

TITLE

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN

to a BLINDING SUN behind the silhouettes of two gravestones.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The heavy clouds pass over and block the desperate rays of light revealing

the first gravestone: JONATHAN SAMUEL KENT.

Then

the second, older and weathered stone: CLARK JOSEPH KENT.

MARTHA KENT(81) stands before the graves in this unkempt old cemetery. She herself fitting right in with the decrepit, dying and depressed greenery under these gray skies.

The sound of a whistling bird enters the scene.

Martha looks up to see a BLUE-JAY land on the branch of a leafless little tree.

Its whistles soothe the deafening silence and add just a spot of color to this drab, nihilistic setting.

Her face almost lights up, but fails to brighten completely in the slight moment before she watches the rogue little foreigner take off.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DUSK

It's a SYRINGE. But it's no ordinary syringe -- the needle is a dark reflective shade of green.

It pierces the skin right over the vein.

Crimson mixes with the golden liquid inside the vial before it slowly empties out.

It's CLARK KENT(49). He leans back against the steps he sits on out on this building rooftop.

His 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.

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CONTINUED:

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

In that skyline and within his view, there stands the DAILY PLANET building with it's iconic slow-turning copper Earth at the top.

He sports a few grays, but his skin remains ageless. He leans his head back on the step, staring straight up--

The sky has begun to turn a shade of purple, the clouds passing quickly with the wind.

Suddenly his whole body levitates slowly off of the steps and gradually up and up--

He lies sloppily back as if in an invisible recliner. He defies gravity, but his clothes do not. He begins sloppily tearing them off.

Not a thing underneath. He rips all clothing off until he is completely naked -- all but the glasses.

He disappears above the skyline.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DUSK

Night falls upon the backdrop of the city's sky scraping skyline.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONEEXT. 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 up 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(44) 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 hollow clay mouse with holes pierced through 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 seller picks out and hands to him.

RON TROUPE(36) suddenly appears right next to Huang. Ron is a platypus of a man, isolated, unique and peaceful. But underestimated and his ability to inflict a painful poison will be the downfall of his opponent.

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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
What are you doing here?

Huang speaks perfect English.

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.

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
Then where can we speak?

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUANG

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

RON

Listen, I have two-thousand words due by nine-o'clock tonight. I'd be happy to go back to my hotel if you'd just tell me why you contacted me in the first place.

The stop.

HUANG

It was a mistake. I apologize, Mr. Troupe.

Huang nods, turns away and Ron is right behind him--

RON

Why did you contact me, Huang?

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

RON (cont'd)

You said it was urgent. Actually, it was -- and I loved it -- "a delicate, existentially urgent matter."

HUANG

That wasn't me! That was--

Huang keeps trying to storm away, but Ron is right at his side, with the smug smirk of a challenge.

RON

With me he goes by "Factstax."

HUANG

Yes, well Mr. Troupe, I have strong reason to believe that Factstax has long been compromised!

RON

Then why were the two of you so eager to speak with me just days ago?

HUANG

(stammers)

I, uh, I just wasn't thinking clearly, at the time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Huang stops again and Ron stop with him.

HUANG (cont'd)
I didn't realize it was not Alan
Plast-- Please forgive me, I've been
under a lot of stress!

RON
With your day job, I'd imagine so.

Huang speeds off again.

RON (cont'd)
Come on, Mr. Huang... Zhu, we're both
reporters... You're a hacker and I
have a Ph.D., but we've both been
hailed as heroes of the public. We're
just the type of men that can't let
anything go.

HUANG
This one I have to let go of. You--

Ron stops and grabs Huang's arm--

RON
Then give it to me! That is why you
contacted me in the first place! Just
pass the buck!

HUANG
Mr. Troupe, I--

RON
I found you randomly at the market,
Zhu! Or do you prefer Lee? Or wait,
I'm sorry, Mr. Jun-fan? Lee Jun-fan?
Great reference, by the way. I love
those movies--

Huang's face sours -- he pulls away and storms off.

Ron certainly isn't letting him go.

RON (cont'd)
Factstax or not, this is what I do
and you have more than piqued my
curiosity, Zhu.

HUANG
There's an old Western saying about
curiosity and--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RON

With all due respect, I'm not the one acting like the pussy here, Zhu.

Huang stops again.

HUANG

You must understand the position I'm in, right now!

RON

I'm an American. Journalist. Here -- in China, of all places, covering the new uranium enrichment program. A wanted Chinese spy contacts me one day and then stops responding the next. Today he shivers at the sight of me. Now you must understand the position I am in.

HUANG

You're too reckless -- that is why I regret contacting you, now!

They stop at a corner as the traffic speeds by.

RON

What the hell is this all about?

HUANG

Please, Mr. Troupe--

RON

Goddammit, just tell me!

HUANG

I thought long about all of this and I realize that it was a stupid, stupid mistake contacting you--

RON

No, your mistake was thinking you could just hide behind your computer.

Huang jets across the street. He moves quickly, desperately trying to ignore Ron whose persistently at his side, chasing him, practically.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RON (cont'd)
Mr. Huang! Zhu!
(quick beat)
Lord_One! Lord_One! Lee Jun-fan!
Bruce Lee!

HUANG
(to Ron)
Stop! Stop! Go!

He speaks to various passing strangers.

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

RON
Mr. Huang! Zhu!

Ron catches up to him, grabbing a hold of him and shaking
Huang in the middle of the sidewalk.

RON (cont'd)
Just tell me what's going on! You
know I won't name you! You know that!
That's why you and Alan Plastino
contacted me!

Huang weeps.

HUANG
I already told you; the Factstax you
were talking to was not Alan
Plastino! Someone else has been
contacting us both from that account!
Please! I cannot be seen with you,
Mr. Troupe. Please. Please leave me
alone!

People walk around them. Some stop and beginning taking
pictures or filming with their cellphones.

Ron notices and realizes what a spectacle he is making of
his inherently outcast self.

There's a BEAT.

Ron lets him go. Huang's head hangs in shame as he cries.

Huang is left standing there as Ron walks off. He turns to
watch to see Ron's back. He wipes his tears and looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stars can be seen in the breaks of the dark clouds.

BLACK SCREEN.

No, actually, it's

EXT. NEAR-EARTH SPACE - TIME RELATIVE

Not your common stereotype, but a realistic depiction on the level of "Gravity," darkness everywhere. Stillness. A barely-visible BLUISH SPECK enters the frame--

It floats quickly across the shot.

A loud *whirling* whistle noise is emitted from the speed at which the speck travels. It's deafening.

ZOOMING IN takes QUITE A BIT OF TIME -- like zooming in on a glass shard on the great lawn -- the whistle grows louder.

It's an ASTEROID.

SUPER-IMPOSE:

1943 ANTEROS

A massive SHIP rapidly enters the shot -- its aim being the asteroid in the distance.

As it enters the shot, the ship slowly reveals the name, "THE CONTESSA."

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

DR. KADAMBINI KISHORE(39) stares out of the small circular window, staring out at--

EARTH. It's an isolated speck in the vast blackness -- barely noticeable, zero inclination of life.

Her head leaned against the glass, she contemplates. It's a bittersweet moment for her, having given up everything for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

In her hand is a small decorated SHANKHA -- an emblem of the Hindu god, Vishnu.

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

HIDEYO ISHII(56) floats with a short tether around his waist and attached to THE MARSHALL, a drilling machine that looks like a massive car adapter plugin. He tinkers with the interior components using a special multi-purpose tool.

The Mission Engineer Specialist is the oldest aboard. He works diligently, artfully assembling a futuristic control panel like a an old barber chopping quickly with the utmost style and precision.

INT. THE CONTESSA - FLIGHT DECK - LATER

A massive five feet high observation window is a cone around the top of the ship's flight deck. In the near distance ahead is 1943 Anteros.

MAJOR GENERAL SEAN PETERSON(48) sits before the forward control board, gazing out at the asteroid with a look of mostly shock. The Mission Pilot is having a moment. It's all hitting him. He shakes his head in disbelief.

A small LexCorp emblem is patched onto the left breast of all of their uniforms like some "Star Trek" tribute.

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

CAPTAIN CHEN WANG(38) works out using a Treadmill Vibration Isolation System. He is completely strapped into this device, working out all of his muscles.

He is the co-pilot, a shang-wei or captain in the People's Liberation Air Force Army. History-making looms too close for comfort, at the moment. He must sweat it all out.

Behind Captain Wang, DR. CURTIS MYERS(35) floats by--

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

Dr. Myers, one of the project spearheads, floats through the tunnel passageway through the ship, headphones over his ears.

At the end of the passageway DR. DEIRDRE CORMAN(54) types away on a built-in screen.

Dr. Myers comes upon his colleague, slowing down his drift by grabbing a hold of a handlebar. He stops too abruptly and smacks his head off of the passageway wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dr. Corman witnesses this with great empathy -- she reaches out and rubs the his injured noggin with a wincing giggle.

EXT. NEAR-EARTH SPACE - TIME RELATIVE

FROM A GREAT DISTANCE

The Contessa and 1943 Anteros appear like two small specks moving toward each other.

INT. THE CONTESSA - FLIGHT DECK - LATER

The illuminated control panel surrounds the flight deck windows in a mesmerizing display of lights off the contrasting windows into space.

GROUND CONTROL

(O/S)

The Contessa is moving within one quarter of a lunar distance from the asteroid. Can the Mission Commander confirm this for Ground Control?

HOLDING THE SHOT, the asteroid is now closer as we continue to move toward it.

PETERSON

(O/S)

Mission Commander confirms Ground Control. Estimated landing in eleven hours, fifty-six minutes and forty seconds.

GROUND CONTROL

(O/S)

Copy that. Ground Control confirms.

PETERSON

(O/S)

If only Ground Control could see this.

GROUND CONTROL

(O/S)

Major General, Ground Control requests you tag us on your Instagram.

It's gorgeous.

EXT. NEAR-EARTH SPACE - TIME RELATIVE

CLOSE ON The Contessa as it moves through the shot, slowly leaving and revealing the bursting rays of white from THE SUN--

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

The same sun is just shining in, and covering the bedroom in an orange haze.

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

She notices the documents surrounding her -- the mutilated carcass of the latest target of her next expose'.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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