I considered that father. But what could these Earth men know of Krypton? Their civilization and technology is beyond primitive.

Grayven holds up a damaged weapon.

GRAYVEN

They call this Kryptonian Superman.  
Many of our weapons were damaged in  
a confrontation with this being.

The weapon flies out of Grayven's hand and into Darkseid's.  
Darkseid looks it over as he studies the face of his sons.  
He sits in his throne.

DARKSEID

Superman? Desaad, construct a  
diagnostic, analyze the damage to  
this weapon. See how it was possible  
for a Kryptonian, or anything in the  
universe for that matter, to damage  
Apokoliptian steel.

Desaad takes the weapon and shuffles off. He looks at Kalibak  
with disappointment as he passes.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Krypton held many secrets of the  
universe, including the Anti-Life  
Equation. Their scientists were  
brilliant, as well as conceited.

KALIBAK

Shall I go and obtain the  
Kryptonian...

DARKSEID

Shall I re-engage the agony matrix  
upon your pathetic carcass? Kalibak  
you are a disgrace and a failure as  
a son. Your news that you were so  
eager to deliver was nothing more  
than happenstance. In any event,  
your brutality would likely result  
in the Kryptonian's death more than  
his capture. I will need this *man*  
alive.

INT. UNITED NATIONS - DAY

A gathering of UN dignitaries listen to a woman, ROSALYN  
LITTLE. She stands next to President Wilson along side a  
man in a wheelchair.

ROSALYN LITTLE

I want to thank the President for  
allowing me to speak regarding this  
issue. My name is Rosalyn Little.

(MORE)

ROSALYN LITTLE (CONT'D)

I am a small business owner, a mother of 3 children and a wife. The tragedies at the Bates Scientific Building and Bates Castle are not unusual in this day and time. I lost a very dear person to me. My son was only 11 years old. I don't blame Superman directly for this tragedy or for any tragedy. There have been robberies and kidnappings as long as there has been civilization. But I believe that indirectly, Superman has caused the criminal world to up the ante on their tactics. Criminals have become far more desperate, more violent, and developed new weaponry for the direct purpose of combating Superman that leaves catastrophic results such as those that cost my son his life and my husband his leg.

INT. CLARK KENT'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clark sits watching the press conference on television. He takes his glasses off as the phone rings.

ROSALYN LITTLE (O.S.)

*But he is determined to walk again.*

CLARK

Hello.

PERRY WHITE (O.S.)

KENT! KENT! Where the hell are ya?  
The whole world's going crazy!

Clark is silent, staring at the monitor.

*ON SCREEN: Rosalyn Little is helping her husband out of his wheelchair to stand at the podium.*

PERRY WHITE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Superman goes nuts for a second and the whole world loses it. Olsen's taking sick time, Lane's no where to be found, and you're holing up with your cookies and teddy bear at home.

Clark isn't listening.

*ON SCREEN: Little stands up shakily on a prosthetic limb. The UN crowd applauds.*

PERRY WHITE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Kent? KENT? Are you even listening?

CLARK  
Yeah, sorry Chief.

PERRY WHITE  
Snap out of it and stop calling me  
chief. I need you down at the Planet  
pronto.

Perry hangs up. Clark stares at the screen.

*ON SCREEN: President Wilson is assisting Mr. Little.*

INT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

Perry White and Clark walk along the busy news room floor.

CLARK  
I thought you told Lois this wasn't  
a real story.

PERRY WHITE  
It wasn't until Bates bought the  
farm and the President and the UN  
got involved. Now its a major story.  
Look at this, morning edition of the  
Gotham Times.

He shows Clark a newspaper with the top headline "Is Superman  
Worth The Trouble?"

CLARK  
How can they say this?

PERRY WHITE  
Its the news Kent! You can't get  
personally involved. Okay, here's  
your plane tickets and your hotel  
information. Get lots of quotes.  
Normally I would send Lane, but she's  
gone AWOL.

CLARK  
No word from her at all?

PERRY WHITE  
None. But you know Lane. She's  
knee deep into Bates death, probably  
trying to prove Superman's innocence.  
Don't worry about Lane Kent.

(MORE)

PERRY WHITE (CONT'D)

She's been gone a whole lot longer than this on a story, and besides if there was something she can't handle, which I doubt, she still has the baddest bodyguard on the planet.

CLARK

I just don't know if I'm the right person for this one.

PERRY WHITE

Look, I like Superman just as much as the next guy. How many times has he saved my bacon? But we have a job to do Kent and I need a guy down at the UN. They're gonna be talking all week about the "Superman problem". Get lots of quotes.

Clark stares as Perry walks off, barking more orders to other reporters.

EXT. THE SLEEP-TITE INN - NIGHT

A run of the mill roadside motel.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Clark sits in the hotel room, clicks on the television, and starts unpacking his clothes. Something catches his attention. He smiles, shaking his head. He stands and opens his window.

The Eradicator enters, flying in rocket ship form. It transforms into a robot.

ERADICATOR

Hello Kal-El.

CLARK

I heard you coming, but I thought you would have been here about 10 minutes ago. What happened, you get lost?

ERADICATOR

I was observing the inhabitants of this planet more carefully. I came across a visual information network which was purveying inaccuracies concerning your alternate identity.



CLARK

Yeah, I saw those too. Could you not talk so...robotic?

ERADICATOR

I apologize for my speech, it however highlights my purpose for making this journey. My neural net requires updating. My sensory emulator is not operating correctly.

CLARK

And you need me to...?

ERADICATOR

Activate the reflective matrix inside the Fortress. It requires voice recognition. Naturally I cannot duplicate your voice until my sensory emulator is working properly.

CLARK

But what does that have to...oh forget it.

ERADICATOR

Kal-El, I detect you are troubled.

CLARK

The whole world thinks I've killed a man.

ERADICATOR

Do not heed the erroneous beliefs of these Earth men. You are not a murderer. You are Kal-El, son of Jor-El, the last son of Krypton. And in every way you are the good man your father was.

Clark nods, relaxes.

CLARK

And if that's not enough Lois is missing. I think she may have gotten herself into something dangerous and I have no idea where she is. Wait a second...you found me. Could you locate...

ERADICATOR

My planetary sensors are not yet attuned to the particular bio-rhythms of the woman you call Lois.

(MORE)

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

Unfortunately I would not be able to detect her. But with the reflective matrix I could.

Clark hears footsteps heading his way, he looks towards the hallway.

CLARK

Okay someone's coming, you gotta take off.

ERADICATOR

My scanners indicate is a female. Perhaps its is the Lois woman you are looking for.

X-RAY VISION: Cat Grant walks down the hallway, checking room numbers.

CLARK

No, its Cat Grant. Out the window, go back to the fortress.

ERADICATOR

I require the activation of the reflective matrix Kal-El. This is a matter that cannot be deferred.

CLARK

Well its gonna have to. Scram.

ERADICATOR

I'm afraid this will cause a set back in the processing of my objective. If I may say so, these alternate identities seem to cause you extreme distress Kal-El.

CLARK

Yeah well right now its a certain little talking robot. Ok bathroom, and no talking.

Clark SHOVES the robot into the bathroom. The Eradicator hovers there, shaking his head.

ERADICATOR

I have yet to examine Earth culture. It must be mating season.

He TRANSFORMS into the rocket ship and noiselessly exits the bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cat knocks on the door and almost instantly Clark answers. He is wearing a set of pajamas, feigning sleep.

CLARK

Cat? Cat Grant?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cat lets herself in. She sees the Eradicator in rocket form sitting in the corner. The blue glow emanates from the nose cone.

CAT GRANT

Now that's a funky little lamp.  
They didn't have anything like that  
in my room.

Clark turns, his mouth hangs slack. He shoots an angry look at the Eradicator, eyes glowing red.

CLARK

Yeah funky is the word I had too.

CAT GRANT

8:30 Mr. Kent? You can't be sleeping  
already.

CLARK

Oh yeah. You know us old farm  
boys...early to bed, early to rise.

CAT GRANT

That's just because those old farm  
girls didn't know how to have a good  
time.

She plops on the bed, striking a sultry pose. Oh yes, Cat is a sex pot, no question about it. Clark gulps.

A thin blue light activates from the Eradicator and scans the outline of Cat's body. Clark gulps again.

CLARK

Ah...well uh Cat. I don't know if  
we...

CAT GRANT

Sorry pooh bear. I'm a terrible  
teaser.

CLARK

You're also a long way from  
Metropolis.

CAT GRANT

Thanks to our boss, he's got me looking into Intergang, and I think I got a hot lead. But I'm very hungry Clark. I couldn't possibly tell you about it on an empty stomach. Why don't you wake up, throw on some of those fancy country boy duds, and take me to dinner?

The news comes on, displaying the Little family at the UN.

CAT GRANT (CONT'D)

Oh, look the UN hearings on Superman. I missed it when it came on.

CLARK

(disturbed)

Yeah, lets go eat. I saw a restaurant up the road.

CAT GRANT

Ok, you get dressed, I'll just watch this.

Mr. Little stands with his amputated leg. Clark grimaces.

CLARK

I'd rather just...

CAT GRANT

No no no, go ahead, I promise not to peek silly. Go.

Clark scoops Cat up in his arms and whisks her away to the door. Cat is slightly startled and impressed.

CLARK

Sorry Cat, I'm kind of old fashioned. Be ready in 5?

He closes the door, turns to the TV and clicks it off.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cat just stares at Clark's door.

CAT GRANT

Old fashioned farm boy? Yow.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Clark stares down the Eradicator, who is still in rocket form.

CLARK

What exactly do you think you're doing?

ERADICATOR

Examining your mating customs. Quite different from Kryptonian methods.

CLARK

We were not mating.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Lois Lane SNAPS awake. She is held down with metal clamps to a metal table, surrounded by dozens of other people, also strapped to tables. She turns her head, eyes barely opening. She sees a gray haired man to the table next to her.

LOIS

N...Nigel Greenberg?

Lois struggles but its hopeless: she is fastened tightly to the table. Her constant struggling seems to have alerted a HOVERING METALLIC PROBE. It circles above her and suddenly fires a bolt of electricity into her head clamp.

Lois winces, but feels no pain. Suddenly Superman bursts into the room.

LOIS (CONT'D)

SUPERMAN!

Superman hits the hovering probe with a blast of heat vision. It explodes into smoke.

SUPERMAN

Is everyone alright?

LOIS

Thank God you're here!

SUPERMAN

I'm going to get you all out of here.

Superman starts to release other people. He seems to ignore Lois.

LOIS

Please. Hurry Superman!

Superman breaks the restraints of a young woman nearby Lois. He picks her up and sets her to her feet.

LOIS (CONT'D)  
 SUPERMAN! Over here! Why are you  
 ignoring me??

Superman doesn't seem to see Lois. He looks around the room,  
 then closes the lab door as he leaves. The lights go out.

LOIS (CONT'D)  
 SUPERRRMAANNN!!!

The lights come back on. Kalibak is standing over Lois.

KALIBAK  
 Did you really think someone was  
 coming to save you?

LOIS  
 Stop it! Get away from me!

KALIBAK  
 No one is coming for you my dear.  
 No one.

Kalibak leans in for a hungry sloppy kiss. Lois struggles  
 against her restraints.

LOIS  
 SUPERMAN!!!

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Lois, twisting fitfully on a metal table, dozens of wires  
 connected to her. She murmurs "Superman" over and over.  
 She is in a dream state, locked in a laboratory with hundreds  
 of other human subjects.

In the corner of the lab sits a large monitor, cycling data  
 over and over, like a streaming ticker. Manheim walks up to  
 a skinny LAB TECH in a white coat.

MANHEIM  
 Closer?

LAB TECH  
 60 percent Mr. Manheim.

MANHEIM  
 Let me ask you kid, what exactly is  
 supposed to happen when we reach  
 100%?

LAB TECH  
 Funny, I was about to ask you the  
 same thing.

MANHEIM

Come on, look around you little dingbat. We got dignitaries, celebrities, doctors, scientists, self-made billionaires, the best and brightest of the planet. You're a smart kid. What could you be doing with them?

LAB TECH

You're paying me to watch them, not to think.

Manheim smacks him hard in the head.

MANHEIM

Don't get smart genius. You wanna take a walk?

The Lab Tech hits a series of buttons, switching off the computers, plunging the room in total darkness.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

LAB TECH

Standing up for myself. You want my help, you're gonna respect me. Keep your hands to your self buddy.

MANHEIM

Alright jeezus...just turn it back on you little geek. I'm sorry. Come on.

LAB TECH

Geeks 1, Goons 0.

The lab tech hits the power button, again. Lights stream through the room, all the systems rev back up.

LAB TECH (CONT'D)

Now, to your question Mr. Manheim. I would be trying to see what makes them tick. Or better yet...

MANHEIM

Go on...

LAB TECH

Trying to see how I can make them tick. Why teach myself to fish if I can control the best fishermen?

MANHEIM

Control the fisherman huh? That's a good question. Let me know when this thing hits 80. Please.

The lab tech smiles, feeling good.

INT. DARKSEID'S STRONGHOLD - DESAAD'S LAB

Desaad and Kalibak enter into his lab, walking at a quick pace.

DESAAD

You can defeat the Kryptonian Kalibak. I have analyzed his defenses and they are poor. He is an offensive opponent. He does not believe he can be hurt. Probably on that planet he never has been, however...

KALIBAK

My father has spoken Desaad. I am not to be involved. As much as it angers me, I must concede to my father.

DESAAD

No you don't. Your powers are enhanced by your anger yes, but you, Kalibak, are a god. You have nothing or no one to bow down to.

KALIBAK

My father would destroy me for even thinking like that Desaad. You know this as well as I do. Don't play games with my mind. I know you resent your position as my father's lackey. You should be praising him that he has not ended your life for your constant attempts to usurp his throne.

DESAAD

Usurp the throne? I am simply trying to help you ascend to your rightful place. You are the eldest son and certainly not second rate to your brothers.

Something in this statement reaches Kalibak.

DESAAD (CONT'D)

Darkseid is our lord but he is not a perfect being.

(MORE)



DESAAD (CONT'D)

His judgment is not always sound.  
Listen, I have the ideal weapon to  
neutralize the Kryptonian without  
causing him any permanent damage.

Desaad hands Kalibak a small mace, elaborately designed.

KALIBAK

My old power mace...? I haven't  
held this since I was young.

DESAAD

I modified it. It will now emit  
intense amounts of radiation that  
will shut down the nervous system,  
rendering your victim helpless to  
even move. From there, you can do  
to him what you want. I call it the  
Beta-Club.

KALIBAK

Well done. I now see why my father  
keeps you here. Despite your  
treacherous lying heart, you are a  
magnificent torturer.

DESAAD

The Kryptonian appears to be a  
resilient being. Nerve damage has  
always been effective against even  
the most powerful of opponents. Use  
it. Bring him in. Gain respect  
Kalibak.

KALIBAK

We shall see.

EXT. ROOFTOP CAFE - NIGHT

Clark and Cat sit at an outdoor restaurant with a spectacular  
view of the downtown area.

CAT GRANT

I can't believe you were there.

CLARK

Come on Cat...you can't? If there  
is any news anywhere on the planet,  
Perry wants it. Same with Edge.  
Galaxy was notorious for their  
sensationalism.

CAT GRANT

That's true. I just can't believe you and Jimmy were hiding in the bushes with the rest of the paparazzi. Perry is nuts.

CLARK

Wasn't exactly our shining moment. But I did break the story, I guess even before you. How did Edge feel about that?

CAT GRANT

The same as Perry would have felt if it was me who broke the story instead of you.

Clark stares at someone over Cat's shoulder. A frosty old business man in a FUR COAT sits at a table with a tough looking bodyguard.

CLARK

He doesn't look like the tyrant you make him out to be.

CAT GRANT

Who? Edge? He's here?

CLARK

Yeah. He's been sitting there about a minute after we sat down.

CAT GRANT

He's the reason I'm here. He owns a large piece of LSI Holdings.

Cat turns her head slowly, not to look conspicuous.

CLARK

LSI? Intergang's main backers? No.

CAT GRANT

Yes cutie pie. Trust me, I know. Luckily, an ace reporter like myself is always prepared.

Cat reaches into her purse, retrieving a small electronic device.

CLARK

Is that a bug?

CAT GRANT

*This...is* a quality surveillance device mister. Excuse me.

Cat stands and saunters over to Edge's table.

CAT GRANT (CONT'D)  
Morgan? I thought that was you.

EDGE  
Kitty Cat? Look who's here Francis.

MORGAN EDGE, 60, stands, embraces Cat with his back to Clark.  
Cat looks over to Clark and winks.

EDGE (CONT'D)  
Hey, why'd you skip out on me Cat?  
We had something special.

CAT GRANT  
I don't know, I just have this thing  
about telling the truth.

EDGE  
Don't believe all that stuff baby.

CAT GRANT  
So you mean you have nothing to do  
with LSI Holdings? They are criminals  
you know.

EDGE  
Kitty Cat, of course not. I'm a  
clean business man, not a crime lord.  
You know me baby, I'm a lover, not a  
gangster.

Cat plays shy and coy.

EDGE (CONT'D)  
Come on, sit down. Let's talk it  
out. You don't belong at the Planet.  
You belong here. At Galaxy. With  
me.

He holds her hand like a lonely old man should.

Clark looks on, then frowns as his super hearing detects  
buzzing. Through X-Ray vision he sees Edge's bodyguard  
checking his cell phone underneath the table.

EDGE'S BODYGUARD  
Mr. Edge I'll be right over here  
sir. Phone call.

EDGE  
Certainly Francis.

CAT GRANT

I have to get back to my friend.  
We'll talk soon Morgan.

EDGE

Make that real soon sweet heart.

Cat briskly walks back over to Clark. Clark is focusing in on the bodyguard the whole time.

CAT GRANT

See how a master operates? I delivered the package, now its time to pick up the goods. Whatcha gotta say about that?

Clark is still focused on the bodyguard speaking on the cell phone.

CAT GRANT (CONT'D)

Now I just have to change to the right frequency to listen on this ear piece. Its not 12...is it 17? Hey Clark, do you know how to work this?

CLARK

Huh? Sorry Cat...wasn't listening.

CAT GRANT

The bug...I can't hear anything yet.

CLARK

Maybe you should try changing frequencies.

Cat playfully pats Clark on the cheek.

CAT GRANT

Thanks farm boy.

SUPER HEARING: Clark hears the conversation on the bodyguard's cell phone.

VOICE (O.S.)

*Edge needs to get more people to Manheim.*

EDGE'S BODYGUARD

*Where is Intergang right now?*

VOICE (O.S.)

*We're still at Bates' place. The tests are making progress but we need more people.*

*EDGE'S BODYGUARD*

*Edge wants his updates faster. You guys are dragging. And he's not getting his answers. If you want people, he wants answers.*

Clark thinks for a moment, then feigns a sick stomach.

CLARK

Ugh.

Cat still works on the electronic receiver, not looking up.

CAT GRANT

You okay?

CLARK

I think I ate something bad. Excuse me.

CAT GRANT

I'm still not getting anything.  
I'll take care of you Clark, come back to my room.

She looks up. Money is left on the table for the bill and Clark is already at the elevator heading down. He is fidgeting with his jacket buttons as the door closes.

EXT. BATES CASTLE - NIGHT

Superman flashes over the castle, faster than a speeding bullet. With X Ray vision he scans in the interior of the castle, seeing nothing. Behind him there is a loud sound.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!

Behind him, a boom tube opens up on the outskirts of the castle grounds. Superman spins slowly and faces the portal.

Kalibak steps through, clutching the beta-club firmly in his grip. He eyes the Man of Steel carefully.

KALIBAK

Well. The last son of Krypton...

SUPERMAN

What the...

KALIBAK

Bow down Superman. You are in the presence of a god.

SUPERMAN

Are you serious?

Kalibak aims the beta-club, firing off a SILVERY-WHITE nerve beam, striking before Superman knows what's happening. He's knocked backwards, trembling on the ground. Kalibak fires another bolt square into the "S" on Supe's chest. He is writhing in pain until the attack stops.

KALIBAK

Do you think I am serious now  
Kryptonian dog?

He spits at Superman but misses.

KALIBAK (CONT'D)

It appears that Desaad was slightly overestimating you. He thought you could be a formidable foe. As it seems, you were unworthy of his esteem.

Superman seems to have shaken off the effects of the nerve beams. He rises to a knee. Kalibak grabs him by the throat.

KALIBAK (CONT'D)

Any other situation, I would have reduced you to mere blood and bones, but my father has need of you.

SUPERMAN

Who is your father?

KALIBAK

What business is it of yours  
Kryptonian?

SUPERMAN

I just wanted to know who I needed  
to send you crying back to.

With that, Superman levels a punch square into Kalibak's chest. Kalibak is caught off guard slightly and staggers, but doesn't fall.

KALIBAK

So there is fight in you.

Kalibak swings the beta club at Superman and misses. For a humongous brute, Kalibak is quick as a cat. Supes is still faster. He dodges another blow and a nerve beam that slices into the ground.

Superman delivers a double axhandle PUNCH to the CHOPS.

KALIBAK (CONT'D)

Igfrak nole venteni Kryptio!!

SUPERMAN

Watch your language pal.

The beta-club slams into the ground, creating a small quake and opening up giant fishers that spider web across the ground. Statues atop Bates Castle plummet into the courtyard.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Did you think that was going to catch me? Look whoever you are I can fl...

Kalibak lifts a chunk of solid earth the size of a tractor trailer and heaves it at Superman.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Oh.

The giant mass catches Superman in the chest, driving him back into the forest. Huge trees snap and break in half.

KALIBAK

Don't make me destroy you Kryptonian.

Kalibak leaps into the center of the forest where the trees fell.

KALIBAK (CONT'D)

You have a purpose to my father and to Apokolips. Perhaps when he is done with your carcass he will allow you to return to this pitiful mound of dirt.

A large tree trunk swings around, striking Kalibak in the ribs, launching him back to the castle. He hits the high wall of the castle and slides into the courtyard.

Superman is wielding the large tree trunk like an oversized baseball bat. He tosses it aside and flies to the castle.

Kalibak aims the Beta Club for another nerve attack, but Superman blasts the club free from his grip with his heat vision.

Superman continues the assault with the heat vision, Kalibak blocking it with his arm. The giant rumbles ahead full speed, holding his arm up for cover as his flesh is being blistered.

Superman tries to back up but its too late. Kalibak reaches Superman and belts him with a devastating uppercut that knocks him back into the forest.

Kalibak turns his back, looking for the beta club. Almost as soon as he does, Superman returns like a boomerang,

hammering him with an overhand right and left, then a right cross that sends Kalibak to the ground.

Kalibak is stunned. He sweeps Superman's leg and launches a large brown boot to Superman's head. Superman catches the foot, swings Kalibak high into the air and slams him face first into the earth.

The blow shatters all windows in the castle. Kalibak crawls to a knee.

SUPERMAN

Identify yourself. Apokoliptian.

KALIBAK

(out of breath)

I am a god of Apokolips, child of Krypton. You are no match for me.

SUPERMAN

Seems like I'm doing just fine.

Kalibak launches his body at Superman, too quick for Superman to react. The two combatants slam into the courtyard, ripping up the cobblestone floor.

Kalibak grabs a loosened stone and hammers Superman in the face with it. He grabs Superman by the back of the head, thundering blow after blow into Supes' grill. He slings Superman into a far wall and Superman crumbles into a heap.

The giant stands and hunches his shoulders. He eyes the Beta-Club, some 30 yards away.

KALIBAK

If I am forced to, you will be destroyed. Your surrender is your only option. You will not rob me of my glory, the glory of my father, the glory of Apokolips. We are the new gods Kryptonian. If it is your destiny to die, then die you shall.

He reaches the beta club and turns seeing...

SUPERMAN ROCKETING TOWARD HIM!

He swings the beta club but Superman backhands it away. He swings a roundhouse punch which Superman catches with ease.

He swings another punch and it lands square in the jaw. Superman doesn't even budge.



SUPERMAN

Whoever you are, I think I'm done  
playing around today.

Superman delivers another devastating overhand right, dropping Kalibak to his knees. A crushing knee lift sends the giant out of the courtyard into the clearing.

Kalibak lands in the clearing, knocked out. Superman jumps and lands next to his fallen body.

BOOOOOOONMMMMM!!!

Further in the distance, a boom tube opens. Superman approaches it.

A pair of red laser beams zigzag out from within the portal. They strike Superman and knock him flat. A dark silhouette fills the boom tube portal.

Superman struggles to sit up, still feeling the effects of the Omega beams. He looks up and sees Darkseid with hands behind his back, standing on his hovering platform.

KALIBAK

F...father...

The silhouette's eyes ignite again. Kalibak is dragged into the portal through them.

KALIBAK (CONT'D)

Father...please!

And with that, the boom tube suddenly shuts, sucking the air as it were from the area. Superman stands in the area where the tube closed, perplexed.

INT. BATES CASTLE - NIGHT

Manheim is scrambling around, trying to climb into some sort of contraption. It is dark so we cannot tell what he is doing. Superman bursts through the wall, looking around.

SUPERMAN

Manheim? I know you're in here.  
I'll tear this castle down to the  
ground if I have too.

Manheim whips around a corner, wearing a futuristic SUIT OF ARMOR of some sort. He shoots off a concussion blast from a SMALL BLASTER. It catches Superman in the back and he is knocked to the floor.

Manheim ducks back. He peeks around another corner while the gun charges up for another blast.

He shoots off another blast that Superman AVOIDS. The blast carries through the room and SHATTERS the far wall. Manheim hides again.

THROUGH X RAY VISION: Superman can't see anything. It appears Manheim's suit makes him invisible.

Manheim is trying to walk quietly, but his heavy breathing is giving him away. He slides along, back against a wall. A blue clad arm BURSTS THROUGH THE WALL, snatching Manheim through it by the neck.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Some night, wouldn't you say?

MANHEIM

I don't know, you tell me. Looked like you were having a rough time out there.

SUPERMAN

Let's step outside for a word.

Superman grabs Manheim around the torso and blasts off into the night sky, pieces of armor falling away from him.

EXT. ABOVE METROPOLIS - NIGHT

Superman and Manheim are miles in the air, the city streets just tiny dots below. Manheim is a nervous wreck.

SUPERMAN

Who is he Manheim?

MANHEIM

What?

SUPERMAN

The guy you're working for? I want to know who he is. I want to know where Lois is.

MANHEIM

You think I'm scared of you? I'm not saying a word.

Superman shrugs. Lets Manheim drop.

Manheim lets go a primal scream that seems to intensify with each passing second.

Superman shoots down next to him, arms folded, hovering next to him. Manheim grabs at him, but Supes keeps his distance.

SUPERMAN

Long way down Bruno. Want to try again.

MANHEIM

You...you're bluffing boy scout. You're not gonna let me hit.

SUPERMAN

Really?

Superman turns and zooms away, disappearing into the distance.

MANHEIM

WAAAAAIIIIITTTTTTT!!!

Manheim looks down, the ground is hastening its approach. Superman zips back to Manheim.

SUPERMAN

I'm sorry, what was that?

MANHEIM

I don't know his name. He's looking for something, he's doing some...

SUPERMAN

Human experiments Manheim. That's what he's doing. He's experimenting on people and you're helping him do it. What is he looking for? The Anti-Life Equation?

MANHEIM

I don't know what that is. Please Superman.

Superman grabs him by the collar and slows his descent. Manheim breathes again.

SUPERMAN

Tell me where they are. TALK!

MANHEIM

Look, he doesn't want anyone to die. He is looking for something, that...that Anti-Life thing...but he doesn't care if anyone does die. He'll slaughter everyone, everyone Superman...do ya understand?

SUPERMAN

Not while I'm around he won't.

MANHEIM

You don't know this guy. He took me to that place where he lives...its God awful. He's worshipped like a god there. People build statues to him, they bow to his feet. Millions and millions. He's huge. He's cold blooded, an unfeeling son of a bitch. I've seen him destroy people, disintegrate them into ashes. He calls it the Omega Effect. Red beams coming out of his eyes. You can't run from it, you can't get away. That guy you fought tonight is his son and he's just a taste. He's just a tool, he's nothing. Nothing like this guy.

SUPERMAN

You're just as bad. You're sacrificing dozens of people to these experiments and you don't even know what its doing to them.

MANHEIM

Like you care about anybody but Lois Lane.

SUPERMAN

You're gonna tell me where those people are Manheim.

MANHEIM

So he can wipe this place out? You might as well kill me like you killed Bates.

Superman stares Manheim down hard. Manheim hit him where it hurts.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

See I got you pegged blue boy. You...are an *alien*. You don't even need this place to live. You can go anywhere in the universe. Meanwhile I'm the only thing standing between this planet and Armageddon.

SUPERMAN

You couldn't possibly know what you're dealing with.

MANHEIM

If I didn't turn those people over to him, he would have destroyed this planet already.

Superman and Manheim touch down in the parking lot of a shopping center. A crowd swells. Manheim backs up into the crowd.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

This world is no longer yours to intimidate big man.

CHILD #1

Superman didn't do anything.

CHILD #2

Then why won't he go talk to the President?

CHILD #1

Superman, you didn't do anything wrong did you?

SUPERMAN

No son I didn't.

CHILD #2

Are you going to tell the President that?

He points towards an electronics store. Superman walks over to a television set, where the President is standing at a podium.

PRESIDENT WILSON

*We are now in the 3rd hour, waiting for Superman to respond to my request to meet. He has yet to acknowledge my request, therefore I have prepared a written statement. To the being known as Superman: The people of the United States of America, indeed the people of the Earth, appreciate what you've done over the years.*

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

At the press conference, the President stands before hundreds of reporters. Cat Grant holds a tape recorder.

PRESIDENT WILSON

There are many alive who would not be here today if it were not for  
(MORE)

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)

your heroism. But there comes a time when the citizens of our world must protect itself from powers we cannot understand nor contain. Although you have done a great deal of good and although we have appreciated your never-ending battle for truth and justice, the citizens of the Earth believe in a life without fear. Our goal is that we can remove the threats to peace and harmony, to remove all who oppose decent law abiders. Today, we remember sacrifices that our soldiers have made to this end. Today, we remember the victims of terror: The busload of children in Jerusalem, the workers at the Indigo plant in Charlotte North Carolina. Today we remember Robert Bates, a philanthropist, a doctor, a father, a good friend and a great American. Our war is fought because it must be fought. We cannot feel secure in this world until all threats to peace have been extinguished. Also we cannot feel secure living in a world in which any single being, with no one to answer to, to which all the nations of the world cannot contest, wields the strength to destroy entire armies, reverse time. Such an individual can be our greatest hero and at the same time, our greatest fear. When such a time arrives that our confidence is shaken in our heroes, when our great hero defies orders and acts upon his own accord, what are we to do?

Above, a sonic boom...a red and blue streak flashes out of the clouds. Superman swoops down onto the White House lawn. The President holds his hand up to quell the bristling crowd. Military personnel stand at the ready.

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)

(nervous as hell)

Superman. Thank you for coming.

Superman walks up to the President, his face serious. He looks at the military, several of them stand near something covered by a large gray tarp.

X Ray VISION: Supes can't see what is underneath the tarp.

There is a nervous silence. Superman doesn't speak, just looks from the President back to the gray tarp.

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)

As I was saying, when our great hero defies orders it becomes necessary to...take extreme measures to ensure the safety of all of Earth's sons and daughters.

Rosalyn Little sits at home, watching on TV, holding her husband's hand. She nods her approval, her face determined.

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)

Therefore it is the declaration of the United Nations Security Council that the person known as Sup...that you leave Earth...

SUPERMAN

You can't mean this Mr. President.

PRESIDENT WILSON

It is not with great joy that I say this. Our planet has come to depend on you, rely upon you many many times. But we cannot trust a being...

SUPERMAN

I am not some *being*.

PRESIDENT WILSON

A being with enormous power...who can do whatever he wishes unchecked.

SUPERMAN

The earth is my home just as much as it is anyone's.

His voice booms. He approaches the President. The President looks aside to his troops with fear. The crowd gasps.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Mr. President, there is something else. A greater threat, a larger crisis.

The President nods to the military in front of the tarp. They pull the tarp back, revealing a glowing green rock on a table. Kryptonite. Along side are several automatic rifles. The soldiers load clips with glowing green ammunition.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Greater threats and larger crises have become commonplace since your arrival. Understand, we have no desire for them to continue. Please Superman, we do not wish to engage in a war with you.

SUPERMAN

Very well. I will depart...for now. But the earth needs me, now more than ever. I won't be far away.

Superman takes off, leaving the White House behind as camera bulbs flash.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE LAB - NIGHT

The Eradicator works on at the large glass table.

ERADICATOR

Kal-El, you have returned. I began to fear you had forgotten about me.

SUPERMAN

I'm going to need your help Rad. The one who is responsible for the kidnappings is the same one who is looking for the Anti-life Equation. He's operating a laboratory somewhere. Bates said it would elicit high amounts of energy.

ERADICATOR

All of my systems are fully operational. What can I do?

SUPERMAN

First of all I cannot leave the Fortress.

ERADICATOR

Why is that?

SUPERMAN

The people of this planet are...its a confusing time for them. But I need to remain inside the Fortress until I can figure out how best to help them.

ERADICATOR

I understand.



SUPERMAN

Now, as far as this lab, I need you to find...

ERADICATOR

Someone is approaching Kal-El.

SUPERMAN

Who?

ERADICATOR

Sensory readings indicate aircraft from this planet. Here.

He points to the table monitor. A far off, two F18 Hornets.

SUPERMAN

Fighter jets. How did they find me?

ERADICATOR

I am checking their radar communication systems now. They have located you by your heat signature. In this environment, the dense cold makes it easy to distinguish you. If you wish to remain hidden, you must mask it or go elsewhere.

Superman pounds his fist on the crystalline table, cracking it.

SUPERMAN

Elsewhere? I can't leave. I need the Fortress to locate the captives.

ERADICATOR

It seems the people of Earth have turned against you Kal-El. Shall I prepare a departure from this planet?

SUPERMAN

A misunderstanding. Your global mapping is working, you should be able to find a location that meets our immediate needs for secrecy and masks my heat from radar.

ERADICATOR

Certainly Kal-El. I am computing all relevant information.

(beat)

Here is the ideal location on the planet. Suitable, well hidden, very warm.

The monitor displays the continent of South America, with a way marker set in the midst of the Amazon rain forest.

SUPERMAN

Let's go.

The Eradicator transforms into his rocket ship form.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

President Wilson sits in the Situation Room with his Chief of Staff, JONAS SMALL and the SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. They are observing a large global map with a single blip on the radar jumping all over the planet.

PRESIDENT WILSON

What is he doing?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We followed him to the Arctic Basin, but since then he has disappeared and reappeared several times. China, New Orleans, Antarctica. He's just doing laps around the earth, moving around too fast for our satellites to pin point his location.

JONAS SMALL

I assume he's trying to hide sir. He could just as easily destroyed our planes if he wanted. Hell he could destroy the satellites and then could be anywhere on the planet and we'd never find him.

PRESIDENT WILSON

I guess that means he's taking it well.

JONAS SMALL

We have the responsibility to protect this country sir.

PRESIDENT WILSON

You're allowed to disagree with me Mr. Small.

JONAS SMALL

With all due respect Mr. President, this is Superman we're talking about. I can't believe he's got to go into hiding.

## SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Superman has been a tremendous patriot to our planet in the past, but I agree with the decision of the UN. How can we really trust him?

EXT. BRAZIL -NIGHT

A lush rain forest. The Eradicator touches down gently in a small clearing. Superman lands with force.

## ERADICATOR

This is a very fascinating place. Various climates abound on this planet, much like Krypton. It seems as if your father wanted to make certain your new home was close as your own.

Superman is not listening. He is blasting an area of dirt with heat vision.

## ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

The Scarlet Jungle was very close to this, more red than green of course. And the Gold Volcano had a basin much like this one. It was visible from your father's laboratory.

Superman supercools the area of molten dirt he just heated up with his breath. It turns to a solid concrete floor.

## ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

Its very warm here. My circuitry index will need to be refreshed approximately every 1.4 hours. I am making the adjustments now. Did you need help with that?

## SUPERMAN

No thanks Eradicator.

Superman carefully measures the ground. He strikes a precise blow into the middle of the stone floor and it splits 4 ways. He uses heat vision to hew out a large block of granite. He lifts it and sets it aside.

## ERADICATOR

Very good Kal-El. Your measurements are precise. Ingenious use of your powers. However this method of construction is very time consuming. If I may?

SUPERMAN

I would prefer to build this myself Rad. But we will need some furnishings. Can you retrieve them...undetected?

ERADICATOR

Of course. My reflective laser image processor is fairly crude as cloaking devices go but it should be adequate for the antiquated systems of this planet.

SUPERMAN

Fine. I'll continue on here. Should be finished by the time you get back.

The Eradicator transforms into the rocket ship and blasts off into the sky. Superman returns to his work.

EXT. BRAZIL - MORNING

The Eradicator touches down. It is nearly dawn. He eyes a small structure of stones, only 10 feet high and wide. Superman looks exhausted, mentally whipped, but he plows ahead.

SUPERMAN

Not quite finished.

ERADICATOR

So I have observed. Kal-El I am detecting you are suffering from mental exhaustion. Perhaps you should utilize the technology afforded to you --

SUPERMAN

I'm fine Rad. Thanks anyway.

ERADICATOR

Very well. I have copied artifacts and furnishings from the Fortress into crystalline form.

The Eradicator reaches behind the "S" on his chest, holding several crystals.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

Lab equipment, tables and chairs, your parents' tribute.

SUPERMAN

Thanks.

He heaves a larger brick to the top of the stone structure. It misses, slides over the top and crashes to the ground, shaking the entire basin.

ERADICATOR

Your powers are incredible. Kryptonians were noted for their physical prowess and strength. On this planet, your genetics powered by this powerful sun have made you one of the strongest beings I have ever encountered in the universe. From my readings you don't utilize half of the strength...

SUPERMAN

Did you bring the foundation generator?

ERADICATOR

Certainly.

Eradicator pulls a green crystal from behind the "S". Superman takes it and plants it into the midst of the stone structure.

The stones seem to ERUPT from within. They are expanding in size, growing exponentially. Superman leaps onto the top of the structure as it RISES into the sky. He taps commands on the glass table.

The stones are growing faster. Surrounding trees are being PUSHED ASIDE and CRASHING to the ground. The Eradicator stands back, surveying the creation.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

Incredible. Did you know that the crystals were designed to acclimate to any planetary environment?

Superman doesn't answer. He walks into the large structure.

EXT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

An elaborately designed stone Kryptonian stronghold rises into the sky, barely brushing the top of the tall trees. The New Fortress of Solitude is complete.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

Superman sits at a crystal deck, similar to the one at the old Fortress. He looks over the historical data flowing holographically above him.

SUPERMAN

All the files from our fortress at the North Pole have been fully loaded.

ERADICATOR

If I may speak freely Kal-El?

SUPERMAN

You can if you call me Clark. That's my name.

Superman smiles. The Eradicator doesn't seem amused.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

You don't have to ask for permission to speak. You're not my servant Rad. You're not my office assistant, you're not my butler. You are probably the only friend I have right now.

ERADICATOR

Your father used to speak to me as such. When your home planet was self-destructing, and the council would not heed his warnings, he would confide in me his great fear. It seems that I have always been there for the Els when their worlds are crumbling around them.

SUPERMAN

It would seem so.

ERADICATOR

I do not wish to sound callous. But your intelligence exceeds this primitive planet. You are so much better than them Kal-El. You have stunted your potential, even as an earthling.

SUPERMAN

I've been told that before.

ERADICATOR

I understand your affection for your home world and its inhabitants. But also understand that your name is not Clark Kent, it is Kal-El. Thereby it underscores the undeniable fact that you are an alien to this world. It was the same with a man named Galvin of Kelsor 9.

(MORE)

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

He was a visitor to an another world,  
much like yourself. Initially he  
was beloved because of his  
differences, much like yourself.  
But soon, he was feared, hated,  
rejected by his new planet.

SUPERMAN

Thanks. I feel much better now.

ERADICATOR

It is not my wish to cause you pain.  
I only illustrate this growing concern  
that you yourself already feel.  
Your adopted home world is turning  
away from you. And you feel alone.

SUPERMAN

I understand what you are saying.  
When I realized who I was, where I  
was from, my first feeling was fear.  
I wasn't afraid of hurting people.  
I was afraid of them hurting me.

(beat)

I know who I am. Before I was  
Superman, before I was Clark Kent, I  
was Kal-El, son of Jor-El and Lara.  
But my home is here now. And Earth  
has accepted me.

ERADICATOR

Have they? Or do they fear you?

SUPERMAN

You always make it sounds as if Earth  
people are backwards, undeveloped  
and primitive. They fear the unknown!  
The uncertain! This is natural for  
ALL sentient life.

ERADICATOR

Son of Krypton, use your mind! That  
is my precise point Kal-El. This  
fear of the unknown and uncertain  
will drive them to become more  
antagonistic towards you. With your  
power and strength, their fear will  
grow, their attacks will become more  
violent and aggressive. There will  
come a time when you will be forced  
to decide between their well-being  
and yours.

A beeping alarm sounds off. The Eradicator moves to the crystal console, reading over a planetary map.

SUPERMAN

What's that?

ERADICATOR

Your research. Scanned the planet, looking for the large output of energy that could be construed as testing for the Anti-Life Equation. I have found nothing. It is possible that this testing is taking place off world.

SUPERMAN

What do you know about Apokolips? Where is it located?

ERADICATOR

I know of Apokolips from the Infinity Complex records. Its in an alternate level of our galaxy. You cannot travel there except by portal.

SUPERMAN

We cannot allow the equation to be discovered by them.

ERADICATOR

Its not so much the equation that poses the problem, but he who wants it. Its power is indescribable. It is an interesting venture, searching for the Anti-Life Equation. It was your father's belief that seeking it says so much about the person.

INT. DARKSEID'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Darkseid sits at his throne, Desaad and Kalibak are on their knees, humiliated and broken. They listen to the words of their master.

(NOTE: These two speeches are given simultaneously, interchangeably, as if each is finishing the words of the other.)

DARKSEID

Desaad, do you understand? Have you fathomed the uniqueness and the magnificence of the Anti-Life Equation?



ERADICATOR

Your father said it was a desperate action, as if a man seeking the Anti-Life Equation is searching for powers beyond his scope.

DARKSEID

It is beyond any of the imaginations of these mere mortal beings skittering through the cosmos, hurtling their way towards their ultimate demise. Such power should only be in the hand of one who could wield it properly, and master it.

ERADICATOR

The type of control it elicits is insidious, he said. It is one thing to control the mind of a person. Mind control has been perfected and mastered by many beings, perhaps even some on this planet. But it is another thing to control a man's desire...

DARKSEID

A man's heart, a man's will, indeed the will of the entire universe, coming into perfection, believing and thinking as one. The complete and...

ERADICATOR

...utter extinction of individuality. Every being, no matter how great, how powerful, serving one master. One voice shall command.

DARKSEID

One voice shall lead. All other voices are silenced and extinguished. Desaad to be on the edge of such greatness, to achieve that which greats and nobles have not achieved, and have power that even the old gods could not attain.

ERADICATOR

Jor-El's analysis was that all men who have sought the Anti-life Equation were dangerous and deadly men.

DARKSEID

It is perfection, all encompassing.

(MORE)

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

It is immortal, shaping and molding forever the infinity of life itself. It passes through generations. It is unyielding. Seed shall pass unto seed the desire of Darkseid and the glory of Apokolips. Yet you and my pitiful misrepresentation aim to undermine me.

Kalibak cowers on the floor, sniveling.

KALIBAK

Father...

DESAAD

No Lord Darkseid. Not undermine. Aid. And assist your son in redeeming himself and finding favor in your eyes.

DARKSEID

Here is the only favor my eyes shall give him.

With that, Darkseid obliterates Kalibak into dust with his Omega beams.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

The favor of removing his failing carcass from existence.

Desaad stumbles back and falls back, crawling away from Darkseid as Lord of Apokolips bears down upon him.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Perhaps your deeds were truly honorable and noble. However as you know your actions as well as Kalibak's threatened my goals. Your foolishness is not without a price. Observe Desaad.

The viewing screen above Darkseid's throne ignites with the picture of a green lush planet. Desaad looks sick, his throat goes dry.

DESAAD

Exocia? My sister's planet?

DARKSEID

Indeed. Behold the power of Apokolips.

The planet's surface begins to darken. It becomes corrupted, ugly. Fire pits burst from the ground. The seas and oceans turn black and red. Within a matter of seconds, the green planet is ablaze.

DESAAD  
NOOOOOOOO...ELANTI!!!

Desaad turns to Darkseid, spitting.

DESAAD (CONT'D)  
DARKSEID! WHY! WHY NOT NEW GENESIS,  
AN ENEMY PLANET AND MY BIRTHPLACE!  
WHY MY SISTER'S WORLD!

The Omega effect flashes bright in the room, and Desaad is lifted into the air, with his body hunched over, frozen in a sickening and painful pose. He is slammed against the floor and released.

DARKSEID  
Pitiful coward. You couldn't care less about your sister or her world. Shouldn't you be thankful I didn't send you to that planet before I destroyed it? Your master's graciousness, can't you see?

Darkseid's eyes glow bright again.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)  
You are thankful, aren't you Desaad?

DESAAD  
Y...yes my Lord.

DARKSEID  
With the Anti-Life Equation in my possession, this will be the fate of all planets. Apokoliptian worlds throughout the cosmos heeding to my service. Beginning with this planet Earth. Desaad, you are dismissed.

Darkseid's hovering platform turns and he glides back to the top of the throne staircase, leaving a pile of ashes and a sobbing Desaad crumpled on the floor.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

Superman stands at the crystal table, scanning over a geothermal map. The Eradicator approaches.

ERADICATOR

Your biometrics are similar to the readings I received when you were in the hotel room in New York. When you were concerned for the woman Lois.

SUPERMAN

She is in trouble. She found something or heard something and in all likelihood someone's taken her. Lois doesn't stay gone this long.

ERADICATOR

If she's been taken she may have been subjected to the equation's extraction protocol. That does not bode well for her.

SUPERMAN

Bates died because he didn't want the Anti-life Equation in the wrong hands. And he's not going to die for nothing. She may have stumbled upon information that will lead us to where the equation is being constructed.

ERADICATOR

This location here is of significance?

SUPERMAN

Bates Castle. It is where Intergang has set up shop. The captives could be held here. I need to get there while keeping a low profile.

ERADICATOR

Kal-El if I may. There are no readings here to indicate any activity...

SUPERMAN

I understand that, but its where Lois would have gone. I need to find her.

ERADICATOR

I realize that. Its what Jor-El felt for Lara.

Superman turns back to the control panel.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

Perhaps I can assist here. I should explore this place in your stead. My cloaking enables me to go undetected.

SUPERMAN

Can we communicate?

ERADICATOR

Yes, you will be able to see my point of view on this monitor. Also I have incorporated a communicator inside my neural net. I have attached a similar device to your clothing, underneath the symbol of hope.

Superman reaches down, touches the "S".

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

I can also speak to you through my vocal capacitors.

SUPERMAN

Let's try it.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

The captives. Strapped to little metal tables, all of them in dream states. The lab technician walks around, checking their readings. Manheim is standing before a GIANT MONITOR, which is scrolling words in an alien language. The only thing we can understand is a number. 87.7%

Manheim looks intently at the screen, bordering between excitement and terror.

MANHEIM

Its getting close geek.

Lois twists and turns. Suddenly the giant monitor flashes red, then white. A new string of scrolling alien language appears, filling in a piece of the formula. 88%.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

Real close.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The invisible Eradicator streaks along the surface of the water.

EXT. BATES CASTLE - DAY

Several trucks are parked around the castle. A side door silently opens and closes.

INT. BATES CASTLE - DAY

The interior of the castle, partially destroyed.

ERADICATOR

I'm inside the castle Kal-El.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

Superman sees the Eradicator's POV inside Bates Castle.

SUPERMAN

Keep it down.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

I am using my vocal processor. No one can hear me except you.

SUPERMAN

Gotcha. Okay, head downstairs. See if you can find a basement.

INT. BATES CASTLE - DAY

ERADICATOR'S POV

The Eradicator heads down the spiral staircase. He passes several gang members along the way.

ERADICATOR

Shall I eliminate these conspirators Kal-El?

SUPERMAN (O.S.)

No Rad. You're doing fine. Don't want to bring attention to ourselves. This is more of a recon situation...you're just gathering information. However if we find the hostages, we'll have to figure out something.

ERADICATOR

Unusual is this hero's business. How do you know what move is proper?

SUPERMAN (O.S.)

You don't always. Sometimes you make mistakes. Enter that door on the left.

Eradicator tries the door.

ERADICATOR

It is locked. I am activating my magnetic pulse to release the tumblers.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

Superman snickers, leans back in his chair.

SUPERMAN

How did you know about tumblers?

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

While you've been busy with hero work, I've been busy studying my new home Kal-El.

INT. BATES CASTLE - DAY

The invisible Eradicator works on the door. The door knob twists and shifts ever so slightly.

ERADICATOR

So far I have downloaded and incorporated over 27.92 million units of data from your worldwide system of computer networks. The internet I believe its called.

SUPERMAN (O.S.)

Well done. You probably know more about my world than me.

ERADICATOR

Its open.

The Eradicator moves into a dark narrow stairwell.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

I detect movement below. Checking my sensors now. Several life forms. To be precise, 188 distinct. Investigating.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

Shrieks and screams echo across the Fortress. Superman frowns. These sound inhuman.

SUPERMAN

I don't think those the are hostages.

INT. BATES CASTLE - BASEMENT LAB - DAY

A large room opens up at the bottom of the staircase. A dilapidated laboratory. Throughout the lab are cages of primates. Apes, monkeys, baboons, gorillas.

ERADICATOR

Primates Kal-El. I also read about these. They fall just below humans on the evolutionary scale of this planet.

The cloaked Eradicator glides through the room, the animals are oblivious to him. He gets close to several, scanning them across the eyes.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

Superman watches the screen intently.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

These creatures have undergone experimentation for the Anti-Life Equation Kal-El.

SUPERMAN

Why would they use primates if they are using people?

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

Lower brain functions may yield a more simplified version of the equation, though it would require extreme torture. And it would not be as effective on humans. The only practical reason to attempt this extraction would be to decipher the proper order of the equation expeditiously.

SUPERMAN

Which means they likely have the puzzle pieces but don't know how to put them together. What is that Rad, over in the corner?

The Eradicator pans to a large DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

It appears to be a decompression chamber. Our theory is correct. They were forcing different versions of the equation into the minds of these animals, searching for the

(MORE)



ERADICATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 proper version that functions. I  
 cannot tell what the process has  
 done to their minds. My neuro  
 scanners are picking up a high degree  
 of psychic interference. Strange.

INT. BATES CASTLE - BASEMENT LAB - DAY

A large gorilla, largest in the room, sits stoically in his cage with arms folded. Unlike the other primates, this one seems to be watching the cloaked Eradicator. The Eradicator moves towards it.

ERADICATOR  
 Very strange.

UP CLOSE: On the top of the cage, embossed on a metal plate read the words "SHIP TO CAPITAL CITY ZOO"

INT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

Cat Grant walks past Clark and Lois' empty desks. She stops and picks up Clark's name plate. Jimmy Olsen runs by.

CAT GRANT  
 Hey Jimbo.

JIMMY  
 Sorry Ms. Grant, gotta get these  
 pics to editorial.

CAT GRANT  
 Just a quick quick question please  
 sweetie.

Jimmy stops on "sweetie".

JIMMY  
 Uh...yeah?

CAT GRANT  
 Where's Clark? Lois disappears,  
 Superman disappears, Clark disappears.  
 Kinda odd don't you think?

JIMMY  
 Mr. Kent? Oh he's back in Smallville.  
 His mother...well the story is that  
 she's sick and he's taking care of  
 her, but if you ask me, they're just  
 both bummed over the Superman thing.

CAT GRANT

Interesting. Lane is never gone this long is she? Its been what, 2 weeks, no word?

Jimmy looks nervous.

CAT GRANT (CONT'D)

What do you know Jimbo? Tell me, you must have heard something.

JIMMY

Mr. Kent...well he says that he doesn't want anyone going and looking and poking around.

CAT GRANT

Well Mr. Kent trusted you. Can't you trust me?

Jimmy gulps as Cat musses his hair.

JIMMY

He thinks Intergang is kidnapping those people for some experiments. He's afraid Ms. Lane might have found something. And if she did, she's in serious trouble. That's why she's missing. I just hope he's wrong. I'm sorry Ms. Grant, I gotta get to editorial.

Jimmy runs off. Cat pulls out her cell phone, looks at it.

CU CAT'S PHONE: "M. EDGE" shows on her contact list.

She frowns, shakes her head. Closes the phone.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

The Eradicator is in rocket form, sitting atop a small charging station. His blue nose cone comes to life, glowing bright blue. He transforms into his robot form and disconnects himself from the station.

He walks through the fortress, which is elaborately decorated in Kryptonian artifacts. He walks into the foyer.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE FOYER - NIGHT

Superman is standing before the re-created statue of his parents holding the globe of Krypton to the sky, this one more stone and earth than crystal and ice.

ERADICATOR

Your parents would have been proud  
Kal-El.

SUPERMAN

You always make it seem like I'm a  
disappointment to Kryptonians.

ERADICATOR

Yes, and much in the same way, your  
father wasn't Kryptonian, nor are  
you. I worked with him for over 10  
years and never once did your father  
regard me as anything but a person,  
not just a mere computer. It was  
the type of man he was. Kryptonians  
were intelligent, but until I met  
your father I never experienced the  
valor and passion of your race. You  
come from a highly principled family  
Kal-El, a distinguished group of  
scientists, artists, men and women  
of vision. They looked to create a  
better future for all life. That is  
why in my estimation, despite your  
great ability and your powers that  
exceed any inhabitant on this planet,  
you are compelled to live among them  
as one of them. You are compelled  
to use your powers for good. A  
heritage of your ancestry. And yet  
they turn against you. Their final  
tragedy.

SUPERMAN

Final?

ERADICATOR

I have computed the likelihood of  
the Anti-Life Equation's discovery  
and what it would mean to this planet.  
You must prepare yourself for the  
inescapable fact that this planet is  
likely doomed. Even if you were to  
intercede, the forces that oppose  
you are far too great.

SUPERMAN

Then the equation cannot be  
discovered. We have to shut down  
the experiments.

INT. GRAYVEN'S LAIR

Darkseid enters into Grayven's Lair, a very serene and polished room. Grayven is busy at a small table, polishing several LARGE RED CRYSTALS. Grayven doesn't rise, looks at his father with a slight sense of amusement.

GRAYVEN

I expected you would be coming soon  
dear father.

Darkseid looks at Grayven's wall, adorned with alien skulls, weapons, skins. A tribute to a powerful warrior.

DARKSEID

You have great pride in yourself  
Grayven. Much more than your  
unlettered, ignorant, *former* brother.

GRAYVEN

So I have heard. And what of your  
lackey, the torturer?

DARKSEID

He is presently being subjected to  
his own devices. As one who delights  
in torture, killing him would not  
have sufficed. A stronger punishment  
was necessary.

GRAYVEN

Clearly. It seems that those whom  
you, in your supreme and unfathomable  
wisdom, have anointed as my superiors  
underestimated the Superman. He is  
a Kryptonian and regardless of his  
lacking in combat maneuvers, he  
remains intelligent.

He opens a large wardrobe. In it is a elaborately decorated golden chest plate, hovering under its own power.

GRAYVEN (CONT'D)

Apokoliptian armor gives its wearer  
the power of flight. Something my  
brother didn't consider before taking  
on a being who has this ability. A  
tactical blunder that left him  
vulnerable.

DARKSEID

Pride, a sharp tongue, as well as  
overconfidence.

(MORE)

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Tell me, great Grayven, what shall become of you if you fail to deliver the Kryptonian to my heel?

GRAYVEN

And what shall become of you, dear father, and your rulership? If I deliver the last son of Krypton, I shall indulge in the power of Anti-Life, the same as yourself. All of Apokolips shall chant my name alongside of yours. Perhaps more.

Darkseid laughs.

DARKSEID

Just bring Superman to me. Alive. Succeed and you've done more than you've ever accomplished in your life.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

The Giant Monitor: 91%

Manheim pulls the small vial of liquid from his pocket again. He looks at it carefully, pulls the lab assistant aside.

MANHEIM

Hey geek...take a look at this.

LAB TECH

What exactly is that?

MANHEIM

Don't worry about it. Just like everything else around here, don't ask questions. Just take what's in here, and put it up there.

LAB TECH

I don't even know how that would be possible. This...

BOOOOOOONMMMMMMMM!!!

A boom tube explodes open behind the two men. Manheim is knocked flat. Grayven exits the tube, floating as he wears the Apokoliptian armor.

GRAYVEN

Manheim.

MANHEIM

You're back. Hey what did I tell ya about Superman, heh?

Grayven grabs Manheim by the throat, choking him.

GRAYVEN

And where might I find Superman?

Manheim struggles to breathe.

MANHEIM

He's gone. The President kicked him off the planet.

GRAYVEN

Gone? Don't lie to me Manheim. The man that bested my brother in combat would not have turned tail and ran from the likes of your pathetic race. Where?

MANHEIM

Well I don't know. He's fallen off the face of the map. The UN told him to beat it and he did. No one's seen him in days.

Grayven squeezes tighter. Manheim turns several shades of red and purple.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

L...look...I don't know...where he is...b...but I know how to get him.

GRAYVEN

How?

MANHEIM

Over there.

He points to Lois. Grayven drops Manheim like a sack of potatoes. Manheim gets to a knee, straining to catch his breath.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

The woman...third from the left. No, keep going. Yeah her.

Grayven stands over Lois Lane.

GRAYVEN

I see. She is fair. He desires this one?

MANHEIM

You could say he has a thing for her. When she's in trouble, he's not far away.

GRAYVEN

Excellent.

Grayven rips the clamps off Lois' arms and legs, hoisting her limp body from the table.

GRAYVEN (CONT'D)

Hello beauty. Let us fetch your Kryptonian.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

Grayven soars above the skyline of Metropolis, as Lois dangles underneath his arm. Citizens gaze up in astonishment. Grayven's voice echoes across the city.

GRAYVEN

Where is the last son of Krypton, the one you call Superman!

INT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

He cruises past Perry White's window as he stares out at the giant warlord.

PERRY WHITE

Great Caesar's Ghost!

GRAYVEN (O.S.)

Earth men...where is your god?

On the Planet floor..commotion. Shouts. Astonished screams. The reporters run across the news floor, following Grayven from window to window. Jimmy runs up next to Perry.

GRAYVEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Bring him! He shall find his humiliation here!

JIMMY

Chief! He's got Lois!

PERRY WHITE

Good god Lane. Well that's one way to get Superman's attention.

Cat looks at Jimmy. Back to Grayven. Something's cooking in her brain.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Jonas Small runs into the Oval Office, out of breath.

JONAS SMALL  
Hank. A situation in Metropolis.  
You need to come see this.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
I don't like the way you said that.

JONAS SMALL  
You're not going to like any part of  
this.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

Grayven soars above the city, holding Lois loosely. People are stopping, cars crash into one another as the city comes to a stand still, gawking at the alien.

GRAYVEN  
Mine is the blood of Darkseid! Mine  
is the blood of Apokolips! Your MAN  
of Steel shall bow to his new GOD...  
Grayven!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President and Chief of Staff Small watch the proceedings on television.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
What the devil...?

JONAS SMALL  
He seems to be looking for Superman.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
Good lord. Has he shown?

JONAS SMALL  
Not yet, but he will. He's got a  
woman captive. Lois Lane, Superman's  
personal correspondent. She also  
happens to be the...

PRESIDENT WILSON  
Yes I'm aware of who she is.

JONAS SMALL  
Hank, the USS Montgomery isn't far  
from Metropolis. Shall I...?



The President shoots him a look of incredulity, then back to the television monitor.

PRESIDENT WILSON

They are not to engage that thing at all. Not until I say so.

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

The Eradicator watches the television broadcast of the events as they are unfolding. Superman walks in.

ERADICATOR

Kal-El. On the viewing screen.

SUPERMAN

Another one?

ERADICATOR

This one appears to have a earth woman.

SUPERMAN

Is that...  
(gravely)  
He's got Lois.

Superman face darkens.

ERADICATOR

Ah, the elusive Lois.  
(realizing)  
I should caution you Kal-El against doing anything...

Superman has already smashed through the roof of the Fortress. The Eradicator stares at the hole in the ceiling, and dodges the raining debris.

ERADICATOR (CONT'D)

...hasty.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOF - DAY

The roof door bangs open and a young pilot, DAVIS, throws on a leather jacket. He is followed by Cat, who turns back to the doorway, reaching through it and grabbing Jimmy by the arm.

JIMMY

I'm not a big fan of helicopters Ms. Grant.

CAT GRANT

If you can squeeze into some bushes with Clark, you can hop inside a helicopter with me.

JIMMY

He told you about that?

EXT. APOKOLIPS

Desaad enters Darkseid's throne room. Darkseid stands perched at his usual spot, a great king overlooking his domain.

DESAAD

My lord Darkseid. Your son, Grayven has engaged the Earth. He threatens a woman over their chief city, screaming for Superman.

Darkseid doesn't even bother turning around to face Desaad.

DARKSEID

Really? And what do you make of it Desaad?

DESAAD

Well...its foolhardy. Kalibak was twice the warrior Grayven is. If he could not defeat this man, Grayven has no chance. He did not have to good sense to equip himself with any Apokoliptian weapon, only armor.

DARKSEID

Understand Desaad that I sent Grayven into battle. Unlike my treacherous vizier or my idiot son, Grayven does not wish to invoke my wrath. He is also the only son of mine that has adopted the Omega effect. You understand that I am a tactician. Observe the encounter, and see what affect the Omega beams have on this supposed son of Krypton.

DESAAD

And if he is not successful, you may be sacrificing your last son.

Darkseid chuckles softly. He couldn't care less.

DARKSEID

Desaad. Is there anything else?

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Superman accelerates, skimming through the clouds.

ERADICATOR

Kal-El? Listen to me. This may be  
a trap.

SUPERMAN

Not now Rad!

The skyline of Metropolis come into view on the horizon.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President stays focused on the television.

WHITE HOUSE INTERN

Mr. President, Mr. Small. The  
Secretary of Defense is calling you.

PRESIDENT WILSON

We know, we have a television as  
well.

WHITE HOUSE INTERN

No. Superman has appeared on radar.  
He's in Metropolis.

JONAS SMALL

Well that didn't take long.

EXT. METROPOLIS HARBOR - DAY

Grayven zooms over Metropolis Harbor. Longshoremen look up  
in awe.

Twin jet fighters appear on the horizon. Followed by two  
more.

GRAYVEN

Not much of a military welcome.

Grayven levels two fighter jets with one flash from his Omega  
beams. His voice booms across the city.

GRAYVEN (CONT'D)

I ask for Superman and you send me  
your pathetic machines? Where is  
your champion? Is he afraid?

The other two planes turn around and head back out to sea,  
attempting to run for it. Grayven gives chase.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

SUPERMAN IN FLIGHT

Superman zooms past the city, following Grayven.

EXT. METROPOLIS HARBOR - DAY

The helicopter zooms above the harbor and heads out to sea.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Jimmy sits nervously, airsick. He finally realizes where they are going.

JIMMY

Um, you didn't say where we were going Ms. Grant.

DAVIS

You know where we're going kid.

JIMMY

Following Superman? I don't know about that Ms. Grant.

CAT GRANT

Just get your camera ready, I've done this before. I know how to cover a story.

JIMMY

Its not always a good idea to be nearby when Superman's doing his thing.

CAT GRANT

Hey Superman doesn't pay my bills, directly anyway. We're in the news business. Get your camera ready, you're about to make some money.

EXT. USS MONTGOMERY - DAY

Alarms sound on the massive aircraft. Crew members walk out onto the deck, trying to see what the situation is. They see the two planes approaching fast.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Grayven flies behind the two jet fighters. He blasts at one plane with his Omega Beams.

The plane tries to dodge them, moving deftly through the air, somersaulting and twisting.

However, the beams track the plane like a heat seeking missile. They make contact and the fighter is incinerated.

Grayven lands on the other plane, simply ripping its WING clean off. The plane spirals out of control.

EXT. USS MONTGOMERY - DAY

Grayven lands on the aircraft carrier, igniting his Omega beams again, destroying several planes trying to take off.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Through the smoke, Superman grabs the wing of the helpless aircraft. The pilot ejects from his cockpit. Superman slings the fighter to the side, and it smashes into the water.

EXT. USS MONTGOMERY - DAY

Superman touches down on the deck of the Montgomery.

GRAYVEN

There he is my beauty. Your savior.

Grayven smashes the window to the BRIDGE, dumps Lois inside.

SUPERMAN

Get off the ship! Quickly! Move!

While Superman's back is turned, Grayven jumps down to the flight deck and hoists a jet fighter above his head with one hand, tossing it like a paper airplane.

The landing gear skids off the runway and the nose of the plane hits Superman in the face as soon as he turns back around, knocking him flat. Grayven's eyes glow red and Omega rays ignite.

Superman flies above the beams, dodging them. Grayven's beams make an about-face, following Superman. They impact their target, knocking Supes out of the sky, crashing back to the flight deck.

GRAYVEN

Here, Man of Steel. I will savor your blood.

Superman launches forward, like he was shot out of a super-powered cannon. His fists sink into Grayven's gut, but he anticipated this and grabs Superman, flipping him overhead and slamming him into the ground.

While on the ground, Grayven catches Superman around the neck, bending the Man of Steel backwards like a wrestler. Supes struggles against him.

An astonished Grayven feels his grip loosening.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

The helicopter carrying Jimmy and Cat arrives on the scene. Its still a ways off, about 200 yards or so.

CAT GRANT

Come on...closer. Jimmy can't get a good shot from here.

JIMMY

I'm fine with us right where we're at.

DAVIS

This is as far as I'm getting sweet cheeks. I'm with the kid.

EXT. USS MONTGOMERY - DAY

He spins Superman around and hammers him with two closed fist, a double ax handle to the chops, sending the hero sliding into another plane.

Superman's body clips the front wheel of the landing gear and the plane drops on top of him. Grayven smiles, stands, regally dusts off his shoulders, fixes his clothing. He walks to the plane with confidence.

GRAYVEN

No no, puny Kryptonian. I am not my brother, the raging brute. As far as fighting capabilities I am superior to you. Before your certain defeat, you will realize this.

He pushes the plane aside, but no Superman. Puzzled he looks around, not seeing Superman poised above him with hands cupped together. Supes drops, plants his fists into Grayven's neck.

Grayven crumbles to the floor. Grayven gets to his feet, and then is lifted off of them by a devastating uppercut, crashing to the deck some 50 feet away.

SUPERMAN

I'm sorry, what was that last thing you said? Something about certain defeat?

Grayven snarls. Superman's face is rigid with anger. The two gods lock horns.

Supes is fast, attacking with a fury we've never seen before, launching a barrage of punches and haymakers.

Grayven counters with his own flurry -- not enough. Supes sends him flying again, his body shattering a jet plane windshield.

Grayven's eyes glow red again, but Superman is ready. He grabs a shard of metal and blocks the Omega beams with it. The beams DISINTEGRATE the metal and Superman holds his hand up to deflect the beams. Grayven laughs.

GRAYVEN

Pathetic! You are no match for  
Grayven!

But Supes isn't weakening. He deflects the Omega beams right up until his hands cover Grayven's eyes, SNUFFING OUT the Omega effect. Grayven grunts and Superman wallops him with another punch, sending the giant warlord flying.

Grayven is quickly to his feet, stunned. Can't believe this **man** stood up to the Omega effect. He watches as Superman stalks him, calmly. Another blast from his Omega beams strike the steel floor where Superman walks.

The floor of the ship quickly LIQUEFIES at the point of impact, and Superman sinks into it like a man trapped in a pool of quicksand. He tries to pull his feet out but the steel is already hardening.

Grayven saunters up to Superman as he tries to yank his legs free. Superman looks up as a THUNDERING OVERHAND SHOT SLAMS HIM IN THE GRILL. Supes takes another, and another, and another. The blows from Grayven are precise and crisp.

GRAYVEN (CONT'D)

And now Kryptonian...

Grayven opens his arms for a thunderclap to Superman's head. Superman catches the closing arms and ignites his heat vision, aiming at the red diamond on Grayven's chest plate.

The diamond EXPLODES and Grayven goes flying backwards, sending him up to the ship's bridge. He smashes into the wall and plummets back to the deck.

Superman looks down and cuts his feet free from the steel with his heat vision.

He turns back towards Grayven, eyes wide. The staggering hulk hoists a REFUELING PLANE above his head and hurtles it towards Superman.

Superman catches the giant aircraft by the nose of the plane and it plants him into the deck of the carrier. He slides along the deck trying to control the plane as it SOMERSAULTS OVER HIS HEAD and crashes into the water.

CU THE OCEAN'S SURFACE

The refueling plane ruptures in the water, spilling thousands of gallons of greasy jet fuel into the ocean. SMOLDERING JET PLANES float in the water nearby.

The toll of this battle is evident on Grayven's face, bloodied and bruised. He staggers around the carrier, clutching the empty space where the diamond used to be. Flames sprout up from around the perimeter of the ship.

X-RAY VISION: Superman looks into the bridge, and he sees Lois' unconscious body laying on the floor.

He flies to the upper decks, only to get rattled by explosions. He looks over the side of the ship.

Jet fighters are sliding into the ocean and are engulfed in flames, EXPLODING within the BLAZING INFERNO on the ocean's surface. The carrier rocks back and forth with each explosion. Superman dives over the side of the ship into the water.

Grayven gets back to his feet, only to stumble and lose his footing again. He looks around, sees the horizon starting to dip, the ocean fires disappearing.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Cat Grant stares slack-jawed. Jimmy SNAPS away on his camera.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

AERIAL SHOT: WIDE

The aircraft carrier rises from the flaming water, as it comes up higher, we see Superman at its bottom, lifting the giant ship into the air. Grayven tumbles off his feet, sliding towards the edge.

UNDERNEATH THE SHIP

Superman strains as he attempts to center himself underneath the ship. He gazes into the blaze below down. Grayven comes around the side, decks Superman with a FLURRY of punches.

GRAYVEN

Foolish, Superman, foolish. In your effort to save your earth woman, you have given me the upper hand.

The ship shifts in Superman's uneasy grip. It feels like it could fall any moment. Superman's fingers sink into the ship's hull, strengthening his hold. He holds the ship with his right hand, as his left flashes out into Grayven's throat.



Grayven is stunned at Superman's speed and power. He lunges for something on his belt. Superman squeezes the warlord's throat with all his might. His face turns an even deeper shade of purple.

Superman looks down towards Grayven's belt. He is fiddling with a small contraption, a BLUE BOX with alien markings etched on them. He slides his fingers along one of the markings and....

BOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!

A boom tube opens underneath them, just above the FIERY CARNAGE of scrap metal. Grayven pries Superman's fingers from his neck and FREEFALLS into the boom tube. It closes upon him entering, the resulting pocket of whooshing air EXTINGUISHING THE BLAZE.

Superman moves the ship to safer waters and sets it back into the ocean gently.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Cat is panting and heaving, euphoric. She grabs Jimmy's arm.

CAT GRANT

Did you see?

Jimmy's seen it all before.

JIMMY

Yeh.

CAT GRANT

Did you get that, did you get it?  
You did get it didn't you? You better  
have gotten that! Tell me you got  
it!

JIMMY

I got it, I got it!

Cat lays a long kiss on Jimmy.

CAT GRANT

God I love Metropolis.

Cat sits back, starts scribbling on a note pad. Jimmy is in la-la land.

DAVIS

Walk it off kid.

INT. USS MONTGOMERY - COMMAND DECK - DAY

Superman rips the door to the bridge off clean. Lois still lays on the floor, un-scarred and unconscious. Superman picks her up, cradles her gently, listening for a heart beat. He is relieved to hear one.

SUPERMAN

Rad, are you still there?

ERADICATOR

Naturally Kal-El. Do you have your Lois?

SUPERMAN

Yes. Can you perform the bio-scan?

ERADICATOR

I have done so. Lois is suffering from a dream state from which she is unable to awake.

SUPERMAN

She's still dreaming?

ERADICATOR

That is correct. Physically speaking she is functioning as she should. They have apparently locked her mind into a mental maze. Somehow she cannot escape.

SUPERMAN

Where did he go?

ERADICATOR

I assume you are referring to the Apokoliptian. You cannot follow him.

SUPERMAN

What was that thing on his belt? He used it to create the portal.

ERADICATOR

A mother box, an extremely powerful super-computer. Somewhat sentient, although much is not known about them.

SUPERMAN

Can it be duplicated?

ERADICATOR

You want to follow after him. I understand. Revenge is a natural emotion. But the mother box cannot be duplicated. And even if that were possible, the mother box operates on exact knowledge. It is attuned to the specific brain patterns of its owner. Essentially it reads his thoughts and opens a portal to where he wants to go.

Superman remains frustrated. Looks down to his helpless love.

SUPERMAN

Lois? Lois wake up. Its me.

He walks slowly out of the bridge.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

The lab tech watches the goings-on on the TV. Suddenly there is a loud BUZZ, deafening. The geek scrambles out of his chair, looking at various monitors for the problem. He sees it. The lone monitor with the numbers now read "100".

LAB TECH

100 percent. Its at 100 percent.

He looks around the room, as if he was expecting something to happen and he missed it.

LAB TECH (CONT'D)

Nothing happened. Manheim.

He grabs a cell phone, dialing furiously. He hears the sound of a phone ringer. He turns around.

Manheim cracks the kid across the jaw almost as soon as he turns. The kid is out cold.

MANHEIM

Now we're even...1 to 1.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

A THRONG of citizens, media types, etc. surrounds Metropolis General. They are out in full force as the Man of Steel walks through a POLICE BARRICADE to the front doors of the hospital. Everyone is shouting his name, but he doesn't reply.

EXT. METROPOLIS PARK - NIGHT

Davis lands the helicopter in Metropolis Park. Jimmy and Cat spill out of the cab, running around the corner, heading towards the hospital.

EXT. METROPOLIS GENERAL - NIGHT

The growing mob is beginning to become more frenzied. People are shouting, trying to reach through the police barricade.

METROPOLIS COP

Please disperse people. We have patients trying to receive medical attention.

OLD LADY

If those alien things are chasing after Superman he needs to get the hell out of here.

METROPOLIS COP

Look, you can yell at me all day long if you want lady, no one's getting past this door.

REPORTER

How come you guys are protecting Superman? Don't you think the Man of Steel is getting reckless?

METROPOLIS COP

Listen. The National Guard is on its way, the governor's placing this whole city on a lock down. They're coming for Superman. They're bringing a ton of kryptonite. Its about to get real nutso down here, so if I were you, I'd get the hell outta dodge. Capice?

Cat Grant stands nearby, holding a tape recorder, stunned by what she just heard. She turns to Jimmy, who was snapping away madly, but now lowers his camera, looking around carefully.

CAT GRANT

Jimmy...did you just hear...

JIMMY

Yeah I just heard. Follow me.

The duo slip out of the crowd and across the street. A LIMOSINE cuts between Jimmy and Cat and screeches to a stop. Morgan Edge jumps out, still donning the stylish fur coat.

EDGE

Grant. God I never thought I'd find you.

CAT GRANT

Morgan, what are you doing here?

EDGE

Came to get you. Its time you listened to reason sweetheart. This whole city is coming down around our heads. Get in.

She looks in the car. Catches a glimpse of Johnny Denetto, who peeks his head back inside.

CAT GRANT

Morgan. What's Johnny Denetto doing in your car?

Morgan looks back to Cat. Frustrated, caught in his lie.

EDGE

Ah, the hell with these dames.

Edge hops back in the limo and slams the door.

EDGE (CONT'D)

Punch it Francis.

Cat looks at the limo as it takes off down the street.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Ms. Grant!

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Cat runs into a dark and dank alleyway. She sees Jimmy jiggling the knob of a boarded up door. Locked. He pulls out a credit card and goes to work on it.

JIMMY

We gotta warn Superman.

CAT GRANT

What are you doing? You got a secret way in?

Jimmy turns, points above to a LIGHTED BRIDGE about 10 stories up, spanning Metropolis Ave.

JIMMY

Up there. The annex.  
(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)

This building used to be the old hospital before it was damaged in another one of Superman's famous battle royales. When they built the new hospital, they built the annex to move over equipment and some bed ridden patients. They were gonna rip it down but decided it kinda went with the Metropolis look.

CAT GRANT

It does look nice.

The door opens. Jimmy grins.

INT. DARKSEID'S THRONE ROOM

BOOOOOMMMMM!

Grayven's boom tube opens into Darkseid's throne room, where Darkseid is seated. Grayven crashes to the floor, soaked to the bone. He looks down to the floor. Realizes where he is. Doesn't dare look up. He stands and walks out of the room, dejected.

Darkseid stares ahead. A wicked grin spreads across his face. Desaad runs in after Grayven exits.

DESAAD

My lord. Your son? The Kryptonian?  
What became...

DARKSEID

Never you mind Desaad. I need you to send a message. To Vundabar, to Goodness, to Steppenwolf, and to all the generals of Apokolips. Prepare your armies.

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

AERIAL SHOT: WIDE

Troops, jeeps, and tanks appear on the horizon, rolling down Metropolis Ave. The National Guard has arrived. Helicopters circle over head.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The President watches the mob activity in Metropolis on television. He wears the grimmest of expressions. Chief of Staff Small walks up behind him, spreading a map of Metropolis in front of him and pointing off landmarks as he talks.

JONAS SMALL

The national guard has entered Metropolis sir. They are setting up a perimeter around the Metro area, downtown, and in Metropolis Park. Two helicopters will circle Metropolis General, and 6 others will station themselves out here. In 5 minutes, snipers will be stationed on the roof tops of the LexCorp building, the Magnus building, the Daily Planet. Each has a birds eye view of the hospital. They are armed with Kryptonite tipped armor piercing bullets. A SWAT Team composed of some of the finest soldiers in their respective units in the country has been assembled. Captain Martin, you know him. Heavily decorated. He leads them. They await your word to enter into the building and -- attempt to arrest Superman.

PRESIDENT WILSON

The alien being?

JONAS SMALL

Disappeared. Gone. By some accounts, Superman defeated him.

The President nods his approval, saying nothing. He picks up the radio for a moment, and then sets it aside.

INT. LOIS' HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Superman stands guard over Lois. The doctor checks his charts.

DOCTOR

Can't seem to put my finger on this one.

SUPERMAN

She has been the victim of hypnosis.

DOCTOR

A very effective one at that. There seems to be a severe chemical imbalance inside her brain. Right now, you can say she is suffering from extreme depression and anger. She'll come out of it, its just hard to say when.

EXT. OLD HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jimmy and Cat run up another flight of stairs. Jimmy is clearly out of shape and out of breath.

CAT GRANT

What floor is it on again?

JIMMY

Tenth.

Jimmy looks at the sign on the side of the door. "4". He rolls his eyes in exhaustion and trudges upward.

EXT. APOKOLIPTIAN PLAINS

Darkseid stands atop a hill looking down on a legion of warriors. Amongst them, PARADEMONS, dressed in red/black and yellow/green camouflaged SUITS OF ARMOR. Several of them leap high into the air, excitedly.

A old woman steps forward, stroking a magnificent dog-like creature. She is GRANNY GOODNESS. Flanking her are STEPPENWOLF and VIRMAN VUNDABAR. They all bow simultaneously to Darkseid. An impressive hush falls over the massive crowd.

GOODNESS

You have summoned your armies, and we have arrived Lord of Apokolips. How are we to serve?

DARKSEID

We are at the brink of universal mastery my children. After countless millennia of searching I have at last unearthed my elusive prey.

STEPPENWOLF

The equation?

DARKSEID

Indeed. The Anti-life Equation is mine at last.

The roar of the crowd is deafening. Parademons flip and raise their weapons in the air. They chant praises to their god.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

But the Equation is not without price. I have lost...much. My first born son, Kalibak, has died in the encounter with the possessors of the Equation.



Gasps all around, then the crowd nearly explodes with fury. Some scream curses in their language. Vundabar leads his parademon troops in a chant.

VUNDABAR

We shall avenge Lord Kalibak, son of Darkseid!

DARKSEID

Do not grieve, children of the deep. You all shall see the glory of Apokolips and her lost son avenged. The cosmos will soon succumb to the will of your gracious lord. New Genesis shall crawl to us for mercy! Let all the universe howl in despair! Kalibak the Cruel has died, and Great Grayven also suffered defeat. But not me. Darkseid, the lord of Apokolips still lives, and reigns.

The crowd once again is ignited into frenzy. Darkseid touches the mother box on his belt, and a epic boom tube opens.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Enter armies of Apokolips. Claim your heritage!

The grand Apokoliptian army marches into the giant portal.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

The SWAT Team, led by a grizzled CAPTAIN MARTIN, stands at the ready outside Metropolis General. Each man dressed head to toe in black and gray camouflage. The police barricade has been pushed back farther from the doors.

Martin paces, looking like a man with an itchy trigger finger.

MARTIN

Gentlemen be ready. The call from the President can come at anytime. And when it does, your skills will be put to the test, more so than ever.

Some kid SHOUTS out to the soldiers.

KID

Hey you really gonna arrest Superman? He didn't do nothing to you or nobody!

MARTIN

We're gonna do our job son. Now you better get outta here.

Martin is on his walkie talkie.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
Pitts. We need to get this area  
cleared. Now.

INT. THE ANNEX - NIGHT

Cat comes around the corner and sees the large lighted hallway ahead of her. She picks up her pace, SPEED WALKING. Jimmy drags behind.

JIMMY  
There it is. Can we rest for a second  
Ms. Grant?

CAT GRANT  
Jimmy...how do you expect to get  
ahead in the news game if your always  
resting?

Jimmy does a half-way, half jog trying to keep up with the enlivened Cat.

JIMMY  
I'm just a photographer, and I take  
pretty good pictures.

CAT GRANT  
What sounds better? Jimmy Olsen,  
photographer, or Jimmy Olsen, photo-  
journalist?

BOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMM!!

Light, as bright as the morning sun, lights up the annex. Cat shields her eyes from the glare, trying to see its source.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

Citizens have now turned their eyes skyward, bathed in the glow of a giant portal, 10 stories above the street. It is as high as it is wide, STRETCHING THE WIDTH OF THE STREET. No one says a word, everyone stares in sheer astonishment.

INT. THE ANNEX - NIGHT

Cat from her position in the annex stands practically in the center of the portal. She gazes in wonderment, same as the people below her.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

A ENORMOUS GALACTIC HOVER TANK exits the portal slowly. Its massive hull fills up the entire portal from side to side, top to bottom.

INT. THE ANNEX - NIGHT

Jimmy's jaw drops. Cat's face loses all color.

JIMMY

Miss Grant!

CAT GRANT

Move it Jimmy!

Jimmy jumps up and runs across the annex as fast as his legs can move. Cat is already in a full sprint. The tank is mere feet from the annex bridge.

Jimmy is halfway through the walkway when the TANK PLOWS INTO THE ANNEX, pushing its way through steel and concrete. The bridge RIPPLES beneath his feet, at the last second, Jimmy FLINGS himself forward, DEBRIS AND RUBBLE EXPLODING around him.

He lands, feet first inside the hospital next to Cat, and tumbles into the opposing wall. Cat and Jimmy watch as the hover-tank finally escapes the portal. Parademons SPILL OUT OF THE PORTAL, flying at attacking the people below.

Goodness, Steppenwolf, and Vundabar exit the portal on HOVER TANKS, flying down and commanding their troops. Martin and the SWAT TEAM look up and open fire on the parademons, gunning down several.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Manheim sits before the monitor. He turns dials and opens a small door to a CHUTE. Inside the chute is a CIRCULAR TRAY holding several empty vials. He dumps all the empty vials on the floor.

He pulls his vial of clear liquid and inserts it into the tray, shoving it back into the chute and closing the door. He types in commands on the alien console.

The machine whirs to life, the mechanisms inside churning so loud we cannot hear the "boom" of the portal that just opened behind Manheim. Manheim watches the monitors eagerly until a shadow overcomes him.

Manheim spins. Darkseid, the giant overlord. He sports a THIN GLOWING RING around his forehead.

MANHEIM

Lord Darkseid.

DARKSEID

What it is exactly that you are doing  
Manheim?

Manheim is at a loss for words. Darkseid grabs him and tosses him aside, sending him crashing into lab equipment. Desaad comes up from behind, checking the readings.

DESAAD

Its all there. Except the proper  
sequence. But this is it. Sire,  
this is the Anti-Life Equation.

He points to the giant monitor. A swirling, glowing light of yellow, white, red, and blue dances over the screen. Darkseid stares at it for a moment, taking it all in.

DARKSEID

Its beautiful isn't it?

DESAAD

Beautiful, but non-functional. We  
must test it on someone...wait.

Desaad pauses, pointing his finger at the monitors, reading. Then looks over to Manheim.

DESAAD (CONT'D)

He has instituted an anomaly into  
the equation Darkseid. Himself.

DARKSEID

Isolate it and remove it.

DESAAD

I can't. He's imbedded his biology  
into each part of the formula. If  
we remove even one element, we'd  
have to start over. From my  
calculations, he's made himself immune  
to it.

MANHEIM

Your mistake Darkseid. All those  
meetings at your creepy palace, you  
think I was just checking out the  
scenery, eating the lousy food? No  
way pal, I was in this bozo's lab.  
You overplayed your hand big boy.  
You can kill me, turn me to ash,  
whatever.

(MORE)

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

But a little piece of me goes along with your equation and you can't control me. What I do, I do for me. Nobody, and I mean nobody gets over on Bruno Manheim.

Darkseid laughs enormously.

DARKSEID

What is this? Why Manheim, you have displayed more cunning than any pathetic son or general I have at my command. Perhaps you shall live to rule this planet. In the meantime, Desaad. Prepare the decompression chamber.

Darkseid removes his helmet, revealing his bald cratered and cracked dome. He removes the glowing ring from his head, hands it over to Desaad.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

This is my will Manheim. My legacy.

MANHEIM

(under his breath)

Our legacy.

Desaad places the mind ring into a slot on the decompression chamber.

Manheim crawls over to the knocked out lab assistant, slapping the kid around to wake him.

DESAAD

We need a person to test the sequence Darkseid.

MANHEIM

I got it, I got it! Let's go kid, just have a seat in the nice comfy chair.

Manheim steers the groggy kid into the chamber, rests him in the chair and straps him down. He grabs the tech's face, gives him the KISS OF DEATH. The geek comes to.

LAB TECH

What's going on?

MANHEIM

Guess what? Goons 2, Geeks 1. You lose pal. No hard feelings.

The lab tech finally realizes what's going on as the door closes. He looks around and struggles in the chair, unable to budge. Manheim backs up, standing next to Darkseid.

MANHEIM (CONT'D)

What if it doesn't work?

DARKSEID

There are millions of decoded possibilities. Be prepared to test this on every man, woman and child on this planet. Since you are now *personally* invested in this endeavor, I can leave this to you. I must deal with another matter.

The lab tech screams a silent scream behind the glass door of the decompression chamber as the lights flicker in the lab.

INT. METROPOLIS GENERAL - NIGHT

Jimmy and Cat run up the hallway. Pushing aside protesting nurses and doctors. They reach Lois' room.

JIMMY

Superman. You gotta...you found Ms Lane, thank God. Superman, its bad...I almost got killed...There was this...thing...its HUGE! And then Cat...Ms. Grant and I...

SUPERMAN

Jimmy, calm down. What just happened, we felt an explosion.

CAT GRANT

What Jimmy is trying to indicate is that all hell is breaking loose outside and they could really use your help.

Cat switches on the television in Lois' room.

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

A Galaxy News reporter stands outside the Daily Planet.

GALAXY NEWS REPORTER

Metropolis...and I am standing in the middle of an intergalactic fire fight.

(MORE)

## GALAXY NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

Following the rescue of reporter Lois Lane from the clutches of what can only be described as an alien being, Superman has not been seen since entering Metropolis General. Meanwhile a large vehicle which is believed to also be alien in nature simply materialized within the Metropolis city limits and is wreaking havoc on the downtown area, destroying vehicles, buildings, anything or anyone in its path. The National Guard, which had been summoned to deal with Superman's return and possible arrest since his banishment, is now engaging the alien force. Thus far they have been ineffective. The Governor has issued a state of emergency, asking residents to remain indoors and away from Downtown Metropolis. He has also made a personal request to the President to lift the ban on Superman.

## INT. METROPOLIS GENERAL - NIGHT

Hospital staff surround the television in Lois' room. They all look over to Superman.

Superman doesn't budge. He looks from the television to Lois. Explosions rock the building.

## HEAD DOCTOR

What's going on in here? People we have patients coming in by the dozens. We don't have time for standing around.

The doctor walks around Superman, checking Lois' readings on her monitor.

## HEAD DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Come on folks, lets get our heads in the game. We have a job to do.

The hospital staff shuffles out, leaving Superman, Jimmy, Cat and Lois. Superman doesn't take his eyes off of Lois.

## EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOF - NIGHT

A sniper takes aim on the hospital, scoped on Lois Lane's room. He makes a couple of small tweaks and adjustments.

BOOOOMMMMMMMM!

BRIGHTNESS illuminates the Daily Planet globe. The soldier turns, slightly blinded. He drops a dark visor on his helmet and looks at the source of light.

IN THE SNIPER'S VISOR

We see the red glowing eyes of Darkseid approaching, then all is BRIGHT RED.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

The insane firefight continues. The PLASMA TANK splits a tank in half as Goodness barks orders to her troops. National Guardsmen retreat from the tank as it explodes. Buildings collapse, cars explode. Metropolis is being decimated.

The plasma cannon is doing the most damage however. It SHEARS OFF the top of a building, slicing through it diagonally and sending the top sliding down into the street. Falling rubble drives the citizens back.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOF - NIGHT

Darkseid looks over the edge of the building, watching and waiting.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

The citizens are in the middle of the street, but cornered. Debris and rubble piled up on either side, flames and explosions behind them. Parademons close in on them.

Out of nowhere, a red and blue blur flashes through the area, creating a SONIC BOOM. The fires are extinguished and the people and parademons are knocked flat. Goodness points to the PLASMA TANKER, who moves into position.

Superman turns back to the citizens and their attackers but takes the full brunt of the PLASMA BEAM to the chest, and is knocked away. He immediately flies back, avoiding the plasma beam and letting the tank have a dose of heat vision.

The parademons are back on their feet. They fly up and grab Superman, trying to hold him still for the cannon. Superman struggles, but KEEPS THE HEAT VISION trained on the plasma tank.

SUPERMAN

(to the people)

Get moving, stop standing around watching.

The crowd scatters in every direction, leaving only Superman, parademons, and the tank.



The tank still fires away, blazing A STEADY STREAM of plasma fire. Superman flies above it, circling away from the gun. The gun is slicing through the surrounding buildings as it tries to catch up to Superman.

INT. PLASMA TANK - NIGHT

The tank driver is sweating profusely. The gunner sweeps the cannon around, aiming for Superman. The interior of the tank is starting to catch fire.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

The large tank is turning red, then orange, then yellow, glowing brighter and brighter. Superman's heat glare intensifies.

BLAAAMMMMMMM!!

The tank explodes into an enormous ball of flame. The surrounding parademons are sent FLYING into buildings, some crash to the ground afire.

Superman TUMBLES down into the ground, bounces off the concrete and crashes through a STOREFRONT.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOF - NIGHT

Darkseid stares in astonishment. He grimaces and leaps from the building, ROCKETING DOWN to the street below.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

Superman crawls from the building, his suit tattered and ripped in every conceivable place. But the "S" remains intact. Darkseid lands in the street directly across from Superman.

*ERADICATOR (O.S.)*

*Kal-El. I have your biometrics on my screen.*

INT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

The crystal table shows Superman's BIO-READINGS, an OUTLINE of a HUMAN BODY, half filled in with black, the other with yellow.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

Superman stands, wobbles slightly.

*ERADICATOR (O.S.)*

*This isn't good. You've taken a lot of damage.*

SUPERMAN

Just don't leave me buddy.

The two men stare at one another. Superman straightens himself up and eyes his opponent. He doesn't need a formal introduction.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Finally.

DARKSEID

Finally? You've been waiting for this?

SUPERMAN

I've been waiting to put an end to this since it started.

DARKSEID

Excellent. Its simple then Kryptonian. You will accompany me back to the laboratory and you will there properly sequence the Anti-Life Equation. Make no mistake, there shall be no further discussion of this matter. Let me assure you that I will kill not only you, but every last man, woman and child, and destroy this planet should you not.

SUPERMAN

Perhaps I need to make myself clear. I am not here to negotiate any terms or deals with you. You're going to leave my home. Tonight. You, your weapons and technology, and everyone you brought with you. If I have to force you and your army out of here, I will. There's the easy way and the hard way. Right now, I'm giving you the opportunity to take the easy way and go home in one piece.

Darkseid paces, with lofty confidence.

DARKSEID

Arrogant bug. You will learn the hard way nothing comes easy with Darkseid.

SUPERMAN

Darkseid. I was hoping you'd say that.

Superman zooms up to Darkseid at lightning speed, decking him with a 1-2 combo. He grabs the giant and slams his back into a building, then turns on his heat vision. Darkseid turns his head, letting the beams deflect off his helmet.

Darkseid grabs Superman by the throat, grinning. He forces his head upwards, and Supes' heat vision cuts through the building, setting it on fire. Superman cuts the heat off as Darkseid gives him a forceful BACKHAND.

The effect of Darkseid's slap is that of a man swatting a fly...Superman goes SOARING across the street. His body embeds itself so deep into a car that the drivers side is now on the passengers side.

Darkseid yanks Superman out of the wreckage, holding him by the back of the neck.

DARKSEID

I am not my sons Kryptonian. This  
is not going to be a contest.

He slaps him around viciously. Each blow looks like it could pull Superman's head clean off. He tosses the Man of Steel head first into the pavement, cracking the street.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Its going to be a massacre.

Superman is suddenly SEIZED in the indescribable pain of the OMEGA EFFECT. His body lifts from the ground and is tossed to and fro, bouncing brutally off buildings, cars, before Darkseid slams him violently to the street. Supes lays limp.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

And it will end in your death, and  
the death of your friends and all  
those you care for.

Superman crawls to a knee, then collapses and rolls on his back. His body is TWITCHING from the effects of the Omega Beams. Darkseid steps in, placing a giant gray boot on his face.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Indeed this entire world will perish  
because of the insolence and arrogance  
of one. How heroic.

Superman reaches up, grabs Darkseid ankle, and flings the overlord off of him. Superman springs up, Darkseid lands on his feet a few yards away.

SUPERMAN

I will not abandon this planet or  
the people, leaving them alone to  
perish at the hands of a tyrant.

Superman lifts AN ARMORED CAR his head and HEAVES it at  
Darkseid. Darkseid simply catches it with the OMEGA BEAMS.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Damn.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

*Kal-El...this being is far too  
powerful. Escape.*

DARKSEID

Indeed you are strong Superman. I'm  
just stronger.

Darkseid lets the armored car fall into his hands and blasts  
Superman again with his omega beams. He turns to try to  
block them with his hand, but the beams overcome him.

The beams blast him into a building and pin him there.  
Darkseid intensifies his assault, and Superman stifles his  
screams through gritted teeth, dropping down to a knee.

Darkseid releases Superman from the Omega beams, and almost  
SIMULTANEOUSLY smashes him with the ARMORED CAR. The armored  
car CRASHES through the building and BRINGS THE BUILDING  
DOWN ON TOP OF SUPERMAN.

EXT. METROPOLIS GENERAL - NIGHT

The SWAT team engages Steppenwolf's brigade, shooting  
parademons out of the sky. Steppenwolf flies low on his  
hover tank, fires CONCUSSION BLASTS at the troops, flattening  
them. He grins and flies off, leaving the troops unconscious.

EXT. METROPOLIS AVE - NIGHT

Darkseid steps forward, shaking his head. The WRECKAGE of  
the building shifts slightly, and Superman PUNCHES a hand  
through the DEBRIS. Blood flows from wounds on his face and  
hands.

DARKSEID

Amazing resilience. Give me the  
sequence of the equation. Kryptonians  
are not meant for this. Wars,  
battles, combat, they are not your  
strong suits.

(MORE)

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Son of Krypton, yours is an intelligent race, that reached the heights of physical and mental aptitude. Use your mind. I can use you to shape the minds and bodies of inferior beings across the galaxy.

SUPERMAN

Your aim...is to control the universe. And everything in it. And the equation will give you that power. I cannot allow that to happen.

DARKSEID

Unreasonable infant. You don't have a choice Superman.

SUPERMAN

Then this the moment where either I succeed or I die.

DARKSEID

I think you know the outcome between the two.

Superman blasts him with heat vision, and Darkseid quickly takes shrapnel from the tank and blocks the beam. He then heaves it at Superman. Superman dodges and Darkseid fires the Omega effect.

Superman flies, dodges. No avail. The beams track him perfectly. Superman flies around behind Darkseid, trying to lure the beams to him, but Darkseid catches him by the head as the beams hit their mark. Superman screams in agony.

Superman's body again is flung into the ground like a rag doll. Darkseid stands above him, smiling. Wipes Superman's blood from his hands, smearing it across the "S".

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

(points to himself)

God.

(points to Superman)

Man. Do you understand now? Your strength is waning. I can sense it, every attack is weaker than the last. It is better for you to give up. Save your planet. The glory of Apokolips Superman, it is not tyranny. It is perfection. All life, living to serve a single purpose, not individual self-seeking goals.

Superman looks up. Darkseid raises a foot, preparing to stomp him.

SUPERMAN  
(under his breath)  
Rad...you still there.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)  
*Kal-El. This would be the ideal  
time for you to exercise your  
Kryptonian intellect and get out of  
there.*

SUPERMAN  
No. Not yet. I have a plan.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)  
*This is not the time for bravery!*

Superman sends a blast of super-breath to Darkseid, and the giant topples over, caught off guard. They each stand, Darkseid annoyed, Superman very wobbly. Darkseid belts him in the ribs with a hard body blow. Superman spins like a top and falls.

SUPERMAN  
(wheezing)  
Activate the reflective matrix Rad.  
Mimic Darkseid's brain patterns...

ERADICATOR (O.S.)  
*Kal-El...*

SUPERMAN  
...and then scan mine.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)  
*CLARK KENT! PLEASE!*

SUPERMAN  
Do it!

DARKSEID  
The sequence Kryptonian. Your last  
warning. Then my mercy shall come  
to an end.

Superman stands, then stumbles, falling into the street.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)  
*I have copies Darkseid brain pattern.  
And the reflective matrix is on and  
scanning.*

(MORE)

ERADICATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

Wait...Kal-El. The matrix. Its  
showing coordinates...coordinates  
to...

SUPERMAN

Rad...beam them along Darkseid's  
brain signal into his mother box on  
my word.

DARKSEID

Time's up.

SUPERMAN

Now!

Darkseid reaches down to grab Superman as Superman leaps forward and hits the mother box on Darkseid's belt.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!

A boom tube opens behind them. Superman shoves Darkseid backwards and both men tumble through the portal and it closes.

EXT. METROPOLIS GENERAL - NIGHT

Cat and Jimmy walk out of the hospital, astonished that the scene that they left only minutes earlier is now a total war zone. Bodies, tanks, weapons are strewn across the streets. A pack of parademons flies overhead.

Grunts and groans are heard from Martin and his SWAT team. They are coming around. Jimmy and Cat tend to them. Cat starts slapping Martin's cheek.

CAT GRANT

Sir? Wake up. Come on, wake up.  
Hey you're kinda cute. Come on, on  
your feet soldier.

Martin props himself up on his elbows. He's groggy and out of it.

MARTIN

Lady. Get the hell outta here.  
What's the matter with you?

CAT GRANT

Worry about that later. Right now,  
can you work this thing?

She shows him the small radio receiver she had earlier.

MARTIN

Why?

CAT GRANT

Because I think it will lead you to  
the hostages.

Martin stares at her.

EXT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

The isolated fortress, illuminated by the light of the setting sun. A strong frigid wind blows across the valley.

BOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!

The boom tube opens, and the two warriors stumble out of it, crashing face first into the icy ground.

Darkseid stands, looks baffled and confused. Superman is on his feet, launches a barrage of punches, backing Darkseid up into the wall of the Fortress. Another crushing haymaker sends him through the wall.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

Superman climbs over the brink, entering the Fortress. He belts Darkseid again, sending him sliding into the ground, near the feet of the statue of his parents.

DARKSEID

I underestimated you Kryptonian. I  
thought my sons were simply defeated  
because they were weak.

Superman doesn't bother to trade barbs with Darkseid. He pounds another quick succession of punches into the giant.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

You deceive your opponent. You attack  
with the element of surprise. You've  
shown a strong sense of cunningness.  
Perhaps you shall become my general.  
You shall be an inspiration to my  
armies.

Another solid right cross lands in Darkseid's chin, but he doesn't budge. Darkseid catches his next punch, much like Superman caught Kalibak's punch.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Unfortunately for you, I am not my  
son Kryptonian.



The warlord squeezes down on Superman's hand. We hear the unnerving sound of cracking and snapping bones being crushed in Darkseid's grip. He swings Superman by the arm, crashing him against the statue.

The giant tribute to his parents and his planet crumbles, crashing down upon the Man of Steel. The giant globe of Krypton falls and takes Superman through the icy floor, creating a giant fisher in the ground.

Darkseid walks calmly down into the dark fisher. Seconds later, Superman's body comes hurtling out, crashing on the ice. Superman holds his left hand, horribly broken.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

It's time to put at end to this. I  
have a universe to conquer.

Superman gets to his feet. Darkseid stalks his prey like a hungry lion. Superman hits him with a blast of heat vision. Darkseid meets them with his Omega beams, deflecting them into the crystal console.

The console explodes, sending SHARDS OF CRYSTALS FLYING. The explosion shakes the Fortress. Large chunks of ice rain down from above, breaking through the floor. The place is coming apart at the seams.

DARKSEID (CONT'D)

Take pride Superman. I haven't needed  
to unleash the full power of the  
Omega effect in many centuries. But  
for you it will be necessary.

SUPERMAN

Full power?

Superman looks at his MANGLED hand.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

I haven't unleashed my full power  
either.

DARKSEID

Now would be a good time.

SUPERMAN

Rad. Caloris Planitia.

DARKSEID

Excuse me?

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

*Excellent. Excellent idea Kal-El.*

DARKSEID

What is that? Kryptonian for 'I'm about to die'?

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

*I am ready.*

Superman, with his remaining strength, jumps up with full speed and force, striking Darkseid with all his might. The punch is incredible. Darkseid's head is snapped back, his knees buckle. But he doesn't fall. He laughs.

DARKSEID

Not bad.

He looks down. Something liquid gleams on his boots. Yellow. And it splatters again, dripping from Darkseid's grinning mouth. He wipes away HIS OWN BLOOD, no longer laughing. Superman stands, holding Darkseid's mother box. Darkseid looks to his belt, stunned.

SUPERMAN

Now!

He dives at Darkseid, tackling him around the waist.

BOOOOOOONMMMMMM!

EXT. MERCURY: CALORIS PLANITIA

The boomtube opens up silently under a black starry cloudless sky. Darkseid crashes down onto a silent cratered desert. He stands, seeing nothing in any direction, but an ENLARGED SUN beating down upon him. He turns again and sees Superman.

Superman hammers him with an overhand right, sending Darkseid flying to the other side of the large crater.

Superman holds his left hand high into the air, into the BRIGHT YELLOW SUNLIGHT. The hand cracks into position, the mangled bones right themselves. Superman looks at his hand, fully healed.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

*Excellent idea Kal-El. On Mercury, your proximity to the sun is increasing your healing and recovery rate 10-fold.*

EXT. NEW FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - NIGHT

Eradicator looks at the bio-readings of Superman. They are off the charts.

ERADICATOR

With the lack of atmosphere as well,  
the heat will slow him down. You  
have an advantage.

EXT. MERCURY: CALORIS PLANITIA

Darkseid stands, wipes GLOWING BLOOD from his lips. He looks at it again, shocked, but musters up LAUGHTER. Even in this atmosphere-less environment, the BOOMING VOICE of Darkseid can be heard. He faces Superman.

DARKSEID

Well played son of Krypton. Well  
played. But it is too late. I have  
toiled far too long to be stopped at  
this juncture.

SUPERMAN

Not far enough Darkseid.

They fly at each other with incredible speed. Superman delivers THUNDEROUS double ax-handles and haymaker shots. Darkseid counters. The blows from the two men reverberates throughout the entire basin. Dust kicks up across the desert.

Darkseid hammers Superman with an UPPERCUT that lifts Superman into the air. In mid-air, Darkseid grabs him and heaves him HEADLONG into a pile of STONES. But Superman halts his fall, stopping himself inches from the stones.

He reverses quickly, flying and grabbing Darkseid by the back of his neck, SLINGING him at LIGHTNING SPEED into a crater's side. Darkseid slides down the side of the crater into the center.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Your plans of domination have come  
to an end. I will see to that.

DARKSEID

Fool. You are already 2 steps behind  
me. The Anti-life Equation is mine.  
The calculations have already been  
transferred back to Apokolips. Your  
supposed victory...nothing more than  
a diversion to your interference.  
True victory and conquest, as always,  
resides in the hands of Darkseid.

SUPERMAN

I don't think so. I'm gonna have to  
make sure you don't make it home.

DARKSEID

You don't think so? I will be happy  
to oblige you in your futility.  
Let's go.

The battle begins inside the massive crater. There are no lolly-pop punches being thrown, no missed opportunities. The combatants are exerting their full arsenal upon the other, but neither gaining an edge.

They square off, then Omega beams and heat vision STRIKE ONE ANOTHER.

Darkseid's intensifies his attack, spit mixed with glowing yellow blood oozes from his mouth. EYES blood red, face is intense, his scream shakes the basin. The Omega effect speeds forward towards Superman, overtaking his heat vision.

Superman's face is frozen in a desperate scream. His skin distorts, bubbles, rips and tears. HE IS FEELING THE FULLNESS OF THE OMEGA EFFECT! But he doesn't fall.

The beams' brightness diminishes as Darkseid collapses to one knee. Finally, Darkseid slumps to the ground, exhausted.

Supes crashes to the ground as well. They stand, weary and battle worn. Superman recovers first, hammering an exacting haymaker. Darkseid counters with a solid back hand. They trade thunderous punch after thunderous punch.

Superman picks up the pace, walloping the warlord across the grill, SPLITTING HIS DOMED HELMET IN HALF. He keeps dodging Darkseid's feeble attempts. He CRUNCHES another solid punch into Darkseid's face and the giant crashes on his back.

Darkseid lays in a heap, a bloody pitiful heap. He makes no further movement. Superman grabs him by the collar, EYES SMOLDERING with heat, his fist poised for a DEATH BLOW.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

*Now. Victory is yours. Strike.*

Superman realizes his position and relaxes.

SUPERMAN

No. I am not a murderer. I am Kal-El, son of Jor-El. I am my father's son.

With that, Superman grabs the Mother Box from the ground. He closes his eyes and RUNS HIS FINGERS across the front of it.

ERADICATOR (O.S.)

*What will you do with him then?*

A BOOM TUBE opens noiselessly. Superman sets the box down.

SUPERMAN

I am sending him where he can no longer threaten anyone.

Superman lifts the fallen overlord and hurtles him headlong into the boom tube. In a magnificent FLASH, the portal closes and all is quiet.

SILENT MONTAGE: THE AFTERMATH

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

Goodness is aboard her hover tank, and she looks at her mother box. She freezes, and her face falls, shocked and stunned. She yells to her troops. Then, BOOM TUBES OPEN all around and everywhere.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Martin and his SWAT team, GUNS DRAWN, have Manheim, Edge, and Denetto on their knees, while they look around the large laboratory, unshackling the hostages.

INT. METROPOLIS GENERAL - NIGHT

Lois Lane comes to, her eyes blinking. Doctors run into her room.

EXT. SPACE - THE PHANTOM ZONE

The RED GLOW goes out of Darkseid's eyes. His physical form loses all trace of color and he begins to take on an ethereal shape. He spins helplessly in a long blackened sheet of crystal, THE PHANTOM ZONE, throughout the black reaches of space.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAWN

AERIAL SHOT: WIDE

PRESIDENT WILSON (O.S.)

Members of the Joint Chiefs. Thank you all for convening at this early hour.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAWN

President Wilson sits inside the Situation Room along with four other men at a small table, members of the JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF and the VICE PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT WILSON

I just got off the phone with the President of Russia and Prime Minister McAllister. Their concerns are the same as ours. We have now been awakened to an open universe gentlemen. The attacks in Metropolis have heightened our awareness that hostile forces exist, and they are far superior. Our planet remains in constant danger.

GENERAL LEWIS

Then is it time to remove this foolish interdiction on Superman? General Lane, I believe you would agree.

GENERAL LANE

He may have saved my daughter, but I don't have to like him. However he did vanquish the enemy.

PRESIDENT WILSON

But can he be trusted to do what's right when the time comes? He's already proven to me his disloyalty.

GENERAL LEWIS

What about the others? Let's not pretend Superman is the only one. They will have loyalties to this planet.

GENERAL KALEY

Perhaps. But honestly gentlemen, I don't think we can trust anyone but ourselves.

A knock on the door. The vice president stands to answer.

VICE-PRESIDENT

If I may Hank, I think I have found someone who we can trust.

An AFRICAN-AMERICAN woman in a perfectly white business suit enters the room. She carries a black briefcase which has a single emblem on the front of it, a chess piece: THE WHITE QUEEN.

AMANDA WALLER

Mr. President, members of the Joint Chiefs. My name is Amanda Waller and I am the solution to our problem.

Two manila folders hit the table. One has the label reading "Project Cadmus". The other has the name "Lex Luthor" on it.

EXT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE - DAY

The Fortress in shambles, ruined. Rubble burns and crystal columns SHATTER with every wave of the flames. The once Kryptonian replica is a shell of its former glory. Fog and smoke cover the valley filled with stacks of broken crystal.

A sound is heard, abnormal to a post destruction zone, almost like a CRY, a STRUGGLE. A loud CRASH is heard, coming out of the debris, a HAND holding a bright green crystal.

The man's other hand grabs a hold of a block of crystal and ice. Through the ice a mouth gasps for a breath of air, A MOUTH FRAMED BY A FAMILIAR GOATEE.

THE END