

"THE PLANET"
Episode 1.01
(Act I)

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Draft
information

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COLD OPEN

EXT. METROPOLIS - DUSK

ESTABLISHING: The statue of the slow SPINNING PLANET tops off THE DAILY PLANET building.

A beautiful explosion of warm red and yellow across the soft blue sky. The SKYLINE exudes excitement and opportunity underneath the sounds of the traffic down below.

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET ROOF - DUSK

CLARK KENT's(49) alien blue eyes are just hidden by the reflection in his large and stylish thick-framed glasses. He stares out at the city glazed by the setting sun.

He sports a few grays, but his skin remains ageless.

He is sitting on the steps that lead from the roof up to the spherical, spinning landmark.

Clark pulls out a piece of specially carved wood -- it's a SMOKING PIPE.

He removes a baggy from his pocket--

It's weed! It's coke -- no! It's opium! Chandu is a rare and concentrated form of the drug, smoked mostly in Asian cultures. It looks almost like a cracker-jack.

Clark breaks it up into the bowl, before bringing it to his lips.

His pupils flare.

INVISIBLE rays shoot from his eyes.

The chandu burns.

He takes a big pull.

CLOSE on HIS(49) eyes. The flares quickly die out. His pupils SHRINK -- the glorious blue taking over.

As he allows the smoke to leave his lungs, his head falls back and he begins to drift upward--

His whole body levitates slowly off of the steps and gradually up and up, the smoke slowly exiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He lies sloppily back as if in an invisible recliner. He defies gravity, but his clothes don't.

He lets go of the pipe -- it dropping straight down, lost in the dark shadows below. He begins sloppily tearing off his clothes.

The suit is not underneath. He rips all clothing off until he is completely naked -- all but the glasses.

HIS POV THROUGH THE FRAMES:

In the heavens above, what He, himself, would only describe as a GODDESS PRINCESS steps out from behind the clouds, walking on an invisible platform of another dimension. She is completely naked -- of a thicker shape -- a more renaissance portrayal. Her dark hair is long and flows around her body. She holds a golden whip, er... harness.

His hand touches his hairy stomach, slowly sliding down past his navel.

He is stuck in a trans.

She stands between the moving clouds, the vapor sporadically passing over her. Her voice echoes.

GODDESS PRINCESS

I'm coming.

He continues up toward her, the city growing smaller behind him.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DUSK

Look! Up in the sky! He is just a glint in the clouds -- barely visible, strung out privately in public.

END COLD OPEN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT I

EXT. BEIJING, CHINA - NIGHT

The BEIJING skyline is illuminated from within the layers of the buildings.

EXT. MARKETPLACE - NIGHT

It's a street filled with small outdoor business fronts and a crowd of consumers crisscrossing in every direction.

Traditional Chinese lanterns are strung over the length of the marketplace, hanging over the displays of delicious kebabs, fresh fish and exotic candies and toys.

Indistinct chatter and urban commotion fill the air.

ZHU HUANG(30s) moves through the crowd and spots one stand, approaching an OLD WOMAN selling trinkets and knickknack.

He greets the elderly woman and looks upon her display with the wonder of a child.

Huang reaches down and picks up a little clay mouse with holes in it.

The old woman grabs his hand and holds the head of the mouse up to her lips, blowing into the hole at the top. The air WHISTLES through the holes.

She then pushes his hand up to his mouth, gesturing for him to give it a try.

He does. It whistles.

EXT. MARKETPLACE - LATER

The man approaches a stand selling silkworm kebabs. In Chinese he asks for one, which the the seller picks out and hands to him.

RON TROUPE(36) suddenly appears right next to Huang. Ron is a platypus of a man, isolated and unique and peacefully accepting of both, as well as the world around him. But underestimated and his ability to inflict a painful poison will be the downfall of his opponent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RON
(in Chinese;
subtitled in
English)
One for me, too, please.

Huang receives his kebab, doing a double take at the sight of Ron standing next to him.

Ron takes his kebab and pays the seller, thanking him and looking back at Huang, who is fearful to see him.

Huang turns and walks away, holding a bag in one hand and his kebab in the other. Ron quickly catches up, walking beside the man while biting into the insects on the stick.

Huang speaks perfect English.

HUANG
What are you doing here?

RON
I was eager to finally meet you in person.

HUANG
I didn't agree to this!

RON
You sought me out. I'm just here to find out why you stopped emailing me.

They move through the crowd, splitting around people, Ron adhering to Huang despite that.

RON (cont'd)
Well?

HUANG
We can't speak here. This isn't right.

RON
Are you afraid to be seen with a black man?

HUANG
Just one in particular.

RON
Then where can we speak?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They separate around a couple walking hand-in-hand. The man moves even more quickly, desperate to get away from Ron.

RON (cont'd)

So?

HUANG

Please, this isn't right. I cannot speak with you.

RON

I have two-thousand words due by nine-o'clock tonight. I'd be happy to go get that done if you'd just tell me why you contacted me in the first place.

HUANG

Uh, it was a mistake. I apologize, Mr. Troupe.

RON

Apology not accepted. Why did you contact me, Huang?

They turn off of the market and down a less crowded street.

HUANG

(stammers)

I, uh, I just wasn't thinking clearly, at the time. Please forgive me, I've been under a lot of stress.

RON

Oh yeah? Me too. And ya know, Mr. Huang... Zhu, I'm just the type of guy that can't let anything go. You can imagine how much stress that can cause. In fact, I'd imagine that that's why you sought me out. You already knew that about me.

HUANG

Mr. Troupe, I--

RON

I found you randomly at the market, Zhu. This is my job. I'm not going to just walk away from you, now.

HUANG

But you must understand the position I'm in, right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RON

Of course, I do. You're in the position of being an employee at the China Aerospace Corporation who contacted an American journalist in the country covering the new uranium enrichment program. Now I know you have something you want to tell me and all I want is to know what it is. It's a win-win, Mr. Huang.

HUANG

No. It's what you Americans call a no-win. For anyone!

They stop at a corner as the traffic speeds by.

RON

What the hell is it, then?

HUANG

Please, Mr. Troupe--

RON

Goddammit, just tell me!

HUANG

I've thought long and hard about this and I realize that it was a mistake contacting you--

RON

No, your mistake is thinking that you'll just be able to talk your way out of this!

Huang crosses the street. He moves quickly, desperately trying to ignore Ron whose persistently at his side.

They continue down the street, moving around those in their path.

Tears begin streaming down Huang's cheeks. How pitiful he appears, speeding down the sidewalk, crying and holding a grocery bag in one hand and an uneaten silkworm kebab in the other.

RON (cont'd)

Mr. Huang--

He speaks to various passing strangers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUANG
(in Chinese)
I told him to go away! I told him to
leave me alone!

RON
Mr. Huang!

Ron grabs him and stops him, shaking Huang.

RON (cont'd)
Just tell me what is going on! I
promise, I won't put you in any
danger. No names. Just tell me what
has you so worked up!

HUANG
You can't promise anything. I can't
be seen with you, Mr. Troupe. Please.
Please leave me alone!

People walk around them. Ron notices all the people staring.
There's a BEAT.

RON
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Ron let's Huang go, turns around and walks away.

Huang is left standing there, watching Ron walk off.

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

The sun is just shining in this morning. An orange haze
covers the bedroom.

LOIS LANE-KENT(47) is the mountain under the covers in the
bed. All by herself, surrounded by stacks of papers sprawled
out across the empty side.

An opened bottle of red wine sits on the side table.

She awakens with a stretch and a yawn. Lois is a lioness;
seductive by nature, and including an unrelenting confidence
that balances her equally unrelenting temperament. The wine
has stained her lips like blood.

INT. BATHROOM - DAWN

Lois exits the shower, grabbing her towel and wrapping herself up.

The mirror is all fogged up.

She opens the door.

Slowly the mirror defogs and begins to reveal her. She stands before it covering her hair in a towel turban.

She reaches for a box of tampons and removes one, tearing open the wrapper.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

She enters the living room still in her towel and distracted by her cellphone. Quickly she realizes the room is empty. She wasn't expecting this turn of events.

In the KITCHEN AREA she checks the sink to see it void of any dishes. She turns and looks around.

Nothing is out of place. Something, er... someone is missing.

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - LOBBY - MORNING

The lobby is of the Art-Deco style -- a sunburst across the two-story wall at the elevator bank -- it's the way to enlightenment. On the opposite side are the sets of doors, revolving ones between each. They are held in the arms of gatekeepers -- sinister gargoyles -- guarding the path to the underworld.

The floor is marble -- a massive engraved golden Earth at the center, surrounded by the moon and the planets of the galaxy -- the threshold caught between the fork of good and evil.

Lois moves through the lobby toward the elevator bank with an iced coffee in one hand and her cellphone in the other.

LOIS

Morning, gentlemen.

DOORMEN

Morning, Mrs. Kent. Morning, Ms. Lane.

INT. 5TH FLOOR - MORNING

The floor is already busy at this early hour.

A glass shield divides her from the rest of the floor. She removes her jacket, settling into her office while talking on her cellphone. She is inaudible behind the glass labeled "LOIS LANE, CHIEF SUPERMAN CORRESPONDENT."

INT. LOIS'S OFFICE - MORNING

She sits at her desk, turning on her laptop.

Right behind and above her head hangs a framed cover page of The Daily Planet reading, in big letters: "I SPENT THE NIGHT WITH SUPERMAN by Lois Lane." She covers her yawning mouth.

LOIS
(on cellphone)
Yes, Mr. Vaughan, would you? I'd really appreciate it. I'd hate for the realtor to show up and find some squatters, there.

On her computer screen:

The cursor opens a search engine.

"www.supermansightingslive.com"

LOIS (cont'd)
(O/S)
Yes. And would you call me after you've checked? Thank you, Mr. Vaughan.

The page loads to a list of recorded Superman sightings, marked as either confirmed, unconfirmed or false.

At the top of the list, in large letters, it reads:

"DAYS SINCE LAST SUPERMAN SIGHTING: 73 (NEW RECORD)"

SUDDENLY we shift scenes, but remain on the screen--

INT. 5TH FLOOR - MORNING

RAE JENSEN(26) sits staring at the same screen. It scrolls without her hand on the mouse. She looks across the room--

Lois is in her office, sitting at her desk as she was--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rae holds up her cellphone, sending a text message:

"It worked. I'm in."

Sent to: VIRAL.

The screen flips to Lois's email.

Rae watches it like television. She's a reporter on Lois's Superman department team. She is a parasite. A sociopath who has spent her life feeding on others.

Viral replies:

"Excellent."

"Next is her phone."

Across the room, Lois can now be seen texting.

Rae writes back:

"No. Next is Perry White."

SEND.

INT. EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE - MORNING

PERRY WHITE(71), the alpha male of the Daily Planet tribe, he's skilled at putting up a dominant front, though this attribute should not disregard his intelligence. He sits behind his desk.

He's in the midst of a conversation--

PERRY

So we actually did wind up turning
a... technical profit since Menschen
has been gone. But nothing
substantial.

An old record player is always playing the big band era of the 1950's. The volume is low, but the music is always playing in this office. Always.

STERN

Nothing substantial, but more than
operating at a loss like prior to his
resignation.

FRANKLIN STERN(69) sits on the couch in the corner of the office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is the publisher or the man of this animal kingdom. He dominates over all, but still, he's no god. He can be inferior and he knows this. And when money is tight, he's not afraid to go poaching.

PERRY

Yes, that is true. However, I don't think Foswell or Armstrong will agree to the terms you want to offer.

STERN

It's a possibility. But I'm open for negotiations.

PERRY

To be perfectly honest, Frank, I think the offer is insulting. To both of them.

STERN

Oh, come on, Perry.

PERRY

I think that the job is a lot of work with three heads. Two is impossible. The both of them have been making the impossible happen for the last month. And with everything going on with Superman and China -- I mean, come on. You offer them something like that, they're both liable to quit. And I wouldn't blame them. Not one bit. The Planet can't afford to lose anymore guys like them, Frank.

STERN

You haven't made any promises have you, Perry?

PERRY

Only to Foswell and Armstrong. Nothing in particular. I had to give them some kind of incentive while you decided on what you wanted to do.

STERN

Well, I do apologize for the delay.

PERRY

No apology necessary, Frank. But those men deserve to be rewarded.

Stern nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY (cont'd)

And to be perfectly honest... again... I don't think any offer can match the magnitude of work required to oversee all departments of this paper. It's just too much for two people.

STERN

So, our backup plan will be to hire another editor... If they say no.

PERRY

They're gonna say no, I'm telling you.

Perry rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

STERN

Oh, Perry, let's just see what they say.

PERRY

I'm too embarrassed by that offer, already.

STERN

Fine. Let's entertain the idea of bringing on a new third managing editor. Who would you choose? Now keep in mind -- they have to be affordable.

PERRY

Anyone here who deserves the promotion won't come cheap. Not the cheap you want, Frank.

STERN

Then give me the name of someone who would deserve it and that is.

Perry shakes his head, sitting back in his chair and thinking.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Ron lies on his bed typing on his laptop.

ON LAPTOP:

"WEAPON-GRADE URANIUM NO SECRET, CHINESE OFFICIALS SAY"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's about half-way through the article, the time at the bottom of the screen reading 8:17 PM.

Ron's cellphone vibrates on the side table. He checks the phone and then turns back to his laptop.

ON LAPTOP:

The cursor clicks away from the article and to the internet where Ron's Daily Planet email is already open.

One NEW EMAIL is in bold. From Zhu Huang. No subject.

The cursor clicks on the email:

"Come to my apartment ASAP."

Ron stares at the email. He then clicks back to the article and begins typing again.

One sentence in further and he stops. The cursor clicks back on the email and then on REPLY.

"Be there by midnight."

SEND.

Ron clicks back to the article and resumes writing.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

ESTABLISHING: LEXCORP is the tallest building in the skyline. It's phallic and reflective.

INT. LEXCORP PRESS ROOM - DAY

LANA LIANG(49) enters the PRESS ROOM. Lana is like an elephant. She's passive, quiet and family oriented, but with an unobtainable presence and often invincible to predators. She never, ever forgets.

It's a crowded room with mingling writers, reporters and photographers and security personnel.

She is noticed by almost everyone she passes, though she doesn't stop to chat. Just a smile and a nod, moving gracefully, but with purpose.

She flashes her badge to one security guard who ushers her to the second row from the stage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She finds her seat and sits quietly.

SPEAKER

(O/S)

Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. The doctors are ready to join us.

Everyone gathers at the stage.

THE DOCTORS enter the press room to much applause and camera flashes.

Lana doesn't exaggerate it as much as others do.

The doctors file onto the stage and sit facing the audience at the long table where microphones and name plates rest.

DR. LENA LUTHOR(41)

LENA

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. First, we would like to thank you for bearing with us through that slight delay earlier this morning. We know it has been a long and grueling night, however, the news we have to share is, we know, well worth it. On behalf of the team and the entire legacy of LexCorp, I announce the successful landing of The Contessa on asteroid 1943 Anteros. The mining craft confirmed landing at 07:38 AM Eastern Standard Time.

A massive screen behind them fades into a simulation of the landing with accompanying photographs from the ship.

LENA (cont'd)

All members of the mining team are in good health. Right now... they are celebrating--

A SELFIE OF THE CREW appears on the screen, capturing the moment they opened the champagne at zero gravity. There is a collective laughter.

LENA (cont'd)

Soon they will begin preparing to step foot on the surface of the asteroid and begin the setup for the drilling process.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENA (cont'd)

This will take place tomorrow evening around 6:30 PM Eastern Standard Time. Now, for a little surprise--

Lena glances over at her colleagues.

LENA (cont'd)

There will be a live feed of the initial drilling the day after tomorrow. If all goes according to schedule, that will be broadcast at around 5:20 PM EST on Friday, the 5th. We want the whole world to see how plentiful these resources are. We hope to inspire Roscosmos, NASA, Planetary Resources, the Chinese Aerospace Corp, the Japanese Exploration Agency, the European Space Agency, et al to... catch up with LexCorp.

Lena is so smug. All of the doctors are. They stare over the press for a BEAT.

LENA (cont'd)

We will now take your questions.

The crowd goes wild. Lena points out someone off-screen.

REPORTER 1

(O/S)

Dr. Luthor, what was the cause of the four hour delay in landing?

LENA

I'm actually going to pass this question onto Dr. Hamilton. Doctor?

DR. EMIL HAMILTON(50s) sits before his name plate. He's a kind and timid man. A brilliant and true ally, though terrible under pressure.

DR. HAMILTON

There was a communications delay about twenty minutes before the initial scheduled landing. As a precautionary measure, we advised the team again not to land until we could ensure it would not happen again.

REPORTER 1

(O/S)

What was the cause of the delay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAMILTON
That is still under investigation.
However, we don't expect a
recurrence.

LENA
Next question?

REPORTER
(O/S)
When is the first scheduled payload
of resources expected to be launched?

LENA
The first of three payloads will be
launched within the first thirty
days. We're not sure of an exact
date. It depends on how quickly the
cargo tank is filled. We can only
estimate the time of this process in
a ballpark unit. So, we'll see. Um,
next question?

The press all raise their hands.

LENA (cont'd)
Ms. Liang, yes?

Lana stands.

LANA
Dr. Hamilton, how long was the delay
in communication?

Everyone turns to Dr. Hamilton.

DR. HAMILTON
Um... it was for about three hours.

This sends the press wild.

Lena looks incredibly displeased.

Dr. Hamilton glances over at her, receiving a glare--

LANA
Three hours? At what time did you
realize and determine that there was
some sort of delay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAMILTON

Communications were... disrupted...
At 6:23 AM we regained contact with
the crew.

LANA

At what point was the crew informed
not to land? And when did they
receive that message?

LENA

(interjects)

The crew was informed not to land
immediately. They received our
message though we could not receive
any of theirs. They had long slowed
down in preparation of the landing
and so they stopped the ship and
awaited word from headquarters. For a
business columnist, you sure show a
lot of interest in the science of it
all, Ms. Liang.

Lana smirks and takes a seat.

LENA (cont'd)

Next question?

EXT. HUANG'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ron approaches the building. He looks up and then walks
inside.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Ron stands out in the hall outside Huang's apartment. He
knocks on the door.

He waits patiently.

He knocks again.

RON

Mr. Huang, it's Troupe.

He knocks again.

He tries the door. It's open.

RON (cont'd)

Mr. Huang?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ron enters.

INT. HUANG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mr. Huang hangs naked over an overturned chair.

Ron is shocked by the sight and stands in the doorway. He moves forward--

A NOTEBOOK hangs like a necklace around his neck with a note in big letters reading, "TAKE THIS."

Ron takes deep breathes, unable to take his eyes off of the dead body. He shakes his head and reluctantly steps toward it--

Ron slowly removes the notebook, desperate not to actually touch Huang's body.

Still entranced by the sight, he walks backward toward the door.

He looks down at the notebook, then back up at Huang.

Ron leaves.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Ron bursts into the stairwell, running down two flights of stairs and then stopping at one landing. He leans up against the wall, the notebook in hand.

He pulls the "TAKE THIS" note off of the cover. It's a folded up piece of paper which he unfolds to reveal another note:

"YOU NEEDED TO KNOW WHY. THIS NOTEBOOK WILL TELL YOU. GET OUT OF CHINA. NOW!"

Ron stares down at the note for a BEAT before he begins gagging. He leans over and pukes a little, coughing. He stands upright, crumbles the paper in his hand and then continues down the stairs.

INT. DR. LUTHOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The doctors stand in a circle in the office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENA

Dammit, Hamilton, you were told what to say!

DR. HAMILTON

I was told to lie! By you!

LENA

You deliberately disobeyed an order, not to mention, the confidentiality clause! How dare you!

DR. HAMILTON

We don't know what happened out there!

LENA

Exactly why you should've kept your mouth shut. I knew letting you speak would be a huge mistake.

DR. HARRISON WELLS (65) speaks up.

DR. WELLS

Excuse me, Dr. Luthor, but I didn't agree with your unethical approach to that press conference and I think you have a lot of gall requesting Dr. Hamilton put his reputation on the line in front of the entire press corp. You wanted to lie and you did. Doesn't mean the rest of us have to go along with it.

Lena listens and waits to be sure he is done.

There is a BEAT before--

LENA

I'm sorry, I just wanted to make sure you were done, Dr. Wells. I want to make myself very, very, very, very clear: you and you and you and you will do exactly what I say, when the hell I say and how the fuck I say it as long as that logo remains on your paychecks. You will do your job and only that until your contract runs out and you will keep yourself in line so that I don't have to remind you of your place.

Her cellphone begins ringing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENA (cont'd)
 You're worried about your
 reputations? Get terminated from the
 richest conglomerate in the world and
 you'll be waiting until we colonize
 Mars to get an interview.

She reaches for her cellphone, bringing it to her ear.

LENA (cont'd)
 Get the hell out of my sight.

The doctors look at her with disgust. They shake their heads
 and exit one by one.

LENA (cont'd)
 (on cellphone)
 Lena Luthor--

EXT. BERMUDA BEACH - DAY

His eyes open. He is flat in the sand.

He lies completely naked on his stomach. Palm trees on one
 side, the ocean on the other.

He listens to the waves crashing down on the beach.

MAN
 (O/S)
 He's over here!

A Bermudan man comes down the beach with several Bermudan
 officers.

He quickly stands--

OFFICERS
 Stop!

They get a whole view of him before HE TEARS AWAY INTO THE
 SKY--

They stop short, their eyes barely able to follow the blur
 blast away--

They are left with their jaws dropped and eyes glued to the
 sky.

END OF ACT I