

THE PLANET
Episode 1.01
Pilot

Written by

100%Cotton

Based on the characters created by Jerry Siegel and Joe
Shuster

Copyright (c) 2017

Draft 1

COLD OPEN

FADE IN

to the ILLUMINATION of a studio APPLAUSE sign before the actual O/S audience applause--

It's JIMMY KIMMEL(cameo) at the JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE show--

JIMMY KIMMEL
Alright, so now it's time for
everyone's favorite event--

The CELEBRITIES READ MEAN TWEETS LOGO consumes the shot--

JIMMY KIMMEL (cont'd)
Celebrities Read Mean Tweets.

The applause sign lights again. And applause--

JIMMY KIMMEL (cont'd)
But this week, we're gonna do one of
our special editions -- like,
remember we did the Oscars edition
for the Oscars and then the Movie
edition because... movies.
(beat)
Yeah, so this time, we have only one
celebrity reading mean tweets. One.
Some of you guys might know him.
Here, let's check it out--

CELEBRITIES READ MEAN TWEETS: The SUPER EDITION--

INT. STUDIO - UNKNOWN TIME

M/C/U of SUPERMAN(49)

in his full getup, sitting before the camera with a cellphone in hand. He reads the TWEETS that are SUPERIMPOSED on the screen--

SUPERMAN
"It's a bird, it's a plane... no
actually it's just a gay alien with a
horrible fashion sense."

He looks comically hurt with a laugh track undertone.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
What? "Hashtag-Bye... Felicia?" Um...
Felicia?

CUT TO--

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
"My wife calls out his name when she
climaxes--" Woah!

He looks into the camera, not expecting that. LAUGHS.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
"Yeah... f**k you Superman." ...
I'm... sorry, @stargraveyard1? That's
terrible.

CUT TO--

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
"Hashtag-Krypton hated hashtag-
Superman so much they aborted him and
then blew themselves up to make sure
he couldn't come back. Hashtag-
prochoice."

He just stares at the tweet. LAUGHTER.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
Gosh, that was really mean.

He looks up into the camera like, "shit."

CUT TO--

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
"Son, how you gonna wear blue tights
and tightie-reds out?"

He purses his lips and nods awkwardly.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
Uh...

He looks down at his attire.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
Hm.

CUT TO--

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
 "How insecure does one have to be to
 call himself Superman? Hashtag-
 tinypenis."

He's disgusted and hurt -- but not really.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
 Hashtag-cyberbully.

More laughter--

CUT TO--

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
 "Superman was cool in the '90s... but
 then PS2 came out."

He can't help but snicker along with the laugh track--

CUT TO--

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
 "Go the f**k away, Super...douche.
 Hashtag-doucheofsteel--"

He can't hold it in -- he bursts into laughter.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
 Okay, that's enough. I can't take it
 anymore.

The Jimmy Kimmel Live band kicks in as the segment ends with
 Superman standing from the stool with the biggest smile on
 his face--

EXT. ROOFTOP - DUSK

M/C/U of CLARK KENT(49).

He leans back against the steps he sits on.

His alien blue eyes are just hidden behind the city
 reflection in his large and stylish thick-framed glasses. He
 stares out at the buildings glazed by the setting sun.

He holds up Superman's red cape in his lap, just staring at
 the "S" symbol sewed into it.

He stands and ties it around his neck, right over his baggy
 denim button-down.

The bottom of the cape hits the top of the rusty metal step he stands on.

He becomes enamored by an explosion of warm reds and yellows across the soft blue sky. METROPOLIS exudes excitement and also chaos underneath the sounds of the traffic down below.

A SYRINGE.

A C/U on the needle reveals it is a dark reflective shade of green -- KRYPTONITE -- before it pierces the skin right over the vein.

Inside the vial, carmine blood mixes with the golden liquid heroin. It then slowly disappears downward.

His graying locks press against the steps as he leans back and stares straight up--

The sky adjusts into a mauveine color, the clouds flowing with the breeze.

His sight locks -- he sees something O/S in the sky--

He reaches up for it.

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 tearing them off--

First his shirt, letting it slide off of his shoulders--

Then his bare feet kick off his boots before he tears off his pants. They all drop.

His glasses drop until out of sight.

And then finally the cape--

It falls.

He continues to rise, still in a drug-induced trans. His FULLY NAKED being is revealed before he disappears behind a dark cloud.

Night has befallen Metropolis.

END COLD OPEN

BLACK SCREEN:

An ominous theme similar to that of "Stranger Things" by Michael Stein and Kyle Dixon preludes the--

TITLE CARD:

**THE
PLANET**

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.

HUANG ZHU(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

Zhu 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.

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

Huang receives his kebab. He does a double-take at the sight of Ron, standing next to him, taking his kebab as he pays the seller.

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

HUANG
What are you doing here? How did you find me?

Huang speaks perfect English.

RON
Oh, come on, you know the CIA doxxed you over a decade ago. I was eager to finally meet you in person.

HUANG
This is harassment, Mr. Troupe.

RON
Hey, you sought me out. I'm just want to know 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 is not right!

RON
Then where can we speak?

They separate around a couple walking hand-in-hand. Huang moves even more quickly, desperate to escape Ron's company.

RON (cont'd)
So?

HUANG

Mr. Troupe, this is not the place!

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.

They stop.

HUANG

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

Huang nods and 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 quote -- "existentially urgent."

HUANG

That was not me! That was--

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

RON

Obviously with me, he's going by "Factstax."

HUANG

Yes, well Mr. Troupe--

RON

Ron--

HUANG

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.

They stop, again.

HUANG (cont'd)
 I didn't realize it was not Alan--
 Please forgive me, I have 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... Well, 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 pass the buck to me! That is why
 you contacted me in the first place.

HUANG
 Mr. Troupe, I--

RON
 I found you randomly at the market,
 Zhu. Or do you prefer Lee? Or is it,
 Mr. Jun-fan? Great reference, by the
 way. I loved those movies as a kid.

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

You are familiar with an old Western saying about curiosity and--

RON

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

Huang stops again, offended.

HUANG

Do you realize the... position I am in, right now?

RON

I'm an American. Journalist. Here -- in China, of all places, covering the uranium enrichment program. A fugitive Chinese hacker 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! This is reckless! That is why I regret contacting you, now!

They stop at a corner as the traffic speeds by.

RON

And now is too late!

HUANG

Please, Mr. Troupe -- Ron--

RON

Goddammit, just tell me why you contacted me!

HUANG

I thought long about all of this and I realize that it was a stupid, stupid mistake getting you involved.

RON

No, your mistake was thinking you could just hide behind your screen name. You can't just walk away, now.

Huang jets across the street, desperately ignoring Ron who persists at his side, practically chasing him.

Huang pitifully speeds down the sidewalk, weeping with his grocery bag in one hand and the uneaten silkworm kebab in the other.

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

HUANG
Stop! Stop it! Go!

He pleads hysterically 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)
Get a hold of yourself! You know you
can trust me -- 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! We both have been
catfished! Someone else has been
contacting us from that account!

Ron pauses with a puzzled look of, "what the fuck?" Huang cries while Ron thinks, noticing the spectacle they've become to passersby with cellphones.

Ron glances up--

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 closer we get, the louder the whistle grows.

It's an ASTEROID.

SUPER-IMPOSE:

1943 ANTEROS

It's the destination of the MASSIVE SHIP rapidly entering the shot from O/S.

THE CONTESSA is the name revealed on the ship's side.

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

DR. KADAMBINI KISHORE (39) stares out through a small circular window at--

EARTH. It's an isolated speck in the vast blackness. Barely noticeable. Zero inclination of life.

Her head leans against the glass. She gave 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. A tether at his waist, he tinkers with the interior components of THE MARSHALL -- a drilling machine that looks like a massive car adapter plugin.

As the Mission Engineer Specialist, he expertly and artfully assembles the futuristic control panel like a seasoned barber chopping hair with the utmost style and precision.

INT. THE CONTESSA - FLIGHT DECK - LATER

A massive, lens shaped observation window tops off the flight deck. In the near distance is 1943 Anteros.

MAJOR GENERAL SEAN PETERSON(48) sits at the forward control board, gazing out at the asteroid in a trans. 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 and also 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's spearheads, floats through the tunnel passageway through the ship. Headphones cover his ears.

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

Dr. Myers approaches his colleague, ending his drift by grabbing a handlebar. He stops too abruptly and smacks his head off of the passageway wall.

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

EXT. NEAR-EARTH SPACE - TIME RELATIVE

An E/L/S of The Contessa and 1943 Anteros makes them appear like two small fleas moving toward each other.

INT. THE CONTESSA - FLIGHT DECK - LATER

The illuminated control panel surrounds the flight deck window in a mesmerizing display of lights and switches.

GROUND CONTROL

(O/S)

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

ON 1943 Anteros through the window--

PETERSON

(O/S)

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

GROUND CONTROL

(O/S)

Copy that. Ground Control confirms.

PETERSON

(O/S)

Mission Commander would just like to remind Ground Control that history has been made, again.

He uses a special camera to capture his view.

GROUND CONTROL

(O/S)

Ground Control requests the Major General tag us on his 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 shines in, covering the room in an orange haze.

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

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

She rises 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, wrapping herself in a towel.

She cracks open the bathroom door.

The mirror defogs and reveals her. She ties up her hair.

Her hand reaches into a box of tampons, removing one and tearing it open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Still in her towel, she enters the room distracted by her cellphone. Quickly she realizes the room is unexpectedly empty. The blankets still folded on the couch.

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

INT. TAXI - MORNING

Lois oozes seduction, even while sitting in the back of a cab. She is, of course, submerged in the cyber world.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN, her finger taps the "SuprTrackr" app:

Opening, it reveals a date, hour and location tracker of all reported, confirmed and unconfirmed sightings of Superman. At the top, in big red font:

LAST CONFIRMED SIGHTING: 79 DAYS AGO (new record)INT. THE DAILY PLANET - LOBBY - MORNING

Lois' heels clap against the marble floors as she moves through the lobby toward the elevator bank.

LOIS
Morning, gentlemen.

SECURITY GUARDS
Morning, Mrs. Kent. Morning, Ms.
Lane.

She moves right past them.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Lois sits at the long conference table, documents spread out before her like chain links to the gentlemen sitting across the table. She waits.

PERRY
Jesus Christ, Lois.

PERRY WHITE(71), the Editor-In-Chief of the Daily Planet, drops the wine-stained document he held and rubs his tired eyes as if he cannot believe them.

She sits there, comfortably and confidently leaning back, her legs crossed and a smirk breaking her silky skin.

Managing Editor, SAM FOSWELL(59) shakes his head, his eyes glued to the document in front of him.

FOSWELL
This is incredible.

Perry stands, shaking his head. They're all in disbelief.

PERRY
We gotta get legal on this.

FRANKLIN
Make sure we're not breaking any
laws.

Perry turns to FRANKLIN STERN(65), the owner of the Daily Planet and nods.

FRANKLIN (cont'd)
Then -- pardon me -- run that
fucking thing like Usain Bolt.

Franklin and Lois lock eyes with devilish smirks.

Perry is beside himself.

The other Managing Editor, DIRK ARMSTRONG(51) sits quietly there reviewing the documents, searching for the hole he can puncture into this story.

Lois turns slightly to him.

LOIS
Dirk?

ARMSTRONG
If legal finds nothing, then...

He looks over at her--

ARMSTRONG (cont'd)
You'll be 2-and-0, Lois.

She chuckles.

LOIS
You know what they say -- "it takes a
Woodward and a Bernstein to make one
Lois Lane."

DIRK
Pssht!

FOSWELL
She was just inaugurated. We're still
in the first hundred days.

PERRY
The congressional hearings are gonna
be all consumed by this.

ARMSTRONG
The Democratic majority is going to
stonewall this for as long as
possible.

FRANKLIN
It's the Democrats. Not the
Republicans. There's no way they will
risk this kind of heat.

ARMSTRONG

They'll be sure to remind us that just because Crawford's campaign chairman said something to a Chinese envoy doesn't mean that it's true.

LOIS

You mean her campaign chairman-slash-brother in-law and now senior adviser to the president? The DNC already resents her for blatant nepotism. And when the public finds out that she campaigned on a platform of lies, President Crawford will be dropped by the Democrats quicker than her approval rating.

The room grows silent.

FOSWELL

The first woman president... Just like that.

Lois feels that. She hasn't fully realized the consequences.

ARMSTRONG

She shouldn't have crossed Superman. Ain't that right, Lois?

Lois shoots a dirty look toward Armstrong.

PERRY

Lois, we gotta get into contact with him. This is beyond ridiculous, at this point.

LOIS

Perry, you've seen the tracker. What do you want me to do, go knock on the door of the Fortress of Solitude?

FRANKLIN

You have no contact with him, at all?

LOIS

Did this just turn into an interrogation?

PERRY

We have to protect this paper, Lois.

LOIS

From me?

PERRY

From scandal. And conspiracy.

LOIS

Conspiracy? I just served you with the corpse of an American presidency. For the second time in fifteen years. How dare you question my trust.

FRANKLIN

Lois, you must understand. This paper cannot afford accusations of treason. You know the US' and Superman are far from allies, at this point--

LOIS

My source in the FBI gave me these documents -- it has nothing to do with Superman!

PERRY

You have everything to do with Superman. And you know that.

DIRK

(to Lois)

You're the one stonewalling, now.

LOIS

Oh, fuck off, Armstrong. When I took down Luthor over the 9/11-Kryptonite scandal, I don't remember this issue ever being brought up.

FOSWELL

It isn't 2002, anymore.

PERRY

You've been covering him for over twenty years, Lois. You see why we find it hard to believe that you haven't spoken to him in almost three months?

The room grows quiet again. All eyes on Lois.

LOIS

Oh, I see exactly what this is. You accuse me of conspiracy--

PERRY

No one accused you of anything.

LOIS
and yet the four of you have
conspired against me. All to keep me
out of that editor's room.

PERRY
What?

LOIS
Mensch retired over a month ago and
these two (Foswell & Armstrong) are
doing double duty as managing editors
while I have yet to be offered the
promotion I have long ago earned. I
come here with Constance Crawford on
a platter and in return I get a
prosecution team questioning my
loyalty to the Planet.

ARMSTRONG
Oh, Lois, stop being so dramatic. Ya
know, I can only speak for myself,
but I think you're a straight up
bullshitter.

PERRY
That's enough!

Lois stands and heads toward the door.

PERRY (cont'd)
Lois!

LOIS
I have a story to write.

She leaves.

ARMSTRONG
You better not give her that
promotion. No way in hell I could
work that closely with that woman.

FOSWELL
Ah, just give her the damn thing.

Perry looks to Franklin.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Lois traverses the newsroom floor, heading straight for her
office--

RAE JENSEN(27) is on her way out. She's a famished freshman on the Superman beat. She aspires to be called the "next Lois Lane."

RAE
Lois... I was just looking for you.

Lois passes her and enters her office--

INT. LOIS' OFFICE - DAY

She speeds over to her desk.

LOIS
Rae, it's just not the right time.

RAE
I know, but Lois you really gotta hear this--

LOIS
Rae!

It quiets for a BEAT. Rae gets the hint.

RAE
I'm sorry.

She awkwardly turns for the door.

LOIS
Shut the door on your way out,
please.

Rae does so as she exits.

Lois leans over her laptop and types into the

SEARCH BAR: Smallville Kansas sheriff--

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

At RAE'S CUBICLE, she sits watching the screen of her laptop.

It's a LIVE STREAM of the page Lois is searching.

She turns to her cellphone and sends a text message:

To: Viral

It worked. I'm in.

She almost caught me.

SEND.

INT. LOIS' OFFICE - DAY

Lois paces around her office on her cellphone.

LOIS
My husband and I haven't been there
in months and we're all the way over
here in Metropolis -- I just wanted
to have someone go check on the
house, ya know?

C/U on the SPEAKER STRIP of the laptop--

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

At her cubicle, Rae can hear inside Lois' office from her
cellphone, which she holds up to her ear.

LOIS
(O/S; over phone)
Ah, thank you Sheriff Hayes, I really
appreciate it.

A text message pings to her phone.

She pulls the phone from her face and opens the message:

From: Viral

Perfect. Next is her cellphone.

INT. LOIS' OFFICE - DAY

Lois stands there--

LOIS
Alright, I'll be hearing from ya
then. Alright.

Lois ends the call and begins another--

LOIS (cont'd)
I need you to call me back, ASAP. I'm
not kidding.

There's a knock at her office door.

She steps over and opens it to see one of the building security guards and a US MARSHALL.

US MARSHALL
Lois Lane-Kent?

LOIS
Yes?

He holds up an official subpoena document. Rae and the rest of the office stare on behind him.

US MARSHALL
You've been served by the Senate
Select Committee on Intelligence of
the United States Senate.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Ron lies on the bed typing on his laptop.

ON LAPTOP:

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

He's about half-way through the article.

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

Just then, the room's landline RINGS.

He reaches across the bed.

RON

Hello?

CONCIERGE

(O/S)

Good evening, Mr. Troupe, this is the concierge. A package was just dropped off for you. It's being brought up to your room, now.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

RON

Okay, thank you.

Ron hangs up the phone and rushes over to the door.

A BELLBOY at the door greets Ron and passes him the manila envelope before he is tipped.

RON (cont'd)

Thanks.

Ron closes the door and reads only his name across the front. Nothing more. He opens the package--

And pulls out a large FLASH DRIVE.

And a BURNER PHONE.

Ron looks at the tiny colorless screen to see 1 NEW MESSAGE.

He clicks it.

From: Unknown

Got it?

Ron immediately replies.

Yes.

SEND.

A QUICK BEAT passes before--

the cellphone rings. He answers.

RON (cont'd)

Hello?

Huang's strong accent comes from the other side--

HUANG

(O/S)

You have received the burden you asked for. I'm not a hero, Mr. Troupe. Real heroes act for the greater good. Now you must leave China. As I have.

RON

Okay. I'm out tonight.

HUANG

(O/S)

Good. Destroy the phone.

RON

Wait, how can I get into contact with you?

The calls ends.

RON (cont'd)

Hello?

He checks the screen.

At his laptop, he places it in airplane mode and plugs in the flash drive.

It's a file with thousands of documents. He opens a random one--

It's all in Chinese, but they are official documents. He scans it with his eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

He runs the sink over the burner phone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

He places the phone in an empty bag of potato chips, rolls up the bag and hides it in the garbage.

He throws his suitcase onto the bed and opens it.

He shuts his laptop and unplugs it.

He flips off the lights before he leaves the room.

EXT. BEIJING CAPITAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

The Tron style lighting compliments the aesthetically futuristic airport. Vehicles dominate the lanes in and out.

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT

Caught in traffic approaching the airport, Ron sits in the backseat of this taxicab with his cellphone in hand. He's writing a TEXT--

To: Perry White

Catching a flight back tonight. Text you when I land.

He stares back out the window for a BEAT before he gets a response.

From: Perry White

Leaving early? Okay. Expect your text.

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Ron pulls his suitcase along the marble floors toward the CHECK IN LINE.

He approaches the airport SECURITY OFFICER--

He hands him his passport.

Ron's face is perspiring.

The officer examines the passport and then glances up at Ron.

He hands it back and Ron continues through.

INT. AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

Ron watches his carry-on feed through the X-ray machine.

SECURITY OFFICER
(in Chinese)
Come!

Ron looks up to see the officer waving him over to the metal detector.

Ron passes through, setting off the alarm.

He holds out his arms as he is given the wand treatment. Nothing he isn't use to.

He glances over at the technician scanning the X-ray machine.

The technician observes the contents of Ron's carry-on as he is further scrutinized.

INT. AIRPORT BAR - NIGHT

Ron takes a seat at the bar, scanning the presented bottles across the back wall as the Chinese bartender drops a napkin before him.

BARTENDER
Hello, sir.

RON
Do you have... Hennesy?

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.

LANA
Lana Liang, Daily Planet.

He nods and ushers her to the second row from the stage.

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) sits in the middle. She has similar qualities to a komodo dragon. She retains an inner desire for solitary in the shade, but dominates in her environment due to her aggressive, carnivorous appetite.

LENA
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
First, we would like to thank you for
bearing with us through the 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. 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. If all goes according to schedule, that will be broadcast sometime around the 25th. We want the whole world to see how plentiful these resources actually are.

Lana receives a text message:

From: Ron Troupe

Back in town. Can we meet? Got something BIG I think.

She responds:

To: Ron Troupe

When and where?

SEND.

LENA (cont'd)

We hope to inspire space agencies like Roscosmos, NASA, Planetary Resources and the Japanese Exploration Agency, etcetera, to... catch up with LexCorp's lead.

Lena is so smug. She stares over the press for a BEAT.

LENA (cont'd)
This is the future.

Behind her, Major General Peterson's photograph is displayed on the screen.

So that's all that I will say about that. We're taking questions.

Lana's hand shoots up with the rest of the press. The camera flashes are constant.

PRESS
Doctor!

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

There's a knock on the door. Ron steps up and opens it.

Lana stands there with a smile on her face.

LANA
Hey.

RON
Hey, thanks for coming.

She steps and gives him a quick hug.

LANA
Of course. How was Beijing?

RON
Well, that's why I wanted to see you.
Come in.

He takes her jacket from her.

LANA
When did you get back?

RON
Uh, last night. Do you want some coffee?

He pours himself a cup.

LANA
No, I'm fine.

RON

Yeah, it was like a nineteen hour flight on Air China. Ugh.

LANA

Ugh. The worst. So can you tell me why we're meeting at your apartment?

RON

I told Perry I needed to work from home today.

(quick beat)

So a couple of known hackers recently contacted me. After a series of... interesting events, one of them finally met me in China and gave me this flash drive.

He leads her over to the laptop.

RON (cont'd)

There's thousands of documents here. They're all official. My Chinese is just not rich enough.

Lana scans the document.

LANA

Definitely official -- the Ministry of State Security.

(reading)

Um, this one is just... typical correspondence, it seems. It's an email discussing the finances of some project. Um... the cost of hiring linguists, the issue of an unknown time frame for funding.

RON

Linguists. I could not translate that if I tried. What about linguists?

LANA

I don't see anything specific, here.

(short beat)

Ron, there are thousands of documents, here. I think you need to contact the ICIJ.

RON

Not yet. This is mine. I'm keeping this in-house for now.

(MORE)

RON (cont'd)

There's something big here and it was given to me for a reason. The Consortium of Investigative Journalists can have it when I'm through with my own investigation.

LANA

So the source gave it to you in China?

RON

He's a national. He was frightened. I'm not even fully sure of the details surrounding him and the other guy who contacted me.

LANA

Well, it must have something to do with China's new uranium enrichment efforts.

RON

I would assume so. But it's not exactly like the Chinese government hasn't been forthcoming about its project and plans. They knew they were breaking international law and have been shockingly transparent about it. A little too transparent.

LANA

Well, only one way to figure this all out.

Lana takes a seat and Ron pulls one up beside her.

EXT. LEXCORP - DAY

ESTABLISHING on the LEXCORP BUILDING in the Metropolis skyline. It's a skyscraper of reflective black glass.

INT. GROUND CONTROL - DAY

Heads fill the rows of controls before the thirty-foot screen built into the wall of the CONTROL ROOM.

LENA

The Mission Engineer's heart rate is elevated.

Lena stands at the center watching the screen with an ear-piece and microphone on.

ON THE SCREEN

are several windows providing live footage of different areas inside the ship and inside every manned suit.

HIDEYO
(O/S; over speaker)
I just had a wind of nausea.

INT. HIDEYO'S SUIT - TIME RELATIVE

He breathes heavily as he stares out through the helmet shield -- the surface of the asteroid just outside.

EXT. SURFACE OF 1943 ANTEROS - TIME RELATIVE

Several crew members move slowly across the rocky surface of the asteroid in their sleek, advanced space suits.

KADAMBINI
(thru suit mic)
The crystals are enormous.

CURTIS
(thru suit mic)
Cobalt, diamond... it's
extraordinary.

Various colors shine across the vast, rocky terrain.

Dr. Deirdre Corman holds the space camera. It FLASHES.

DIERDRE
(thru suit mic)
It's gorgeous.

Dr. Curtis hops lightly in his steps.

CURTIS
(thru suit mic)
The gravity feels much different here
than on the moon.

INT. GROUND CONTROL - DAY

Lena peers over the shoulder of one ground control technician who is monitoring Hideyo Ishii's vitals.

LENA
 Alright, he's gotta go back.
 (to Hideyo)
 Return to the Contessa, Mission
 Engineer.

INT. HIDEYO'S SUIT - TIME RELATIVE

Suddenly he pukes, covering the lens of his helmet and effectively blinding him.

INT. GROUND CONTROL - DAY

Everyone reacts with slight wincing as their view is obstructed by vomit.

LENA
 Mission Engineer, stop and wait for
 assistance. All crew abort Surface
 Quest Mission and assist the Mission
 Engineer back to The Contessa.

KADAMBINI
 (O/S; thru mic)
 Affirmative, Ground Control.

DIERDRE
 (O/S; thru mic)
 Affirmative.

Lena is frustrated. Another delay. This was to be expected, though. She lets it go with a few deep breathes.

A man approaches her with a cellphone and says something inaudible before handing it to her.

Lena removes the headset and puts the phone to her ear.

LENA
 Yes?

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

ESTABLISHING on the DAILY PLANET where the logo design hangs over the doorways to the lobby.

At the top of the building is the landmark slow turning copper planet with the Daily Planet ribbon surrounding it.

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

Lois sits in the chair across from Perry's desk in the Chief's corner office. The room is tense, already.

He's reading her story. The title, "STACEY ROGEN PROMISED US-CHINA ALLIANCE AGAINST SUPERMAN DURING CAMPAIGN."

PERRY

It's great. Every dripping word.

LOIS

And when they deny that the President knew any of this, we'll drop the follow-up. Rogen will resign in the coming days. Crawford will be gone before the hundred day mark.

PERRY

And there goes universal healthcare legislation.

There's a beat of silence.

LOIS

Corruption hurts everybody.

PERRY

Did you confirm when you're testifying before Congress?

LOIS

Tuesday.

He nods and it grows silently awkward between them again.

PERRY

We're gonna hold off on publishing until after the hearing.

LOIS

What? Why?

PERRY

Franklin and I have agreed that it's best to wait until after you have testified.

LOIS

Your reasoning being?

There's a beat of silence.

PERRY

I know you feel slighted Lois and I can assure that it is not intentional and it's not personal--

LOIS

Bullshit, Perry.

PERRY

Tell me that you can give your word to me that you will not tell a single lie before Congress.

C/U on a framed newspaper front page of the Daily Planet, hanging on the wall. The consuming headline reads:

"TURNING POINT: SUPERMAN REMOVES LAST NUCLEAR ARMS FROM EARTH"

"International Law Prohibits Any Development Of WMDs Ever"

September 13th, 2002

PERRY (cont'd)

(O/S)

Give me your word that you will have no reason to--

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

At Rae's cubicle, once again, she can hear the entire conversation over her cellphone.

PERRY

(O/S; over phone)

No matter what questions are thrown at you.

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind the frame is a WIRED listening device--

Lois says nothing. She can't respond.

PERRY

You've become a real liability for the Planet, Lois. The stakes are too high with this story, right now. You're too connected to it and your credibility is paramount to the publication.

LOIS
You're gonna ask me to take a
sabbatical, aren't you?

Another BEAT of silence ensues--

PERRY
We think it's best, for now.

LOIS
And then my resignation later.

PERRY
Now Lois--

LOIS
Twenty-six years, Perry. Long before
you sat at that side of the desk. I
interned here--

PERRY
I told you already -- this isn't
personal, Lois. We're grateful for
your years--

LOIS
Give me a break. This isn't personal?
I've devoted my life to the Daily
Planet! This paper was crumbling
before "I Spent the Night With
Superman." And you don't even have
the balls to stand by me. Franklin
couldn't even show up to face me
himself. You're both cowards and it
disgusts me to watch this paper
compromise all integrity after George
Taylor pulled it out of bankruptcy.

Perry says nothing. He is not impressed.

PERRY
I wish you luck with your testimony--

LOIS
(stands)
Go fuck yourself.

She storms out of his office.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Rae looks down at her cellphone and types out a text--

To: Viral

Shit! She's out!

Rae is stressed. She stares down at her cellphone. A text message arrives--

From: Viral

I heard.

White's office wasn't enough. We need access to her cellphone.

Rae shakes her head.

RAE

(to self)

How the hell am I going to pull that off, now?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Lois enters the empty bathroom, infuriated. Storming in, she loses her footing and catches herself on the counter. She rips off her high heel and angrily throws it at the wall. Followed by the other one.

LOIS

Fuck!

She holds herself up on the counter, letting her hair fall in front of her face as she cries softly.

She quickly composes herself and stands in front of the mirror, wiping her eyes.

She pulls out her cellphone and sends a text message:

To: Clark

You are a fucking asshole.

SEND.

The text joins a long chain of unanswered others, asking where he is, telling him to contact her over and over.

Lois stares at herself in the mirror. She holds the tears in her eyes, refusing to let them fall.

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 above.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. UNITED STATES CAPITOL - DAY

ESTABLISHING on the US Capitol building in Washington D.C.

We hear the O/S bangs of a GAVEL.

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - DAY

Lois stands before a panel of SENATORS, a full house of spectators and press sit behind her while a gang of photographers endlessly snapping photos.

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lana sits before the television watching as the hearing begins. Ron approaches with a beer in hand.

RON

Alright, so one sip for every time they mention the Daily Planet and two for Superman.

LANA

We're going to finish these beers before they even start asking questions.

RON

So what? We've earned it. Plus, we got a whole six pack.

LANA

And about four thousand more documents to sift through. I haven't had a beer this early since... college.

RON

Wish I could say the same.

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - DAY

Lois raises her right hand.

CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Lane, do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you god?

LOIS

I do.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

The newsroom televisions broadcast the hearing live. Rae is among the few ignoring their work to watch.

CHAIRMAN

This committee meets today to discuss the issue of Superman's disappearance from public view--

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ron and Lana clink glasses and drink.

CHAIRMAN

(on TV)

and his sudden end to communication with the United States and reportedly, the rest of the world.

RON

Two sips!

They drink again.

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - LATER

Lois sits before the committee, well into the hearing.

SENATOR 1

Now, Mrs. Lane, you have been in near constant contact with Superman since your first--uh--your first interview with him back on March 3rd, 1993, correct?

LOIS

Up until about ninety days ago, yes.

SENATOR 1

Now did he give you any indication as to why he would just suddenly disappear from public and cut off all communication?

LOIS

Not directly, no.

SENATOR 1

Thank you, Mrs. Lane. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to yield the remainder of my time to the Vice Chairman.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Thank you, Senator. Mrs. Lane, there have been ongoing rumors about the nature of your relationship with Superman since your very first interview, correct?

LOIS

From what I have heard, Senator, yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN

And now, there has never been any truth to those rumors, has there?

LOIS

I'm a professional, Mr. Senator. And a married woman, as I have testified to a similar question during the impeachment hearings of Lex Luthor.

VICE CHAIRMAN

I recall, ma'am. So now, fifteen years later, I ask again, can you testify, unequivocally, that you and Superman have never shared anything more than a professional relationship before or since your last testimony before Congress?

Lois leans into the microphone and speaks slowly.

LOIS

I have never had anything more than a professional relationship with Superman.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Thank you. Now, you said just a few moments ago, that Superman gave you no direct indication of his possible intention of disappearing from public view. Can you clarify that, please?

LOIS

I can only testify that Superman has been very troubled about declining relations with the United States, among other issues he has been facing, worldwide.

CHAIRMAN

Excuse me, Mr. Vice Chairman, I would just like to point out that our newly elected president has made very clear that she fully intends on changing the coarse of our nation's relations with Superman.

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

Perry is watching the hearing on his laptop, at his desk.

CHAIRMAN

(on laptop screen)

So, if Mr. Superman is watching this public hearing, we invite him to testify before this committee or Foreign Relations, which I am also apart of, and explain why he has gone missing in action.

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lois refrains from reacting to the Democratic Chairman, though she would love to roll her eyes.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Lane, are you aware of this morning's article in The New York Times claiming that you have been suspended from The Daily Planet due to your unprofessional relationship with Superman?

Lois takes a beat to answer--

LOIS
I did not see the article, no. But I
was contacted for a comment.

VICE CHAIRMAN
The article says you didn't give one.

LOIS
That's correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN
Is there any truth to this story?

LOIS
The story is completely inaccurate. I
was not suspended from The Daily
Planet, I've taken a sabbatical.

VICE CHAIRMAN
May I ask why?

LOIS
For personal reasons.

VICE CHAIRMAN
My time is almost up, so I just have
one last question: Mrs. Lane, did
your husband, Clark Kent accompany
you here today?

Lois delays to answer once again, holding in her fury--

LOIS
No.

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

C/U on Lana as she watches.

VICE CHAIRMAN
(O/S; on TV)
My time is up. Thank you.

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

ON THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN
The chair will now recognize--

LOIS
Excuse me, Mr. Chairman--

CHAIRMAN
Yes, Mrs. Lane?

LOIS
I would just like to comment on something you mentioned earlier about President Crawford's intentions toward relations with Superman.

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

Perry sits up--

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

The whole room is paused, but the CLICKING of the cameras.

CHAIRMAN
Yes?

LOIS
President Crawford ran her campaign on the promise of restoring relations with Superman. Even going as far as to claim that she would recognize him as an American citizen again, explaining that this was a matter of national security. Her stance was quite the contrast to her Republican opponent, Sylvester Stallone, whom she criticized for, what she claimed, threatening American lives with his hard stances against Superman's potentially authoritarian threat to the planet.

All of the senators of the panel stare on inquisitively.

LOIS (cont'd)
I can testify here, today, that -- as a journalist for The Daily Planet -- I have obtained proof that the Crawford campaign's actions behind the scenes contradicted President Crawford campaign promises to a potentially treasonous magnitude.

The room erupts.

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

Perry looks as though he has just witnessed a murder--

PERRY
What the hell is she doing!

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Chairman slams the gavel, repeatedly--

CHAIRMAN
Quiet! Quiet, please!

The room settles and Lois continues--

LOIS
The Crawford campaign, namely, the
campaign chairman and now Senior
Adviser--

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

They watch in complete stillness.

RON
Holy shit.

CHAIRMAN
(on TV)
Mrs. Lane, Mrs. Lane, this is quite
an inappropriate--

INT. SENATE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

He attempts to interrupt her, but Lois is not having it--

LOIS
Stacy Rogen secretly made promises of
aligning with China's anti-Superman
stance despite the public campaign
rhetoric. This is, of course, after
China has made several indirect
threats to any nation that allied
with Superman. And following the
sanctions the previous administration
imposed upon China for breaking
international law with their new
uranium enrichment program.

CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Lane, please. You may speak further, but there is an order to this process--

CHATTER fills the room once again.

INT. CNN NEWS STUDIO - DAY

M/C/U of journalist ANDERSON COOPER(cameo).

ANDERSON COOPER

We have breaking news this hour as the Daily Planet publishes its groundbreaking story on Constance Crawford Campaign lies about the now president's stance on Superman, exposed in unmasked communication records between Crawford campaign officials and Chinese diplomats. This comes after Superman Correspondent, Lois Lane's shocking testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee earlier today.

The news ticker at the bottom reads: BREAKING NEWS

DaPla: CRAWFORD CAMPAIGN LIED ABOUT SUPERMAN--

EXT. LUTHOR TOWER - DAY

A 1929 Rolls Royce Phantom II pulls up in front of this exquisite glass skyscraper.

INT. LUTHOR PENTHOUSE - DAY

Lena exits the elevator into a luxurious penthouse where THE BUTLER greets her. She doesn't acknowledge him at all, immediately removing her mink coat and passing it to him.

THE BUTLER

May I get you anything, Dr. Luthor?

She doesn't answer and THE DOCTOR appears--

DOCTOR

Dr. Luthor, how do you do?

She sends a message on her cellphone.

LENA
 Busy. Shall we?

DOCTOR
 Yes, of course. Come.

The doctor leads her through the extravagant penthouse.

LENA
 Has my brother or sister been here?
 Have you contacted them?

DOCTOR
 We could not get into contact with
 your sister and your brother said he
 could not make it at this time.

LENA
 Did he say why?

DOCTOR
 No, ma'am.

They stop before a large, golden frame of a Vincent
 Camuccini painting -- *Death of Ceasar* (1798).

LENA
 He's in his room?

She proceeds, but the doctor stops her--

DOCTOR
 Uh, I must warn you, Dr. Luthor, your
 father does not look like himself.
 He's lost all of his hair and he
 cannot speak very well. Please try to
 remain calm--

LENA
 I'm not here to shed tears, Doctor.
 Excuse me.

Lena passes him and knocks on the door.

INT. LEX LUTHOR'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is bright and vibrant, big windows and lots of
 natural light shooting in.

LENA
 Daddy, it's Lena. Can I come in?

She enters to see her father -- LEX LUTHER(78) lying in a hospital bed, attached to various tubes and wires. A NURSE at her father's bedside is checking his vitals. Lex is at the end of his life, now. His legacy still dominates the world, now in the hands of his prodigy.

LENA (cont'd)
What are you doing?

NURSE
Oh, I was just checking his vitals.

LENA
No, I mean the blinds--

Lena rushes over to the windows and drops the blinds, shrouding them into a dark cave of a room.

LENA (cont'd)
My father hates the sun.

She turns to him--

Lex stares over at her.

LENA (cont'd)
He always has.

NURSE
I'll remember that, Ms.--

LENA
Doctor. Dr. Luthor. Thank you. I'll call for you if you're needed.

The nurse nods and quickly leaves.

Lena moves across the room to her father's bedside, sitting on the bed and switching on the lamp on the side table.

Lex already looks dead -- BALD, frail, colorless and bony. He wears an oxygen mask at all times.

LENA (cont'd)
I'm here, Daddy. I'm sorry I couldn't come right away. But I'm here now. Just me. Alex and Natalia couldn't be bothered, of course.

Lex doesn't respond. He just stares, menacingly.

Lena looks a bit uncomfortable, though determined to hide it -- she cannot lose control of this situation.

LENA (cont'd)
I know it's been quite a while, but
I'm sure they've been taking good
care of you.

Lex groans, slightly.

LENA (cont'd)
Are you in pain, Daddy?

She shoots up and speeds to the door, where she stands,
speaking out into the hallway--

LENA (cont'd)
Excuse me, is my father's pain being
properly managed?

DOCTOR
Why, yes. Of course.

The doctor rushes in behind Lena as they approach Lex's
bedside.

LENA
He's moaning and groaning -- he's in
pain!

The doctor listens--

DOCTOR
I don't hear anything. Mr. Luthor,
are you in pain?

The doctor pulls off the oxygen mask.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
Let's take this off for a while. Mr.
Luthor, are you feeling any pain?

LEX
No.

Lex's voice is weak, low and incredibly raspy.

DOCTOR
He said no.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
Is there anything I can get you, Mr.
Luthor?

Everyone must wait patiently for Lex to form words.

LEX
(mutters)
A time machine.

LENA
What did he say?

DOCTOR
He said, "a time machine."

Lena's eyes interlock with her father's.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
Here, sit close, Dr. Luthor.

Lena sits beside her father.

LENA
Is that your way of apologizing?

The doctor and nurse exit as Lex clears his throat.

LENA (cont'd)
Here.

Lena holds the straw in a cup of water up to Lex's mouth, allowing him to take a sip.

LEX
Don't disrespect me.

Lena rolls her eyes.

LEX (cont'd)
A Luthor never apologizes.

Lena snickers, but restrains herself, quickly.

LENA
"Only to their daughters," is how I remember the rest of that saying going. But come to think of it, most of your rules for being a Luthor could be followed up with something like that. "A Luthor never jokes... only with their daughters." I think you've said that one before. Or how about, "a Luthor never lies?"

She gives him the "eh?" look.

LENA (cont'd)
Or wait, what am I thinking? The most obvious: "a Luthor never steals."
Only *from* his daughter. Right, Daddy?

Lex stares on with as much of a smug expression as he can muster so close to his time.

LENA (cont'd)
But the past is for moving on. Which I have.

LEX
You got your revenge.

LENA
You're right. You always were.

Lena glances down and smiles evilly.

LENA (cont'd)
Except about Superman.

Lex groans again, loudly.

Lena laughs, sadistically.

LENA (cont'd)
I bet you could use some more of that morphine now, huh, Daddy?

Lex's agonizing expression transforms into a satisfied smirk.

LENA (cont'd)
Look at you. Not a single regret. Dying proud. Aren't you?

LEX
Very.

LENA
Well, I guess you have every right to be. I always took your every word over gold. Now look at me. I run a multi-trillion dollar company. I'm the richest person alive, providing the world with life-saving, groundbreaking technologies. They write books about me. A real Luthor.

She shrugs with a "it is what it is," expression.

LENA (cont'd)
 And I only apologize to my daughter.
 Remember my Lori, Daddy? Lori -- you
 met her two or three times, at least.

Lex mumbles something, inaudible.

LENA (cont'd)
 What was that, Daddy?

LEX
 Pictures?

Lena pauses, nervously and then pulls out her cellphone.

LENA
 Ya know, I had one in here--

Lex puts his hand on Lena's. She stops.

She let's his hand rest there for a BEAT before it gets too
 intense and she pulls away.

LENA (cont'd)
 Ya know, I guess I should--

Lena stands.

LENA (cont'd)
 I don't want to intrude on you--

LEX
 Wait--

She pauses and stares down at what's left of the most
 powerful man, er... human on Earth. Empathy infects her.

She sits, reluctantly. She leans in--

LENA
 Yes?

His wrinkled, spotty and bony hand touches hers, once again.
 She doesn't pull away, but her heart instantly races.

LEX
 A Luthor never dies.

A tear begins to escape from Lena's eye--

LENA
 I guess you're not a Luthor then,
 Daddy.

She wipes it and abruptly stands, walking over to the door.

LENA (cont'd)
Do Luthors go to hell, Daddy?

Lex just stares.

LENA (cont'd)
I'll be seeing you, then.

She nods and leaves.

EXT. NEAR-EARTH SPACE - TIME RELATIVE

E/L/S of 1943 Anteros as it continues on its course.

EXT. SURFACE OF 1943 ANTEROS - TIME RELATIVE

ESTABLISHING on The Contessa sitting idly on the surface.

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

Hideyo continues working on The Marshall as the group crowds around, holding themselves in a gathering.

CURTIS
In less than twenty-four hours we
will begin the first dig of what will
be many lucrative digs--

KADAMBINI
Woo!

CURTIS
Thank you, Kada. Don't all clap at
once.

Everyone laughs as their feet hover in the zero-gravity air.

CURTIS (cont'd)
Now we have six months worth of fuel,
food and oxygen aboard, but Lena and
the rest of Ground Control will
abandon us up here if we have one
more delay.

PETERSON
Did the Mission Engineer Specialist
catch that?

HIDEYO

Loud and clear.

Laughter resumes.

CURTIS

Alright, alright. So we're all gonna be on TV so let's get our beauty rest and try not to make fools out ourselves on Earth, alright? We need all hands on deck. Okay?

ALL

Yeah. Yeah, okay.

CURTIS

Alright. I'm gonna get my old black ass to bed, so I'll see y'all later.

Everyone disperses, while Hideyo remains working.

INT. THE CONTESSA - TIME RELATIVE

Kadambini floats into a private area on the ship where a touch screen is built in.

A button on the SCREEN reads: INITIATE VIDEO DIARY. She presses it.

The recording begins--

KADAMBINI

Dr. Kadambini Kishore aboard The Contessa Mining Vessel. The date is April 27th, 2017... on Earth.

(quick beat)

I know now that I don't regret the sacrifices I had to make to be here. At this point, I am one of only five people to step foot on an asteroid. The collective hour that I've spent on the surface of 1943 Anteros was... worth more than my seven years of marriage... and all else.

She admits this with reluctance and sadness.

INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

The floor is quiet, but still rather busy.

At her cubicle, Rae sits on her laptop:

She is on TWITTER where she finds the top trending hashtags to be

1. LoisLaneBoss
2. ImpeachCrawford
3. nakedsuperman

She clicks #nakedsuperman and finds a video posted in a random tweet. She hits play--

THE VIDEO is ten seconds and captured from a cruise ship showing Superman flying naked in the sky over the ocean--

She replays it.

And again.

And again.

RAE

I'm gonna find out who you are if it's the last thing I ever do.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Lois overlooks the city skyline in her nightgown, with a glass of wine in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

LOIS

I was hoping that if I stood up here long enough, you'd come back.

Clark stands behind her (now dressed).

LOIS (cont'd)

I'm glad you didn't disappoint... this time.

She never turns to him. No, instead, he comes and stands beside her, overlooking the city.

LOIS (cont'd)

Almost two weeks. Did you have fun?

CLARK

Must have. I woke up on the beach in Bermuda.

LOIS
Without clothes from what I gather.

They glance at each other and then both start laughing.

He grabs the cigarette from her.

CLARK
I thought you were done with these?

He smokes it.

LOIS
Bought a pack today. First time in
six years.

He takes one last drag and then puts it out.

LOIS (cont'd)
When is he coming back, Clark?

Clark won't look at her.

LOIS (cont'd)
Is he coming back?

CLARK
Would it matter to you if he didn't?

LOIS
I'd miss him. I do miss him.

CLARK
Did you miss me?

LOIS
(shakes head)
No.

CLARK
Oh Lois... why do we even do this
anymore?

LOIS
We don't.

Clark just nods slightly as it goes silent between them for
a BEAT. The sounds of the city traffic fills the void.

LOIS (cont'd)
He has to come back, Clark. He has to
come back.

She sips her wine and walks back toward the roof entrance.
Clark keeps his back to her.

LOIS (cont'd)

(pauses)

If he doesn't... well, then he'll
have validated all of his enemies and
their vilification of him.

(quick beat)

Lex Luthor, especially.

She turns to walk inside.

CLARK

It's not happening, Lois.

(quick beat)

He's never coming back. The planet is
better off without him.

LOIS

The planet? Or Clark?

Lois sips her wine and continues inside.

Clark is left standing there.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his syringe.

He walks on over and takes a seat on the steps he sat on
more than a week ago and begins preparing the dope.

The Metropolis skyline glows with an aura of gold fading
into the moonlight-blue sky.

END ACT THREE

TAGINT. LUTHOR PENTHOUSE HALL - NIGHT

The doctor walks down the long hall toward the double doors to Lex's bedroom where the Secret Service agent guards.

INT. LEX LUTHOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The doctor enters the room and approaches Lex's bed.

Once again, Lex wears his oxygen mask, taking deep, loud breathes, looking like death is just teasing him at the moment.

The doctor stares down at him with a sigh.

DOCTOR

Are you ready, Mr. Luthor?

Lex blinks, barely able to react at this point. He looks even worse than earlier.

The doctor removes a syringe from his medicine bag. It's filled with a pink, almost smoke-like liquid. He removes the cap.

The doctor injects Lex's IV. The line quickly turns pink, streaming down into his hand.

Lex takes a deep breath and moans, pitifully.

His heart monitor begins beeping rapidly before it
FLATLINES--

ALARMS BLARE.

The doctor allows the machine to go off beside him, staring down at Lex's limp, colorless body.

END