

**SUPERMAN**

**AND THE**

**MOB MEN**

*A new saga inspired by  
"The Adventures of Superman"*

**Bruce Kanin**

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# ***SUPERMAN AND THE MOB MEN***

**Bruce Kanin**

***A THREE-EPIISODE SAGA  
(EPISODE 2)***

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## **EPISODE 2 “THE SECRET OF KRYPTONITE”**

60 min (normal-length episode)

### **PROLOGUE**

(The Prologue takes place immediately before the Epilogue of the “The Ghosts That Haunted Superman”)

### **SOMEWHERE NEAR METROPOLIS**



**WALTER CANBY WAS A MODEL CITIZEN** from Day One at Hackenbosch Prison. After all, in Metropolis, he had posed as one on the *Citizen’s Committee for Clean Government*. Though he would, from time to time during conversations with fellow prisoners, maintain his innocence and subtly blame others for his imprisonment, Canby focused on being overly cooperative with the guards and other officials at the jail.

One particularly important activity that Canby’s decent conduct enabled him to do was to visit the grave of his sister, Connie. She and “Ace” Chiles were buried in Potters Field on an island in the Metropolis Sound. Potters Field was a city-maintained cemetery where criminals and the destitute were put to rest. On a hot summer day, Canby, along with two other prisoners, boarded a prison bus to visit their departed loved ones. Along the way, the bus made a planned stop at a roadside flower stand. Each prisoner was allowed to obtain a bouquet. One of the prison guards paid the woman running the stand and they were again on their way. The bus ride was sweltering, and it’s a wonder that the flowers didn’t wilt by the time they reached their next stop, a marina on the Sound.

From there, a police boat ferried them to tiny, barren Hart Island, which contained Potters Field. Two policemen stayed behind with the boat while another accompanied the men to their respective graves, which were all near each other. All

of the policemen were armed with pistols. However, the prisoners' good behavior, along with an air of good will that carried over from the bus and boat rides made the pistols seem like decorations more than anything else.



Canby came to his sister's grave. It was unmarked except for a number "671" carved in a simple rectangular gravestone. He knew that Connie was buried underneath and knelt, putting the flowers, still wrapped in their thin paper, beside the gravestone. Thinking of his sister and her demise, an intense pent-up anger filled the former attorney and mob chief. Looking back towards the prison guard, Canby was reminded of his own demise – the disgrace at being captured, tried, convicted and imprisoned after being such a prominent citizen of Metropolis with a lucrative law firm. All of this made Canby think of the single cause for his sister's death, as well as his humiliation and imprisonment: **SUPERMAN**.

Almost on cue, dark storm clouds appeared overhead, coming across the Sound from the direction of the city, and like an advance guard, a cool, dusty wind kicked up. It shook Canby out of his funk and he looked towards the Metropolis Sound, on the opposite side of the island from where the police boat had docked. There, on the shore, was the signal he'd been waiting for.



Canby crouched beside Connie's gravestone and retrieved the bouquet of flowers. With the same hand, he picked up a small uniformly grey rock that had the texture of plastic, not stone, and placed it inside his fist. He then slowly walked a few yards back to the police guard waiting for him and the other prisoners. The guard asked Canby if he was going to leave the flowers by the headstone; Walter replied with a hint of embarrassment, "How silly of me. Of course."

As Canby was dressed in a suit (the prison allowed him to retain this for Sunday services), he had a handkerchief in the breast pocket. He was genuinely upset, thinking of Connie and her death, and his eyes welled up. In one swift move, Canby took his handkerchief out, and, unseen by the guard, put the grey "stone" in it, crushing it in the bouquet so that its contents would disperse onto the flowers. Canby then made a motion suggesting that he needed two hands to blow his nose in the handkerchief and asked the prison guard to hold the bouquet. When the guard nodded in agreement, Canby pushed the bouquet in his face. While the crime boss covered his nose with the handkerchief, the guard was quickly overcome by a mist coming out of the pretty yellow and white flower arrangement and began to noiselessly collapse to the ground.

While this happened, Canby pulled the guard's pistol from its holster and then without hesitating, began sprinting towards the other side of the island, avoiding scores of gravestones protruding from the ground as rain began to fall. The other prisoners took notice of their fellow prisoner's movement and after momentarily standing there dumbfounded, began to follow chase. Across the way, by the police boat, the two guards finally took notice themselves, with one firing his pistol in the air and shouting, "Stop!" while the other getting a shot off in the direction of the escaping prisoners. It whizzed by them, but a second shot struck one of the prisoners in the back of a shin, and he collapsed.

Both guards were then running hard, but before long Canby had neared his goal: a motorboat beached in the sand. A bald man with two parallel streaks of red hair sat at the rear gripping a handlebar extending from the outboard motor. He had a gun, holstered, but with a hand on it, ready to be used. By now the skies had completely opened up and visibility was getting worse – a perfect situation for Canby while he was still on land, perhaps less so for anyone in the choppy waters. As Canby approached the boat, the man in it jumped out into the shallow water as the two of

them then pushed it off the sand and into the Sound. After they both hopped into the boat, Canby's accomplice pulled the cord on the motor and the outboard rumbled to life. By then one of the cops had caught up with the uninjured prisoner; the other policeman finally made it to the spot where Canby and his companion departed. He began to aim his pistol at the boat bobbing in the whitecaps, but Canby fired the gun he had appropriated in the direction of the officer, causing the police guard to drop to the sand to avoid being hit.

Before long, Canby and his associate were beyond range, their boat bobbing and fighting its way into the stormy Metropolis Sound. With lightning bolts in the distance over the darkened city skyline, Canby shouted to his friend. "Your knockout drops worked like a charm!"



"I knew it would!"

"How is your latest 'creation' coming?"

"Almost ready. Then we'll need a test subject..."

"Leave that to me, Ritchie..."

**ACT 1**

**SOMEWHERE OVER THE UNITED STATES**

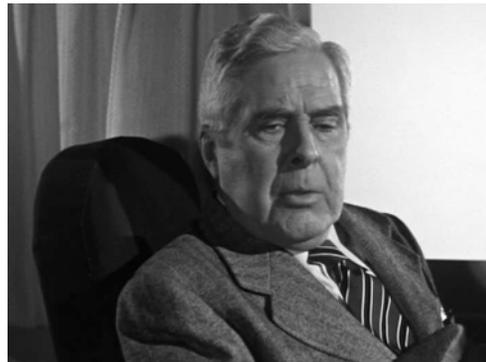


**PERRY WHITE AND CLARK KENT** finally caught the news of Walter Canby's escape during their layover at Seattle's Sea-Tac airport. The *Daily Planet* was published there and it was a front-page headline. Clark thought it strange that Ron Troupe, a staff writer, and not Lois Lane, wrote the article. He mentioned it to his boss, and Perry opened up on the flight from Seattle to Metropolis.

"Well, Kent, I suppose I should tell you that Lois has been digging into our man Canby for quite some time. In fact, she's been working with Henderson. Her own personal crusade, you might say."

"But why Canby? And why didn't any of you say something to me? You know I could have helped with whatever she's doing."

"Look Clark. You've scooped Lois over the years. I remember when you first got the job – you beat every newspaper in town – and then Lois to boot – to get the first exclusive on Superman! However she feels about you personally, when it comes to her profession, Lois can be as intense, focused and dedicated as anyone."



"Well, I know that, Chief. I have great respect for her."

"I just think that it stuck in her craw when you came along, because she thought she was going to be the *Planet's* top reporter."

"Professional competition, eh?"

"Exactly. And only that. Like I said, we both know she thinks the world of you."

"OK, so what's she figured out about Walter Canby? And why did Ron write that article? Seems like based on what you told me, Lois should have."

"I can only guess that Lois is on the trail of something – could be Canby himself, now that he's missing - and Ron was her ghost writer. She's probably not in the office. I

tried calling her when we got off the plane. But as for what she's dug up on Canby, all I can say is – talk to Henderson.”

**SOMEWHERE OVER METROPOLIS**



Canby was dropped off along the shore on the other side of the Sound and made his way to an abandoned airfield a half a mile inland. By that time the storm had abated and was heading out to sea. As the skies cleared, the mob boss saw that his next arranged mode of transportation was waiting for him: a small plane piloted by none other than Sally Lambert. Once news of his escape spread, Canby knew that a manhunt would have police watching roads, trains, airports and more. But they wouldn't necessarily be watching the skies, at least, not easily. He entered the Cessna that Sally had rented under a false name, and then the pair held a clandestine meeting a thousand feet above the outskirts of Metropolis. Lambert explained what had happened in Alaska with Superman in her pursuit of Connie's dying words.

As she looked out the window and as well watched the plane's controls, Sally said, "I'm sorry I didn't come through with the goods."

Canby was unsympathetic. "It's a shame we couldn't obtain Connie's last words. We'd probably know who Superman really is and maybe have gotten proof that he was responsible for her demise." The master criminal paused and then said, with resolve, "That said, I'm all but convinced that Clark Kent is Superman. That film of yours. And Superman showing up when Kent was in Alaska."

Sally said, "I agree – that can't be a coincidence. Plus Kent always being able to contact Superman."

"Did you come up with anything else on him?"

"On Superman?"

“No, on Kent.”

Sally smiled and pulled out a manila envelope from behind her cockpit seat. She unclasped it and took out some papers along with photos, handing it to her passenger. “Get a load of this.”

Canby thumbed through the information. The photo showed a farmhouse and a “FOR SALE” sign. He looked at another picture, this one of an old woman. Then he smiled. “Brilliant. Just brilliant. *This* is our scheme. *This* is our hold over Superman. We’ve got him!” He paused, and then said, “Sally, if we play our cards right, I’ll be leaving Metropolis soon. I need peace and quiet. Something rural, in fact. The small town life will be more suitable from now on.”

Sally tweaked a few dials on the instrument panel and then spoke. “The boys are ready for you, as we talked. Kon and The Professor are with Ritchie King, preparing everything. Kon will join you and the boys, but The Professor has to lay low with all the roadblocks.” Kon was an unknown in the East, but Blaine was still a wanted man, especially in Metropolis.

“Perfect.”

“But boss, what if we’re wrong? What if Kent *isn’t* Superman? If that’s the case, what good is threatening him? We want the edge on *Superman*, not Kent.”

Canby said, “I realize that and that’s why our friend Mr. Ritchie King has been busy. He’s going to help us *prove* beyond a shadow of a doubt that Clark Kent is none other than ... Superman. And once he does that ... then the fun and games begin.”

**ACT 2**

***METROPOLIS, AT THE DAILY PLANET***



**A FEW DAYS LATER** at the Metropolis *Daily Planet*, two men separated by generations and a desk sat in a large office staring at typing on a page.

“Your spelling is good. And your grammar is fine.” The distinguished grey-haired man paused. “I like your comment about the owners resembling their animals. You weren’t specific, so I suppose we won’t be sued.”

Young Jimmy Olsen said, deadpan, as he was a little nervous, “Yes sir. I mean, no sir.”

The man put the typewritten pages down on the desk in front of him and looked squarely at the “cub” reporter. “As a matter of fact, this is a fine article, Mr. Olsen.”

Olsen grinned, ear to ear. “Well, *thank you!* I mean ... sir.”

“The only thing is...” The man looked back at the pages and then at Olsen. “Well, you need to start writing about bigger things than dog shows.”



“Well, golly Mister Taylor sir, I’d sure like to. But the Chief, I mean, Mister White tends to give those stories to, uh, Mister Kent and Miss Lane.” He looked down, a little sheepish.

“I understand that, son. And I recognize that Kent and Lane are two of the best in the business – at least that I’ve ever seen. And that includes all my years at the *Star*.”

George Taylor, former editor at the Metropolis *Daily Star*, was an old friend of Perry White’s. Though retired, Perry called upon him to fill in at the *Daily Planet* during White’s Alaskan trip. Clark Kent would often ‘sub’ for White, but he was with him in Alaska; Lois Lane could fill-in, as well, but she was on assignment. The *Daily Planet* hierarchy offered other substitute editors, but they all happened to be away from the office for various reasons such as vacation, big story projects, conferences and the like. As such, Taylor, certainly no stranger to being an editor, signed on as a ‘temp’. He continued, “Those two reporters are real good, but I’ve a feeling that given the chance, you’d be good, too. And I mean on the *big* stories.”

Jimmy’s grin returned. “You mean that? Chief?”

White’s phone rang and Taylor picked it up, covering the mouthpiece and gesturing for Olsen to leave. “I do mean that, but Jim?”

“Yes, Chief?”

Taylor displayed a warm smile. “Please don’t call me ‘Chief’”.



Olsen raised his eyebrows, nodded and then turned to exit Perry White’s office. He strutted down the hall passing Miss Bacharach, the receptionist, at her desk. A man in a dark grey suit, white shirt and bright yellow tie was talking to her. The old-school Bacharach was curt, no-nonsense and authoritative with her voice. “I’m sorry, but Mister Kent is out of the office on company business. He’s scheduled to return tomorrow morning. If you’d like to leave a message—”

“As a matter of fact—“

Olsen interrupted. “Excuse me, but are you looking for Clark Kent?”

The man turned and looked at Olsen. He reacted as if he was thinking, *who’s this annoying kid?* and turned back to Bacharach.

“I see, Miss...”

The receptionist exhibited a tight-lipped smile, almost as if she was pleased to have someone ask her what are name was. “Bacharach. Miss...” She almost slipped and gave her first name, perhaps charmed by the man. “...Bacharach.”

“That’s fine. Thank you, yes, I *will* leave a message for Mister Kent.”

At that moment, Miss Bacharach’s phone rang. Olsen, on Cloud Nine from his conversation with George Taylor, used the opportune moment and twirled to get in the man’s face. “Excuse me, but I’m *James Olsen*. Clark Kent and I are *senior* reporters. We work closely together and report to chief editor Perry White. Any messages for Clark Kent can be given to me.”

The man stared at Olsen for almost ten seconds and then spoke. “We need to talk privately. Your office?”

Olsen, being a *junior* staff member, had a desk in an open area called the City Room shared by several people. “Why, sure. But my office is being...uh, painted. While Mister K—I mean, Clark—is away, I’ve been using his office.” He pointed down the hall. “Come this way.”

The clearly reluctant man tipped his hat to Miss Bacharach, who was still on the phone. Still, she managed to convey a *Well, I never!* look at Olsen but then focused on her call. As Jimmy opened Kent’s office door for the man, he asked, “I’m sorry, but I never got your name.”



The man walked in and sat down in the guest chair while Olsen moved towards Clark’s desk and chair. “Donald Anderson.” He took out a card and handed it to Olsen, who was sitting now. “Williams Laboratories, Metropolis.”

Olsen simultaneously tried to take the card and shake Anderson’s hand, but the card fell to the floor. Both men tried to pick it up and their heads connected with an “ouch!”

Anderson looked at Olsen like he was an idiot.

“Sorry about that.” Olsen finally picked up the card and stared at it. “Williams Labs. I think I’ve heard of them. Aren’t they the ones working on all sorts of cures for things like the common cold and shingles?”

“That’s our pharmaceuticals branch.”

“Farm a suit—?”

Anderson rolled his eyes and then ignored the red-haired, bow-tied kid. “We have a team of scientists pretty much working round the clock on various endeavors.”

“Golly. I mean. Well, that’s excellent.” Olsen put the card down on Kent’s desk. “So, um, why do you want to see Clark...Kent?”

Anderson leaned over, closer to Olsen, and lowered his voice almost to a whisper. “Williams Laboratories has had a breakthrough in perhaps the most fantastic area yet!”

“Oh yeah? What’s that?”

“A cure for Kryptonite!”

The “cub” reporter moved back in Kent’s seat until the wall would let him go no further. *Kryptonite* – the one substance that could rob Superman of his powers and even kill him – was supposed to be a secret. Perhaps it was an open secret, an expression the Chief sometimes used, but he, Jimmy Olsen, wasn’t going to be the one to acknowledge it.

“Krypto-what?” he asked sheepishly.

“Come on – everyone knows about Kryptonite. It’s a green rock – a meteorite from the planet Krypton where Superman came from. It can harm him. It’s *deadly* to him.”

“Well—“

“Well what? We’ve got the cure. Williams Laboratories has been able to *neutralize* Kryptonite!”

*I’m caught between a rock and a hard place*, thought Jimmy and then he openly chuckled at the thought.

Anderson saw Olsen’s expression was getting annoyed. “You think this is funny? Maybe I should wait for Kent!” He started to get up.

Olsen got up, too, but waved his hands for Anderson to sit down. "OK. OK. I hear ya. If we can get rid of something that can hurt *Superman*, it's a good thing, right?" He gulped down a smile.

"That's right". Anderson sat again.

"Well, all right, but why do you need Mister Kent? Why not go directly to, uh, Superman?"

Anderson suggested the 'Olsen is an idiot' look once again but not as severely as before. "Mister Olsen, Superman isn't easy to find. It's not as if he works in an office or lives in an apartment building." He chuckled, "At least, none that we're aware of."

"Jeepers. I mean, well, of course."

"It's been said that Superman is associated with the *Daily Planet* and that certain individuals, such as, say ... Clark Kent ... have been known to contact him. Need I explain more?"

"Well, no, except Mister Kent isn't here. I'd be happy to leave him the message. But, um, what exactly is the message?"

"Williams Laboratories believes that it has found a cure for Kryptonite, as mentioned. Of course, the only way to test this – to prove it – is on a, well, someone from Krypton. And as we all know, there is only one such person."

"As we all know—"

"If there were others from the planet Krypton – say, a dog, even a cat or monkey – perhaps a super-horse – we could test it with them. Regardless, it would just be a test. There would be no intent to harm them. Or him."

"Well, sure, but what's in it for you? I mean..."

"Williams Laboratories is doing this purely for the betterment of mankind. Eliminating the one thing that can destroy Superman would help the world!"

"It certainly would bring you guys a lot of publicity."

"Well, there would be that, of course."

"So, what's next?"

"We would like to arrange a meeting with Mister Kent. We know how busy Superman is and feel that Mister Kent would be an appropriate, broker, so to speak. A liaison for Superman."

“I see. Well, I’m close to Superman. I could—“

Anderson waved a finger, then looked at his watch, and stood up. “We specifically want Mister Kent. I understand that he’s back tomorrow from his business trip.” Anderson pulled out another card, larger than the business card, from his breast pocket and, wary of Olsen dropping it, placed it on Kent’s desk.

Olsen picked it up. It was a dinner reservation at a restaurant. He read it out loud and verbatim. “Ill Port Oh Fine Oh Aye Aye Aye...”

Anderson rolled his eyes and then spoke the name of the restaurant like a native of Italy. “Il *Portofino* Tre”.

“Oh yeah. I know that place. Fancy Italian. They have an outdoor section open now. Only in the summer. Real nice. I could never afford it on my salary. Says here seven-thirty Friday the twenty-third. This Friday night.”

“Correct.”

“OK. I’ll give this to Mister Kent.”

“Thank you. Please make sure he gets it.” And with that, Anderson disappeared from Clark Kent’s office, but seconds after he left, Olsen noticed that the visitor forgot his fedora on Kent’s desk. The “cub” reporter ran after Anderson and just managed to catch him before the elevator doors closed.

“Hey! You left your hat!”

“Oh, thanks, kid.” Anderson grabbed the hat just as the doors were closing, placing it on top of his shiny head with two parallel streaks of red hair.

Standing in front of the elevator, Jimmy Olsen thought about what had happened. Something about Anderson just didn’t feel right. *A cure for Kryptonite? Sounds fishy.* It would be twenty-four hours before Clark Kent’s return to work. He wanted to “do good” by Clark, if not Perry himself. He had one whole day to make sure that this guy Anderson was for real. The “cub” reporter’s wheels started to turn.

**NEXT DAY IN METROPOLIS, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

“Yes, your boss is correct, Kent. I’ve been helping Lois Lane on a project of hers.” Inspector William J. (Bill) Henderson stood looking out his office window at the city of Metropolis he helped to protect. Clark Kent was by his side, gazing out the window, as well.



Kent said. “A project concerning Walter Canby, no doubt.”

“That’s right.”

“Well, why didn’t someone tell me, Bill? As I told Perry White, I could have helped.”

Henderson turned around and sat down at his desk. He looked up at Kent, who was now sitting on the windowsill. “Oh, well, I wanted to. Even Perry White probably wanted to. But Miss Lane, well, she needed to keep it all to herself. ‘Scoop of the century’, as she called it.”

For a moment Clark thought, *not my secret identity – no, that’d be the scoop of the century all right, but Lois would never reveal that if she ever discovered it.*

“Bill, with Canby having escaped, this could be important. Lois could be in trouble.”

“You don’t know that for sure. Why, I spoke to her just a few days ago.”

Clark waved a finger at the Inspector. “Now wait just a minute. You know as well as I do that Canby is a dangerous character.”

“Well, sure I know. He even tried to kill Superman.”

“Yes, believe me, I know *that* all too well. But if she’s trying to track him down, it may backfire on her, in a bad way. That’s why I want you to tell me about Lois’s research.”

“I suppose there’s no point in it remaining confidential anymore. Maybe by now even Lois would’ve shared it with you.” Henderson got up again and turned around to look out his office window, but kept talking. This time Kent sat down.

“You know, that Lois Lane is a pretty sharp cookie.”

“Believe me, Bill, I’m well aware of that.”

“Well, it all started a few years ago.”

“When Superman hauled in Canby?”

“No, actually according to Lois, a little after that. Almost a year, I think. It was when Burt Burnside was caught.”

“You mean, the Tulip Man?”

“That’s right.”

“Superman nailed him for robbing a U.S. Mail truck.” *And he almost exposed my secret identity.*

“It was pretty stupid of him.” Henderson smiled. “Say, I remember him accusing *you* of being Superman.”

Kent adjusted his glasses. “Never mind that. So what about Lois and her research?”

“Well, it occurred to her that Burnside looked a lot like Canby.”

“She wasn’t the only one to notice that. They could’ve been brothers, in fact, although I recall that they weren’t exactly alike. But, well, I guess that people assumed that they had different names, and presumably different backgrounds, so—“

“OK, well, hold that thought. It gets more interesting, Kent.”

“I’m sure it does.”

“About a year or so later there was that incident with Jonas Rockwell.”

“Oh, yes, with that pretty girl, Mara Van Cleaver.”

“Well, your Lois Lane was there during the whole thing.”

“Sure, with Jimmy Olsen. I showed up, as well, eventually.” Kent grinned and again adjusted his glasses.

“As a matter of fact, Rockwell’s parole hearing is coming up in a few days. He’s given us a lot of ammo on a dozen counterfeiting rings. Although I’m still not sure he deserves a reduced sentence.”

“I’m inclined to agree, but go on...”

“Well, after that affair, Lois really dug her heels in.”

"I think I see where you're going. I recall that Rockwell resembled Canby *and* Burnside."

"Believe it or not, there was another – that so-called Mr. Big who kidnapped my Sgt. O'Hara. But that turned out to involve plastic surgery – a long story for another time unrelated to this."

"I'd love to hear that one, but go on."

"Well, Kent, let me cut to the chase. Lois Lane went through reams of hospital records, orphanage accounts and even hooked up with those guys who specialize in chasing down family trees."

"Genealogists?"



"That's right. She pulled a lot of data together. Even enlisted Oscar Quinn, the scientist who created that super-computer."

"*Uncle Oscar?* The inventor of *Mister Kelso*, the computer?" Kent laughed.

"It's not funny. Between Lane and Kelso, they figured it all out."

"Figured all *what* out?"

Kent had walked to the other side of Henderson's desk and sat down, facing his friend.

"They figured out that Walter Canby, Burt Burnside and Jonas Rockwell were born as brothers – *triplets*, if you will. No father around and the mother died during childbirth. Miss Lane said the records are sketchy, but those are the facts she's uncovered."

"That's incredible. I'm surprised that the three of them never realized it themselves. They must have read newspaper accounts of each other that contained photos."

"You'd think so but then again Canby was the only one with a public profile, at least until Superman put him behind bars. As you know, Burnside was in hiding for years and avoided photographs." The policeman chuckled. "Except that one that did him in, of course. And for most of his life, Rockwell was almost as elusive as Howard Hughes. Plus he apparently spent most of his time in California and Nevada."

"I see..."

“Anyway, the orphanages those days kept lousy records, but Lane was able to track down two very old former hostel workers as well as some dusty files in a warehouse.”

Kent was humbled. “You know, I’ve always been so busy and distracted by so many other things, Bill, that it never would have occurred to me to look into the connection between those three.”

“Yes, Lois did quite a job. Deserves a medal for what she’s done. Even got an exclusive interview with Rockwell. Broke the news to him. White told me that even before news of Canby’s escape broke, Lois insisted on tracking *him* down, too. She had some crazy idea about finding him and telling him about his long-lost brothers, thinking he’d grant her an exclusive interview. You know he’s never talked publicly about his life.”

“I think that’s a stretch that *he’d* open up, even with that news, although I can understand her sentiments. Now let’s hope she’s not in deadly danger because of it.”

Henderson’s phone rang, but Kent had learned enough and waved a thank-you to the inspector before leaving.

***METROPOLIS, AT THE DAILY PLANET***

Clark Kent went to his office at the *Planet*. It was there that Jimmy Olsen told him about Donald Anderson. Olsen didn’t share his suspicions or his intentions to figure out if Anderson was legit as he still had more digging to do.

Kent thought hard about the dinner invitation. His priority was figuring out what had happened to Lois, especially with Canby on the loose. He used his super-vision to see if she was in her apartment, but the place was empty. In the end the reporter figured that the dinner was an opportunity, a hoax or a trap. His reporter’s instincts told him to go along with it and in parallel try to figure out Lois’s whereabouts.

He called Anderson and agreed to go.

**ACT 3**

**SOMEWHERE IN METROPOLIS**



**FRIDAY NIGHT CAME**, and with the sunset's glow still painting the western sky of Metropolis, one of its premier upscale restaurants, *Il Portofino Tre*, buzzed with a festive aura. It hummed with patrons at its interior bar and overflowed with people waiting to be seated in the outdoor section.

And as Domenico Modugno's *Volare* filled the air throughout the restaurant via its loudspeaker system, two figures sat at a table in a corner next to an outdoor garden. Donald Anderson had been to the restaurant many times before; in fact, he was thought of as a regular, with his favorite dish being the *Rigatoni Florentia*. Anderson typically preceded this with an appetizer of Toasted Ravioli, a specialty of the St. Louis area that *Il Portofino Tre* had effectively adopted.

Clark Kent, on the other hand, was dining at the restaurant for the first time. The reporter maintained a somewhat bland existence when it came to eating out, preferring occasional take-out and home-cooked meals. In fact, by anyone else's standards, Kent's dining habits might have been considered almost *anorexic*. Though he enjoyed the smell and taste of food, Clark's Kryptonian makeup prevented him from experiencing *hunger*, much less require regular nourishment. As well, Kent's somewhat busy life as a reporter – and a super-hero – minimized opportunities to eat in most restaurants, much less the fancy ones. So it was somewhat of a treat for Clark to sit down in *Il Portofino Tre*. Moreover, it was the subject matter that made dinner intriguing for the *Reporter of Steel*. Jimmy Olsen had described his

conversation with Donald Anderson, but Kent had to hear things for himself from the horse's mouth, so to speak.

*A cure for Kryptonite*, thought Kent. *Seems too good to be true and probably is, but worth a dinner to find out.* A few hours before, using his slightly deeper "Superman voice", the reporter phoned his friend Professor Lucerne in Washington, asking about Williams Labs and Anderson. Lucerne confirmed that both were legit. Moreover, the professor confirmed that Williams Labs was in fact looking at a cure for Kryptonite. Over the phone, Lucerne provided some background.

"You see, Superman, though you look like an Earth man, your physiology is somewhat different. As we had discussed on at least one previous occasion, your molecules are compacted, more so than an ordinary man.

"Now, the radiations given off by this material from your home planet, Krypton, are unique in that they easily pass through an ordinary person's body without harm. But with your *Kryptonian* physique and particularly its dense composition – the radiation is slowed and takes hold, ultimately poisoning you.

"That is really the secret of Kryptonite – why it is *deadly* to you."

Kent responded, "That's very interesting, sir, but then, how could there possibly be a cure?"

The professor responded, "Well, it's not practical to change the way Kryptonite radiation behaves and we certainly can't make your body less dense. That is, in fact, the source of your invulnerability." Clark Kent heard the professor chuckle over the phone. "We here – and I understand at Williams Laboratories as well – are looking at other means, such as a way of *deflecting* the radiation. But so far, we've been unsuccessful. I've not heard that the Williams facility has had a breakthrough but perhaps your friend Clark Kent will learn more, as you've mentioned."

The waiter appeared, causing Kent to be brought back to the here and now. Anderson ordered his usual. The waiter then turned to Kent.

"Oh, I'll have the, uh, Eggplant Parmesan with, uh, spaghetti. Tomato sauce please."

"Any appetizer?" ask the waiter.

"Oh, no..."

Anderson jumped in. "Billy, throw in another order of the toasted ravioli for Mr. Kent."

"Yes, sir. Thank you sir. And to drink?"

Anderson once spoke to the waiter, not giving his dining partner a chance to speak. *"Alabat. Red. Nineteen Twenty."*

Kent interrupted, "Oh, Donald—"

Anderson held a hand up. "Don—"

"I'm not much of a drinker, Don. Really—"

"Nonsense. This is a special occasion. I insist. You'll have at least a sip – to toast, of course." Anderson nodded to the waiter, who abruptly disappeared to the interior of the restaurant.

"Really, Donald – Don. I—I'm not a drinker."

"Please. Kent. Clark. Let's get back to business, if you don't mind. I know that Johnny Olsen—"

*"Jimmy Olsen—"*

"Jimmy Olsen ... I know you think he explained things to you but he didn't strike me as the sharpest knife in the drawer. Let me –"

Kent was annoyed. "Jimmy's a good kid and a very smart one, too."

Anderson smiled and waved a hand. "I was joking. I'll bet he is. Anyway, let me get to the point, regardless." He leaned forward and lowered his voice a notch. "Williams Labs has been conducting experiments for three years. Experiments with the goal of finding a way to neutralize—"

*"Kryptonite. Yes, so I've heard."*

Now Anderson leaned back, his bubble obviously burst. "You sound dubious, Mr. Kent. I can assure you that we have the most recognized credentials in the field—"

"I'm not doubting—"

"Why, we even have the backing of Professor Johannes Lucerne of the National Laboratory in Washington, D.C. Surely you have heard of him."

"Well, I've read about his work", Kent lied. "Don, I have no issue with you or your organization. In fact", Kent picked up a glass of water, "There may be no issues at all. It's just—"

The toasted raviolis came, prompting Anderson to ask the waiter, "The wine?"

“Being retrieved from the cellar as we speak, sir. My apologies for the delay.”

“Of course.”

Each diner took a bite of the ravioli. Anderson asked Kent, “Well?”

“Mmm. Very good! I’ve never had anything like this before.”

“Glad to hear.” With that comment, Kent noticed that Anderson was staring at him differently, almost as if he was analyzing his body language – or something else. Clark shrugged it off as Anderson continued. “Anyway, you were expressing concerns—”

“No, not really. It’s just that, well, we’re talking about a pretty important guy – Superman. And, well, the big question is – how can you prove that it works? In fact, how *does* it work?”

“You mean, the Kryptonite neutralizer?”

“Yes, I mean: Is it a drug you give to Superman to make him immune to it or something you spray on the rock or—” Kent was partly playing it dumb and partly, because he really wanted to know what the deal was.

“It’s neither.”

“Oh?”

“It’s rather complicated, but in a nutshell, it’s something that Superman would wear – attached to his belt, if you will, that would create an energy field around him to neutralize the harmful effects of the Kryptonite radiation.”

“Wow – that was a mouthful.”



“Maybe so, but that’s what our invention is all about.” Anderson continued to stare across the table at Clark, almost with a look of disappointment. At least, that’s what Kent thought he detected, but he still couldn’t figure it out.

Just then, the wine came. The bottle of *Albat Nineteen Twenty* sat on a tray held by the waiter along with two empty wine glasses. All appeared to be in order, but had either man bothered to look up at the waiter they’d have seen that one thing was quite out of place.

The *waiter*.

Then as the first glass was being poured, for Anderson, the man from Williams Labs did in fact look up at the server. Shocked at what he saw, he said, “Where’s Billy?”

Kent, momentarily no longer absorbed in the riveting conversation, looked up, too, and almost fell out of his chair. The waiter, dressed in a tux, with long, thin sideburns and with a handlebar mustache -- was Jimmy Olsen.

Once again Anderson asked, this time in a demanding tone, "Waiter. What happened to Billy, our waiter?"



With a horribly fake Italian accent, Jimmy Olsen replied, "Oh monsieur, I mean, *senor*, Weel-yem was taken ill." He pronounced the word like *eel*. "I ham feeling in." Anderson eyed Olsen suspiciously, watching his every move as he then poured wine for Kent. His eyebrows narrowing, he asked, "Haven't we met somewhere before?"

Olsen, keeping his cool, answered, "Oh, no *senor*. I am just a stub-stee-tute. I have nut work-ed here bifore."

Meanwhile, Clark Kent willed himself to be utterly neutral. Part of him wanted to laugh. Part of him wanted to cry. And part of him wanted to scold the daylights out of the "cub" reporter. He let the faux waiter pour his wine without saying a word.

But as Olsen poured Kent's drink, he dropped a napkin that landed on the floor next to the star reporter. "Excuze", said Olsen, who finished pouring and then bent down to pick up the napkin. Kent sighed, "No problem" and simultaneously bent from his seat down to the floor.

Olsen came back up with the napkin. Kent came back up with a folded piece of paper that Olsen had dropped. The reporter quickly pocketed it. The sequence evaded Anderson's gaze, whose view was blocked by the table, but he remained ever doubtful of the waiter, with his mind closing in on memories only days ago at the *Daily Planet*.

At the moment Anderson finally made the connection between the odd, familiar waiter and his recent trip to the *Daily Planet*, the three men were interrupted by a woman's scream from one of the indoor tables. A couple had been dining quietly by candlelight in a corner when the man collapsed, breathing heavily. Instinctively, Kent got up and rushed over. Simultaneously from another table, a man came over and, after taking the disabled man's pulse, gave him mouth-to-mouth. After a half-minute, he stopped and spoke urgently to the small crowd of waiters and others, including Kent, around him.

"Someone call for an ambulance! I'm a doctor. This man appears to have either had an attack of sorts, or, based on his coloration, appears to be suffering from some

form of poisoning.” He again called out to a few nearby waiters, demanding an ambulance.

The woman that the man was dining with bent over to him, sobbing, while the doctor stood up. Kent pulled him aside and asked the doctor, quietly. “Is there anything you can do?”

The doctor spoke softly. “No. He needs to be rushed to a hospital. But I’m afraid he doesn’t appear to have long.” And then he bent down back to the stricken man.

Kent began to back away from the crowd. When he was far enough, he spun and headed to the kitchen. As he turned, for an instant he took in the sight of Jimmy Olsen, still in the outdoor section and dressed as the fake waiter, having a heated conversation with Donald Anderson. But there was no time to waste. Kent ran through the kitchen, startling chefs, cooks, servers and others, and before long was in an alley way behind the restaurant. In a second his Clark Kent clothes had been compressed and tucked away in the secret cape pouch, and Superman was in the air.

The Man of Steel simply leaped up and over the restaurant, coming down on the other side, landing at the entrance. He ran inside and without a word, lifted the stricken patron in his arms. Superman then quickly stepped back outside the restaurant and to the wonder of everyone there, streaked into the sky.



In less time than it takes an ambulance siren to make a complete rotation, Superman had the ailing man in a hospital stretcher at Metropolis General. Just the sight of the familiar red, blue and yellow-garbed symbol truth and justice was enough to attract a swarm of doctors, nurses and attendants. Superman barked out orders as if he worked there. Before long the patient was in an operating room surrounded by a half-dozen physicians and nurses. The Man of Steel relayed comments from the doctor in the restaurant and within minutes, a preliminary diagnosis was confirmed: the restaurant patron had been poisoned.



It was touch and go. The doctors performed both a stomach pump and a blood transfusion after quickly identifying the man's blood type. Superman stayed only long enough to finally be assured that the man would live and then zoomed back to *Il Portofino Tre*. There, he found the distraught woman who had been dining with the stricken man. She was waiting for the police to take her to the hospital but after quickly learning that they were man and wife, Superman, with the woman's permission of course, flew her to the O/R waiting room at Metropolis General.



By the time of their arrival, her husband was beginning to stir. Superman stood by as the doctors and nurses watched the stricken man open his eyes and whisper a few words. The Man of Steel, relieved and thanked profusely by the wife, strolled away past the nurse's station, looking for a window. It was then that he remembered the slip of paper given to him by Jimmy Olsen.

In a blur, Superman pulled his cape around his front, reached into the secret pouch where his "Clark Kent clothes" were stashed and withdrew from his suit jacket pocket the slip of paper given to him by Jimmy Olsen at the restaurant. It read:



Almost on cue, Superman heard, “*Superman!*”

The Man of Steel spun around and smiled. “Hello Inspector. You got here fast”.

Inspector William J. Henderson of the Metropolis Police had just come from a doctor’s station down a side hallway. “Sheer coincidence. I was meeting with some of the chief admins regarding a cold case, of all things, when someone shouted that you had flown in very sick man, so I came to see what was going on.” Henderson nodded towards the O/R. “I guess you know he’s going to be OK.”

“Yes, but do they know what made him ill?” Superman didn’t normally remain involved once a crisis had been averted, but since he had dined at the restaurant, he was curious to know more.

“Hang on. I know you’re probably in a hurry.” Henderson walked over to a coffee machine in the hallway and put in a dime. A cup plopped down and dark fluid began to fill it. Henderson pressed two other buttons, one for cream and one for sugar, and before long he pulled the hot brew from the machine.

“I just love these new-fangled things”, smiling and pointing at the machine.

The cop took what appeared to be a much-needed gulp of caffeine. “No worse than the coffee at the station house” and then he looked past The Man of Steel. “There’s Doctor Ellis now.” Henderson nodded down the hall. “Let’s see what he knows.” Superman and the Inspector walked a few yards down the hall to the doctor.

Henderson always thought the physician looked a lot like actor Robert Young. He asked Ellis if he knew what made the patient sick.



The doctor replied, “We’d love to know that, too, given his symptoms. It’d be terrible to have an outbreak of whatever that was.”

Henderson responded, “Well, there’ve been no reports of other customers becoming ill.”

Then Superman spoke to the doctor. “Doctor Ellis. Have you run any tests, perhaps on the stomach contents or the man’s blood?”

“Why, we haven’t had time, Superman. In fact, we’re sending a sample of the intestinal matter to the lab right now. But we may not have it back for a couple of hours.” Ellis pointed to a pretty young nurse who was carrying a medical tray with a slide, heading for the elevator.

“I see”. Superman paused. “Oh, Doctor, would you mind if I took a look?”

Ellis called out. "Nurse Miller". He motioned for her to come over to him.

When she got there, Nurse Miller bashfully looked at Superman and offered a meek, "Hello" and then all but gaped at The Man of Steel, who smiled back. The doctor, impatient, said, "Um, Nurse..."

She composed herself and turned to Doctor Ellis. "Oh, yes, Doctor Ellis?"

Then Superman intervened and with a slight smile asked, "Do you mind, Nurse Miller?" He reached a hand out to the tray and she answered, starry-eyed again. "Oh, no, of course not." But then she collected herself again, remembering protocol, and turned to Ellis, "That is, if it's all right with you, Doctor Ellis."

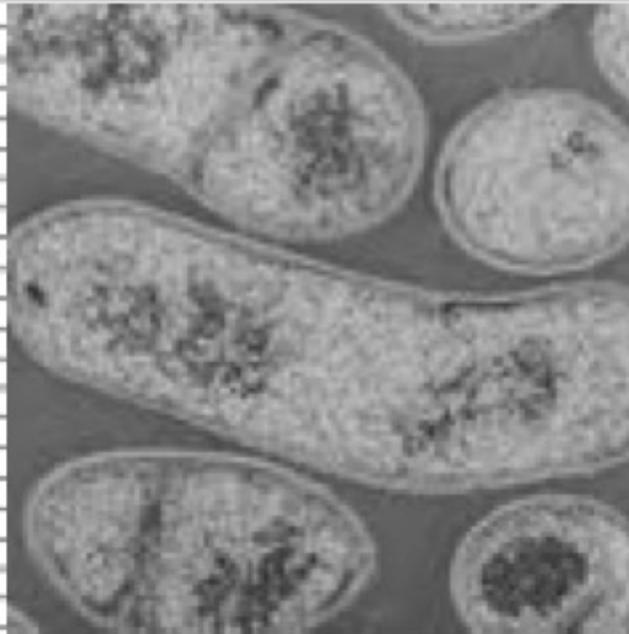
Ellis nodded, and Superman retrieved the glass slide off of the tray. He then walked over to a nurse's station a few feet away. Three nurses, who had been mesmerized by the sight of The Man of Steel, suddenly pretended as if they were going about their business by fussing over things at their large desk.

"Excuse me, Nurse..." Superman looked at the badge on the middle nurse's uniform. "...Biddle". She looked up, as if she had only just noticed Superman, and said, "Oh, yes, well hello Superman. What can I do for you?"

He looked down at the desk and pointed to a large white pad of paper with a pencil sitting on top of it. "May I?" Superman smiled.

She hesitated, mesmerized again, as were the other two nurses. In fact, there were now two more nurses who had gathered near the desk to watch The Hunk of Steel, with more arriving by the minute. Seeing Nurse Biddle's hesitation, Superman leaned over, grabbed the pad and pencil, saying "Thank you" with a smile, before walking away. He put the pencil between his ear and head, holding the pad in one hand and the glass slide with the sample, in the other. (It didn't take his super-senses to allow him to hear Nurse Biddle whisper to one of her colleagues, "See, I told you he puts Rock Hudson to shame.")

Then, approaching Doctor Ellis and Inspector Henderson, The Man of Steel noticed a small, unoccupied examining room and went in, followed by the two men. Superman put the slide down on an examination table and the writing tablet next to it. Then he took the pencil that was held by his ear. It was dull, so he swiftly created a point using super-pressure. The doctor and Henderson grinned at each other. Then Superman looked down at the slide and stared for exactly ten seconds. When he was finished, The Man of Steel picked up the pencil and scribbled at super-speed on the pad. In no more than three seconds, the pad had an incredible drawing on it.



Doctor Ellis looked at it and exclaimed, "*Botulin!*"

Superman looked again at the slide and then at the two men. "That's right. Highly concentrated."

Henderson spoke, looking at Superman. "You mean you were able to see--?"

Superman saved the Inspector the trouble of figuring out what he did. "It's a lesser known ability of mine, Inspector, something Jim Olsen once termed 'microscopic vision'. Allows me to see down to the molecular level. Even atoms and electrons."

"And chemical compounds, apparently" Ellis jumped in. "Astounding. Simply astounding."

Henderson shook his head, saying, "You saw what it looked like, and drew it on that piece of paper." He smiled. "You could get a regular job here."

“And miss the chance to help you and your police force, Inspector? Not on your life.” Superman grinned and then turned to look at both men. “So now we know not only that the man was poisoned, but what he was poisoned *with*.”

Henderson said, “Botulin’s pretty nasty stuff. Plus it’s odorless and colorless, to boot.”

Superman wondered, “And it should be hard to obtain or synthesize. But, doctor, shouldn’t that man be dead?”

Ellis said. “I think I can answer that. One of my staff chatted with his wife just a few minutes ago. They were just at the restaurant for appetizers. She said that they had had a late lunch only a couple of hours before.”

“I see”, Superman said, “So the effect of the poison may have been stymied by the man having something already in his stomach.”

The doctor answered. “Yes, it seems that way. The food lining his stomach may have saved his life. But the poison was still quite harmful.” A nurse poked her head in and called Ellis away. “Excuse me.”

The Inspector turned to Superman. “Well, regardless, if not for you, that man in there might have died in the restaurant.” Henderson’s face suddenly focused on the Man of Steel. “Hey, how did *you* happen to be at *Portofino*? I didn’t think you superhero types ate out all that much.” At the thought, Henderson smiled.

But Superman ignored Henderson’s comment and had a more urgent matter. “Inspector... I wonder if the doctors know *how* the poison was delivered? Like something in his food ... or drink?”

“I don’t know, but let’s ask them.” Both men walked briskly back to the O/R and met someone Henderson knew as Doctor Klein outside, who responded to the question. “Yes, we pumped his stomach and did an analysis.” Klein looked at a chart on a clipboard and then at the two men. “Let’s see. The only partially digested food was the, uh, ravioli.”

Superman asked, “Are you certain?”

The doctor thought, and then said, “He was eating at the Italian place on Swan and Kaye Streets, right?”

Henderson nodded and Doctor Klein said, “I’ve been there a million times. Yeah, this is their specialty: the toasted ravioli. It’s real good.”

Klein was called back into the recovery room, leaving Superman alone with Henderson in the hallway. Superman stood there thinking and after staring down the corridor, said, "That poison was meant for *me!*"

"*You?* Who'd want to poison you, even if they could?" Henderson was almost smiling.

"Oh, I mean ... Clark Kent."

"OK, well, I know those reporters have almost as many enemies as you, but why Kent?"



"I don't know, but I'm going to figure it out." Superman put a hand on the Inspector's right shoulder, saying, "Thanks for your help, Inspector", and then, dodging hospital workers and stretchers, he made his way to a window overlooking the hospital parking lot, leaped through the opening and flew into the warm summer night.

Within moments Superman was back at the "scene of the crime", though dressed as Clark Kent.

He stood at the entrance to the outdoor area of the restaurant and scanned the entire place with his x-ray vision. There was no sign of the so-called Donald Anderson or Jimmy Olsen.

Kent walked around both sections – indoors and outdoors – describing Anderson and asking if anyone had seen him. No one remembered him. But when he asked about a strange-looking waiter with a funny mustache, one worker remembered him. "Yeah, he was pretty odd. I saw him give Billy a bunch of bills...."

*So Jimmy bribed a waiter. Must have cost him a few weeks salary.* Clark almost chuckled at the thought and made a mental note to thank the "cub" reporter later – but first he had to make sure Olsen was all right. Suddenly he heard, "Hey! You no-a pay!"

It was *the maître d.* "You and-a your friend, you-a no pay. He left-a when-a that man got-a sick!"

"But I came back... to... pay. You see, I'm a reporter, and I was phoning the incident into my office."

"Oh. Then you-a no say that-a the restaurant was-a at fault-a, I hope."

“Well, that remains to be seen.” Kent saw several police cars show up, with Inspector Henderson in one. *That was fast. No doubt he’s here to scour the restaurant*, he thought. Then the reporter remembered the note from Olsen and was beginning to bolt but the maître d tried to hold him back.

“I make-a you-a deal. You no mention-a the restaurant and-a I no make-a you pay.”

Kent gave a curt smile and pulled several bills out of his wallet, handing it to the man. “Sorry, no deals.”

**ACT 4**

**SOMEWHERE IN METROPOLIS**

**AND WITH THAT**, Kent avoided Henderson and his men, fearing it would delay him, and jogged off to a street corner with an empty Bell Telephone booth. After a quick change, Superman was once more briefly in the air. It took him seconds to reach 101 Boring Street, a ten-story warehouse on the waterfront that was due for demolition. Superman peered inside, starting with the basement. He didn't see Olsen, but there was Anderson in a medium-size room that appeared to be a laboratory. It contained assorted tables, including one that looked like a hospital's operating table. On it there were dental instruments strewn about. Most importantly, Superman scanned the room for anything that looked like Kryptonite – the only possible danger to him. Within moments his x-ray vision zeroed in on a lead box. It was sitting on a small table in the far end of the room. The white-coated Anderson was nowhere near it, so the Man of Steel put his simple plan into action.



Crashing through the outer wall of the building and then the ceiling of the basement, Superman landed far from the lead box. He peered beyond a countertop with lab instruments and focused his heat vision on the box – though he couldn't see through lead, the powerful heat beams could melt it, which they did. The box was soon safely sealed shut, regardless of its contents being deadly to him or not.

He then approached Anderson, saying sternly, “I understand you were the last person to see Jim Olsen.”

Anderson was leaning against a table, facing Superman as The Man of Steel approached. All he would say was, “Sorry, I've no idea who you're talking about.” Anderson then looked at the damage caused by Superman at the far end of the room and shook his head, but said nothing.

But Superman was in no mood for Anderson's obvious lie. “You were at a restaurant with Clark Kent. Olsen was disguised as a waiter. People saw you two arguing.”

Anderson smiled and shook his head but said nothing as Superman got even closer. He turned to his side as if he was ignoring his visitor. The Man of Steel's tolerance was wearing thin. “Tell me or I'll break every bone in your body!”

Instead of replying, Anderson reached into his pocket and pulled out a rectangular object, like a brick. When he turned to again face Superman, The Man of Steel saw it and realized that it had a telltale, sickening green hue. He tried to step back, away from it, but it was too late – Superman collapsed to the floor.



Anderson spoke. “No, I don’t think you’ll do anything of the sort. In fact, maybe it’ll be just the opposite. Maybe with your last breath I’ll break all *your* bones. Or maybe I’ll just watch you suffer...”

He stood over Superman, who was writhing in pain. “I must admit, I didn’t expect you. But you saved me the trouble of getting Kent to contact you.” He stopped and then said, looking up, “Oh, I get it. Olsen found a way to get a message to you. Wonder how, since I nabbed him in the restaurant. Well, never mind that.” Then Anderson looked at what he was holding. “Oh, you must be wondering where this little thing” he waved the Kryptonite in the air “came from. Simple enough. Lead-lined pocket in my lab coat. I made another one of these pockets for an old friend of yours, but you’ll never see him again.”

Anderson then laughed. “Ah, payback is wonderful, ain’t it?”

Superman barely got out the words. “P-payback?”

The man stuck out his hand. “Name’s Ritchie King.” He quickly withdrew it. “Oh, that’s rude, but I understand. You must really be feeling it now.” Anderson chuckled. “Anyway, you knew a close member of my family a few years back.”

“You’re ... Happy King’s...”

“Happy’.” King shrugged. “How he tolerated that nickname I’ll never know. Yeah, I’m his brother. Now you get it?” Ritchie King crouched over Superman, bringing the Kryptonite even closer. King lowered his voice, almost like he was praying. “He let me know all about that synthetic Kryptonite his scientist pal made. I got hold of the formula. I used to work at Williams Labs. Know all about how to make things like that.”

Superman just groaned. His skin was turning a slight tinge of green.

King abruptly stood up. He was clearly impressed with his handiwork, holding the Kryptonite up to his face. "Wow – this really works." Then he looked back at Superman. "Anyway, after you killed my brother—"

Superman, straining, said, "I didn't—Happy King drove off a cliff—"

King's face became twisted. "*Shut up, liar!*" He wound his arm to hit Superman with the Kryptonite but stopped in mid-air and calmed down. "All I know is, he told me you had an appointment with him and the next thing I know, he's dead, along with Ruffles and the scientist, Meldini."

Superman was breathing hard, trying not to groan out loud. Ritchie King went on. "Anyway, I was supposed to meet him that day, too. My brother was gonna show me your body. Only when I got to his place, it was empty. But I saw Meldini's notebooks." Still gripping the Kryptonite, he held the lapels on his lab coat and proudly said, "I'm a scientist, too, you know. That's how I understood Meldini's formulas. Even improved on them – made this Kryptonite *stronger* than the original. Figured out how to slow the spread of the radiation so it really takes hold in you. I may even get a patent." He laughed maniacally.

All Superman could say was, "No—"

"I don't mind telling you another thing – 'cause you're gonna be dead soon, anyway. I'm good with poisons. Real good. But, man, I'm wondering why that reporter Kent wasn't affected. Shoulda dropped dead after a few bites. Canby was really tight-lipped about the whole thing. Anyway, well, that pest Olsen got in the way, so—"

Superman thought. *Walter Canby. So he's involved!* He struggled to say, "Jim...Olsen... is he..."

"Oh, I have him tucked away upstairs. Tied up. Shielded from your infamous see-through eyes. The cops'll find him. Or maybe no one will." Ritchie King laughed again, but his jollity was interrupted by one of the lab doors bursting open. Superman was barely able to crane his neck to see who it was. The Kryptonite fever was entering a new stage, and things were starting to spin. All he heard was, "Ritchie, the boss warned you not to mess with him."

"I know, and I was just gonna make him suffer, that's all." King waved his hands, still holding the Kryptonite. "Listen fellas, he killed my brother – understand? I'm sure you both would enjoy watching me kill Superman, right?" He shrugged. "Don't worry -- I'm putting it away, see?" Ritchie King held the Kryptonite up and made a move like he was going to put it in his pocket. But the submission in his face suddenly turned twisted and freakish, giving his next move away. As he used his free hand to reach into his other lab coat pocket containing a small gun, a shot rang out. King dropped to the floor, as did the brick of Kryptonite. It fell a few feet from Superman, still close enough to leave him pained, paralyzed and powerless. But he was alert

enough now to watch the scene in front of him. He had a fleeting impression that as strong as King's Kryptonite was, it seemed to quickly diminish when distanced from him.

One of the men, not holding a gun, looked familiar. He couldn't see the other man, armed, who was still by the door. The unarmed man walked over to King and bent over him, avoiding a growing pool of blood. Feeling for the criminal scientist's pulse and satisfied that he was dead, the man went over to the Kryptonite, picking it up. Then he crouched in front of Superman and waving the Kryptonite over him, said, "You think we're saving your life, but the worst is yet to come." He smiled and placed the Kryptonite on a table close to Superman. With that, he and the other man left, leaving the door to the large room open.

Superman strained to get up, but every muscle in his body was on fire. Every time he tried to move, the burning intensified. He made one last valiant effort to even get up on his knees before collapsing.

It seemed like an eternity had passed before he heard a familiar voice say, "Don't try to move!" It was Jimmy Olsen, still clad in his waiter's outfit but having lost the fake mustache. He looked around the laboratory and spotted the Kryptonite. Olsen picked it up, *but where to put it?* He then realized that he had the freedom to go anywhere and ran outside the room, up stairs leading from the warehouse to the street. Once outside, he threw it down a sewer drain. When Olsen returned to the room, Superman was sitting up. The "cub" reporter then reached out a hand to help the Man of Steel to his feet.

"Thanks Jimmy." Superman's voice was nasal, as if he was getting over a head cold. "I've lost track of how many times you've saved *my* life – and from Kryptonite, no less." Superman staggered a little and put a hand on a table.

"Yeah, that's sure a switch, but jeeppers, are you ok, Superman?"

"I think so, though it was touch-and-go for awhile." He shook his head to clear it. "Seems like these characters created a synthetic Kryptonite packing quite a punch – more debilitating than anything I've encountered."

"That's terrible, Superman, but what happened? I mean. I guess this whole thing was a trap, but then some men – they looked like thugs to me – they freed me and told me where to find you. I can't figure that one out."

Superman remembered the last words said by the unarmed man, *the worst is yet to come*, but didn't tell Jimmy that the men wanted him alive for some unknown and probably sinister reason.

Olsen suddenly looked at Superman with a look of grave concern, saying, "Mister Kent!"

Superman, startled, said, "What? Jimmy, are *you* ok?"

"No, I mean. Mr. Kent. At the restaurant." As the "cub" reporter continued, Superman breathed a sigh of relief. "Anderson pulled a gun on me. Took me away. Well, to this place." He nodded and looked around the room to suggest 'the building'. "But I never found out what happened to Mr. Kent. I did some snooping and found out that Anderson was going to poison him. Jeepers, we need to find out—"

Superman put his hands on Olsen's shoulders. "Oh, Jimmy, I happen to know that Clark Kent is perfectly fine ... at least he is, now. I'm positive he'd thank you for your concern."

"Oh, well that's a relief." Olsen shook his head. "I just really don't understand any of this."

"Neither do I, Jim, but I aim to find out. But first you have to tell me what you did with that Kryptonite. I'll need to find a way of disposing it."

## **EPILOGUE**

### **METROPOLIS, AT THE DAILY PLANET**

**NEXT DAY** at the *Daily Planet*, Kent and Olsen chitchatted in the hallway.

"Jimmy, that was a wonderful thing you did saving Superman's life and warning me about the poison."

"Shucks, it was nothing. I'm just glad both you *and* Superman are all right." He grinned.

"Well, I understand that you bribed a waiter with a week's worth of your salary." He reached into his suit breast pocket. "So here's two tickets to the Everly Brothers concert tomorrow night."

Olsen's face lit up. "Golly, thanks." At just that moment, down the hall, the door to Perry White's office opened halfway and the Chief Editor appeared. He was smiling, but both Clark and Jimmy noticed that it was a mock smile the boss had painted on his face when he was furious. "Oh Mister Kent, when you're through with one of your many coffee breaks, if you'd be so kind?"

Obediently, Kent replied, "Yes, sir" and raised his eyebrows at Olsen. Olsen shouted out to White, "Me, too, Chief?"

But White was in a mood and shouted, “Unless you two are Siamese Twins or your name is Kent, no, no – and don’t call me ‘Chief!’”

Olsen wanted no more of the scene and with a faint “Yes, sir”, quickly spun around to head in the opposite direction. As he trotted down the hall, he remembered the concert tickets and, now grinning, wondered if Lucy was in town tomorrow.

Soon Kent and his boss were sitting across from each other at the Chief Editor’s desk. The reporter explained the poisoning incident at the restaurant with the male patron and Jimmy saving Superman from a new form of powerful Kryptonite. He omitted the poisoning attempt on his life.

The reporter was concerned. “Chief, Superman told me he learned that Walter Canby is involved in this whole poisoning incident. I can’t help but think that all these events are connected – Canby’s escape from prison and the trouble in Alaska involving his people, including the sabotaging of our plane. And maybe even the attempt on my life last night.”

“Your life? I thought it was someone else who almost died from poisoning, not you.”

“Oh, well, I have reason to believe that the poison was meant for *me*.”

“You’ll have to explain that one, Kent, but before you do, I suppose I should tell you – I’m getting a bit concerned about Lois. I thought she’d have checked in by now. I’ll bet the fool girl is trying to track down Canby.” Kent thought, *that may be why Perry’s so irritable - or not...*

Kent answered his boss. “Crazy girl! You could be right – and she’ll get into trouble, for sure!”

The pair were interrupted by Jimmy Olsen, who burst open the editor’s door.

“Mister Kent—”

White shouted. “Who said you could just barge in here like that?!”

Olsen replied, “But—”

“I only called for Kent, not you. Remember?” White was still shouting, though less so.

“But Chief, Mister Kent has a call in his office. It’s long-distance. And collect, too.”

White exploded again. “*Collect?* We print *newspapers*, not money!! Olsen, you tell whoever—”

Kent interrupted his boss with a “Hang on, Chief” and then looked squarely at Olsen who was still poking his head in the editor’s door. “Jim, long-distance?” Olsen nodded. Then Clark rose and again faced White, leaning with both hands on the editor’s desk. “Chief, it could be important. It *could* be Lois!”

But Olsen said, “No, she sounded like someone older than Miss Lane. A lot older.”

Kent turned, and without another word, stepped quickly out of the Chief Editor’s office, disappearing with Olsen. All White could muster was a defeated expression, staring at the now empty doorway where his employees had just exited.

He muttered to himself, “Yes of course, just walk in and out as you please like this is a hallway and I’m only the janitor.” But then he stood up and yelled, “Guess you two have forgotten that *I’m* the one who signs your paychecks!” He pounded a fist on his desk, causing the phone receiver to jump and make a ringing noise. White picked it up, and when he heard no one at the other end, he sat, replaced the receiver in its cradle, and, calming himself, saying quietly, again to no one in particular, “Great Caesar’s Ghost.”



Meanwhile, Clark thanked Olsen as he went into his office, alone, to take the phone call.

“Hello. Clark Kent speaking.”

“Oh, Clark. How wonderful to hear your voice.”

“Ma?”

“I’m so sorry to bother you, son. I know how busy your big city newspaper work is. But I just *had* to tell you.”

“Tell me what, Ma? Is everything all right? Are you ok?”

“Oh nothin’ too bad, rheumatism actin’ up, but that’s it. Everything’s fine.”

“Then what is it?”

“Well, Clark, I got me a buyer for the farm.”

The reporter paused. His years growing up at the Kent farmhouse flashed before his eyes at super-speed. Clark loved his regular visits back home and wished that the place would remain a Kent homestead forever. But he knew that it had long since become too much for his mother to handle, despite help from neighbors like Ben Hubbard, and others. Disguising his wistfulness, he replied, "Oh, that's great news, Ma."

"But get this, son. The nice gentleman interested in the farm wants to see *you*."

"Really?" An Arctic chill went up Kent's spine.

"That's right. Can you come down soon? Any chance of today?" She paused. "Come on - I know *you* can." He almost heard her wink over the phone.

"Well, Ma, I'm really very busy."

"Son, it won't take long. Mister Canby is *very* anxious to meet you."



**CLOSING CREDITS**

**“THE SECRET OF KRYPTONITE!”**

***Starring***

George Reeves.....*Superman / Clark Kent*  
Noel Neill.....*Lois Lane*  
John Hamilton.....*Perry White*  
Jack Larson.....*Jimmy Olsen*  
Robert Shayne.....*Inspector Henderson*

***Guest-starring***

John Eldredge.....*Walter Canby*  
Barbara Fuller.....*Sally Lambert*  
Pierre Watkin.....*George Taylor*  
Jackie Coogan.....*Ritchie King*  
Robert Young.....*Doctor Ellis*  
Yvonne Craig.....*Nurse Miller*  
William Shatner.....*Doctor Klein*  
Everett Glass.....*Professor Lucerne*  
Almira Sessions.....*Miss Bacharach*  
Leonard Marx.....*Restaurant maître 'd*

