

**SUPERMAN**

**AND THE**

**MOB MEN**

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

**Bruce Kanin**

MOLL  
FOR ME  
May 24  
June 10

REWARD  
\$20,000  
READ  
BOB  
BOBBY BIRNELL  
D. B. B. B.

PUBLIC ENEMIES  
MOLL  
BOB  
BOBBY BIRNELL  
D. B. B. B.

28784

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

**Bruce Kanin**

***A THREE-EPIISODE SAGA  
(EPISODE 3)***

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**T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S**

**EPISODE 3 "SUPER-SHOWDOWN IN SMALLVILLE"**

PROLOGUE

ACT 1

ACT 2

ACT 3

ACT 4

ACT 5

ACT 6

EPILOGUE

CLOSING CREDITS

**SAGA EPILOGUE**

ONE YEAR LATER

FROM THE PRIVATE FILES OF LOIS LANE





**EPISODE 3 “SUPER-SHOWDOWN IN SMALLVILLE”**

90 min (special extended episode)

**PROLOGUE**

Deep in the thick woods that shelter the Tecumseh River sit the Weepwell Cabins, a small, peaceful haven for motorists and tourists seeking refuge from the hubbub of distant Metropolis and beyond.



The modest, bucolic facility of eight cabins, each equipped with the usual amenities as well as a stove, fridge, fan and radio set, were typically occupied in the summer with families and others hoping to spend a few days hiking and swimming in the nearby waters.

But save for a small group of people, the “No Vacancy” warning hanging under the roadside “Weepwell Cabins” sign was a lie. The place was nowhere near capacity – in fact, only three rooms were in use – four if you counted the office containing the lifeless body of Deidre Whiting, the owner.



The current guests had booked three cabins for themselves and chased the remaining patrons away through a combination of a phony hepatitis scare and bribes that folks were happy to accept. Deirdre Whiting became a casualty when she recognized one of the guests from a newspaper photo and tried to call the police.

Once things settled down, Cabin *Six* became occupied by three somber-faced gentlemen in fedoras and cheap suits. Cabin *Seven* contained another man, but he was quite different from the others what with his hulking size and solitary, unspeaking demeanor.



And in Cabin *Eight* were a man and a woman. The man, in a white shirt, tie and dress pants, lay on one of the twin beds filing his nails while the well-dressed woman sat in a comfy chair looking over some papers she had removed from a manila envelope.

Both were listening intently to the radio. As the sun had already set, the static crackling from the receiver diminished, allowing the even-toned broadcaster at radio station WMET to be heard more clearly with each passing moment.

*"...with the Red Cross estimating more than one thousand people having been killed by the Typhoon, named Ida, which decimated the coastline of Honshu, the main Japanese island.*

*"Turning to regional news, the manhunt for escaped mob boss Walter Canby is in its second week. Canby, serving time at upstate Hackenbosch Prison, eluded guards during a cemetery visit to Metropolis's Hart Island in an...*



*"...apparent planned getaway via motorboat with an accomplice. He and his accomplice, or accomplices, are believed to be hiding out on Long Forks Island.*

*"Canby is also wanted in connection with an assault thousands of miles away in the Alaska Territory on a doctor in a remote village. Sources to WMET report that the attack was related to the deaths years ago of two...*

*"...underworld figures, Ace and Connie Chiles, also in Alaska. Connie Chiles was purported to be the sister of Canby and to complicate matters, none other than Superman, The Man of Steel, is said to be involved. An all-points FBI search for Canby continues.*



*"In other news, the Metropolis Police report that the body of Ritchie King, brother of the late mob boss Happy..."*

**Click!**

The man had gotten off bed to shut the radio. He stood over the woman and with a dead serious look on his face, said, "Let's get moving, Sally. We've got work to do."



**ACT 1**

**SMALLVILLE**

(Note: The diner scene occurs just before the final scene of “*The Secret of Kryptonite!*”)



**LOIS LANE HAD NEVER BEEN TO SMALLVILLE BEFORE** but it took almost no time for the town to feel like home. After a restful night at *O’Grady’s Hotel*, the first order of the day for Lois Lane was breakfast, so to speak. It would give the reporter a chance to organize her thoughts along with a review of her typed and handwritten notes before calling in to Perry White back in Metropolis. Lois hadn’t let him know where she was going for fear that the editor would interfere with her plans. Lois figured that once she was *in* Smallville, he’d begrudgingly let her continue snooping around.

Down the block from *O’Grady’s* was the *Plastino Diner*. The restaurant was reminiscent of *Tracy’s*, a restaurant in Lois’s hometown of Pittsdale. Memories of that eatery came back as soon as she approached its entrance along the sidewalk, with the odor of bacon and onions (*and was that liver? Chicken liver?*) coming through the screen door, luring her inside almost as if she was floating along like a cartoon character.

As man and a woman were exiting, and Lois heard the familiar bell tinkle that gently announced people as they went through the front door. Once inside, the reporter walked past the chalkboard propped up on a small table near the entrance saying



Lois targeted an open booth and walked towards it. As she did, patrons politely nodded and smiled at the pretty reporter. She returned the same before sitting down. It wasn't long after ordering that Laura, the fortyish waitress, returned with breakfast. Lois surveyed the scrumptious meal before her while at the same time taking in some of the conversations going on around her.

A plate of eggs over easy (hold the potatoes), whole wheat toast (butter on the side) with orange marmalade, tomato juice and a cup of black coffee (no sugar; cream standing by if necessary) shared her table with a spiral notebook and manila envelope full of papers, along with a ballpoint pen and two sharpened #2 pencils. As she gradually made her way through breakfast, Lois Lane reviewed her notes and subsequent plan for the day and beyond.

A key tip from a very close and reliable source led Lois to Smallville. But why here? She had no clue. Yet all roads led to this quaint Norman Rockwell town in the nation's heartland. Lois's goal was to spend a few days snooping around and if nothing turned up, to head back to Metropolis and re-group.

Halfway through her meal, Lois barely noticed when the restaurant door tinkled and two elderly women walked in, taking a booth directly across the aisle from the reporter. The waitress came over to them with a happy look of surprise.

*"...gonna go from St. Louie t'Denver along U.S. Forty but it might swing down near Ellsworth..."*

*"...saved enough money for a brand new Zenith..."*

*"...shame Ike can't run a third time..."*

*"...Denver? The innerstate's supposta go's far as Californie, maybe even th'Pacific..."*

*"...you call that...what's it called? Rocky roll? You call that stuff music? More like **noise** to me. Gimme Glenn Miller any day..."*

*"...hey Laura, you get a new cook or something? Yer chili Jim ate yesserday made me hafta sleep on the sofa last night..."*

*"Sarah Kent! Now where have you been for the past week? I was beginning to think you didn't like us anymore..."*



Upon hearing “Sarah Kent”, Lois almost dropped her coffee cup. She turned to look at the elderly woman across the way, trying not to be too obvious. Sarah Kent smiled, looking up at the waitress. “Oh, hush Laura. Been just four days.” She waved a hand at the waitress. “I was real busy. Think I got me a buyer for the farm.”

“Well, I’ll be darned.” The waitress took a pad from her back pocket and a pencil tucked over her ear. “You been trying to sell that place for a few years now.”

Sarah Kent nodded, “He was out there yesterday and I showed him around a little. Said he’d meet me here an’ then we’d go back for another look.”

“What’s your big city son think?”

“Y’know, I meant t’call him but it plum slipped my mind. I’ll do that right after breakfast.”

Laura, the waitress, was called from the rear of the restaurant. “Oh, sorry, ladies. Be right back.” She smiled and trotted off. Lois used it as a cue, calling across the aisle.

“Excuse me. I’m so sorry for interrupting.” She had looked at both women, but now at Sarah. “Did I hear correctly – are you Sarah Kent?”

The old woman turned and smiled at the pretty young woman. “Oh hello. Why yes. Do I know you?”

“Well, no, not really, but I may know *you*. Or, well.” Lois got up and walked across the aisle, facing the women’s table. “I’m so sorry for interrupting.” She smiled at both women, and then looked back at Sarah Kent. Lois said, “I believe I know your son, ma’am.”

“Clark?” Sarah Kent grinned.

Hearing confirmation that the woman was in fact her colleague’s mother, Lois’s face lit up. “Why, yes. You see, my name’s Lois Lane and I’m from—”

“*You’re Lois Lane? Merciful heavens!* Now you sit down right here, girl.” With that, Sarah Kent, her face beaming, moved towards the window in her booth and patted the now-empty part of the bench seat next to her.

Lois hesitated. “Well, I—I *really* don’t want to interrupt. I don’t want to be rude.”

“*Nonsense!* Now, you sit down.” The elderly Kent woman was motioning with her arm for Lois to sit. The reporter finally did just that and immediately, Sarah Kent gave her a big hug, much to Lois’s surprise.



“Lois Lane! I can’t believe it. After all these years.”

“Well, I—“

“Clark has said so much about you.” Another hug and then, withdrawing with one eyebrow raised, looking right at the reporter, “I do believe he’s sweet on you.”

The woman across the table sternly said, “Sarah Kent!”

Lois was clearly embarrassed and smiled at the woman across the table.

Sarah suddenly put one hand up to her face, saying, “Oh my goodness, where’re my manners? Lois Lane. This is my cousin - Edith Watkins.”

Edith put an arm out over the table to shake Lois’s hand. She nodded and said, “Pleased to meet you, Miss Lane.”

“Call me Lois.” She was still flustered by Sarah Kent’s comment about Clark but smiled at Edith.



Sarah Kent called to a passing busboy to have Lois’s breakfast and belongings fetched. Then she turned again to Lois and looked her over. “My, my. Lois Lane. You’re as pretty as Clark said.”

Edith jumped in, “Land o’ Goshen, Sarah, you’re gonna make her die of embarrassment.”

Lois turned to Sarah. “Oh, Mrs. Kent, please.”

“And you call me Sarah. Hush now with formalities. We’re almost like family.”

Lois composed herself and took a look at Sarah. “So – you’re Clark Kent’s mom. He’s talked a lot about you, too, you know.”

Sarah was still gracious but lost her smile. “A busy city feller like that? And for a big newspaper like yours? The *Daily Planet*? I doubt if he has much time to think of me at all.”

Edith said, “Come on, Sarah. He calls you once a week and visits you at least a couple times a month.”

Lois was surprised. “Clark comes *here* – to Smallville – *twice* a month? When does he have time? It’s not exactly around the corner. I mean—“

Sarah Kent knew how easy it was for her son to visit at really, any time, but there was no sense letting that cat out of *that* bag. As far as the mother of the Man of Steel knew, she was Clark's only co-conspirator in his never-ending deception to dissuade people from suspecting his other identity as Superman.

"Hush now, Edith. You're mind's playing tricks on you. I think you're mixing up Clark's telephone calls with his visits."

Sarah's cousin tried to protest. "But—"

The elder Kent turned back to Lois. "So, Lois, what brings you all the way here from the big city?"

"Well, I'm actually researching a story and—"

Just then the diner front door opened once again with its characteristic tinkle. Sarah Kent looked away from Lois and her eyes lit up. "Well, right on time."

Lois Lane nonchalantly turned to look at the person to whom Sarah was speaking. The *Daily Planet* reporter froze in her tracks, unable to utter a sound. The man in the fedora and Sunday suit who came through the door stopped in front of their table, smiling. He nodded at Sarah Kent, saying "Mrs. Kent" and nodded at her cousin, saying nothing. He seemed to avoid looking at Lois.

Immediately Sarah Kent spoke to Lois Lane, holding a hand out to point to the man.

"Lois Lane. I'd like you to meet the man who wants to buy my farm. Mister Walter Canby."

**ACT 2**

**METROPOLIS, AT THE DAILY PLANET**

**AFTER BREAKFAST**, Sarah Kent made the long distance collect call from the restaurant's public phone to her son at the *Daily Planet*, getting Jimmy Olsen, who then went to retrieve Kent. Olsen stepped away after handing the phone to Clark but upon returning to Kent's office, the reporter was nowhere to be found.



Of course, when the Clark Kent received the call from his mother and learned that Walter Canby was now in Smallville, a million alarms went off in his head. Though Sarah Kent's voice contained no hint of trouble, Clark knew otherwise. *Canby's found out my secret identity and is going to threaten my mom to get to me*, he thought. He wanted to warn her but decided, *if I alert her as to who Canby really is, it could make things worse and endanger her life*.

While on the phone, The Son of Steel restrained himself so as not to betray his thoughts and calmly promised his mother he'd be in Smallville as soon as possible. After the conversation ended, Clark rushed to the familiar storeroom for a private change of attire and zoomed out of the *Daily Planet* building as Superman. The thought of Walter Canby *in his hometown, with his mother, threatening her life*, whether overtly or not, immediately spurred him into action.

This was the one thing he never wanted in all his days as Superman – those close to him being endangered by someone as a way of striking back at him. Or being forced to do something for someone in exchange for his loved ones remaining unharmed. It was the same reason why he never allowed himself to fall in love and strike up a romantic relationship.

Now it seemed that his worst fear was being realized.

**APPROACHING THE FARMHOUSE**

Back in Smallville, Walter Canby, Sarah Kent and Lois Lane sat in a Plymouth sedan driven by one of Canby's "associates". Canby had insisted that Lois accompany them back to the farm and the reporter readily agreed, despite the danger, since Canby was the eye of the storm she'd been tracking. *Besides, if Clark's mother was in jeopardy without realizing it, maybe there's something I can do to help*, Lois thought.

Lois suspected that the driver, named Cutter, was "packing". She feared more for the life of Clark Kent's foster mother than her own and as such she played along, not letting on that Canby was dangerous after they left Sarah's cousin behind at the diner.

Sarah Kent seemed oblivious to the whole thing. Lois thought that perhaps it was a touch of senility or just her down-home attitude. She thought, *Walter Canby probably came off as a fine city gentleman to Sarah. After all, he fooled the city of Metropolis for years as one of its leading law-abiding citizens.*

Or maybe Sarah Kent was smarter than all of them and was just waiting for her son to show up.

Following a short ride out of town, Lois saw that they had driven on a dirt road up to a farmhouse with a signpost that said, simply, "Kent". Several yards to the rear of the house was a barn. She wondered what was in store from Canby. *And why is he interested in Sarah Kent?* The reporter's instinctive wheels were in high gear.

**OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE**



Spurred on by the apparent threat from Canby, Superman made it from Metropolis to Smallville in virtually no time at all. However, as he approached the Kent farm and the house where he grew up, the Man of Steel slowed his approach.

The speed of his flight typically was accompanied by a distinctive “whoosh” that could be heard a mile or so away. As well, he stayed on high, within cloud cover so as not to be spotted below. He was cautious so as not to alert Canby and his men, below, approaching the Kent farmhouse in a car.



Yes, Canby *and* his men. During the very fast flight Superman homed in with his super-vision on Smallville and the surrounding area, tracing his mother and Walter Canby to a car approaching the Kent farmhouse. His amazing sight also revealed two men waiting for them at the farm. Along with the man driving the sedan, they were all familiar to him from Metropolis and were no doubt Canby’s henchmen. Superman could see that each was packing a gun in their belts.

To no surprise, Superman saw another person getting out of the car with Canby and his mom - perhaps the most unwilling participant: Lois Lane. *Her reporter’s instincts have gotten her in trouble again*, he thought. Soon he saw that they were now all inside the farmhouse, in the living room, with Canby and his mother in conversation.



As Superman gently alighted behind the farmhouse, he formulated a simple plan: rather than crash through a wall to enter the living room, which might cause injury to his mother and Lois, he would “phase” through the wall – one of the techniques he had learned from Professor Lucerne – and suddenly appear on the other side. From there, he would, at super-speed, disarm Canby’s men. If anyone questioned Superman’s appearance, particularly Lois Lane, he would say that Clark Kent sent him there, which was, in a sense, the truth.

But as he landed and stood beside the farmhouse outer wall nearest to the living room, something unexpected occurred: a familiar feeling - an excruciating and a debilitating agony that began to pervade his body. It was, of course, the effect of *Kryptonite*. As his legs buckled, he hugged the side of the house so as not to collapse – Superman wanted to remain standing in an attempt to walk and distance himself from the source of the deadly radiation. He staggered along the outside wall, avoiding a window from which one of the thugs might be peering out. Slowly but steadily he made his way to the outer wall of a storage shed attached to the house.

At this point, the effects of the Kryptonite had diminished slightly and Superman was able to catch his breath. He sat down on the ground and thought, *Canby’s got this all figured out*. Superman reasoned that he must have arranged for Ritchie King to synthesize more than the single Kryptonite brick he’d encountered and retrieved from the sewer in Metropolis – obviously before Canby’s men murdered King.

*Taking any action inside the house now would be a mistake*, Superman thought. Even if he made a valiant effort to crash into the living room, he’d be in no shape to disarm Canby’s cronies. The deadly Kryptonite radiation would likely neutralize him before getting a chance to whisk Sarah and Lois out of the house. *And who knows what Canby and his thugs would then do to my mom and Lois Lane, at the sight of me. I need a plan, a good one, and fast*, he thought.

Even at this end of the house, by the storage shed, the twangs of pain from the Kryptonite continued. Flying was out of the question because in his weakened condition Superman’s slow takeoff and flight might be seen from a window, alarming Canby and his men, again, perhaps threatening their “hostages”. The same was true about him simply walking off the property – he could easily be spotted.



It then occurred to Superman that about two yards below ground was a shaft. It was a secret tunnel he had built as a teen that ran from the house far out to a wooded area on edge of the Kent property. Clark had excavated it back then with his growing super-strength just for fun but then used it to avoid disturbing his parents on his frequent sleepless nights. He’d sneak into the basement, open a trapdoor covered by a rug, enter the underground passageway and then run or sometimes fly through the tunnel to the opening in the woods. That end was closed by a trapdoor, fused shut via his heat vision and hidden under bushes lest anyone come across it.

Clark eventually told his parents about it and they just chuckled. Now, years later, he thought he could again make use of it, this time as an escape. Superman got up and struggled to focus his x-ray vision downwards. Like an old friend, there it was - the tunnel was only a few yards from where he stood next to the house, in fairly decent shape after all these years. He glanced back inside the house with his weakened x-ray vision and saw that one of the hoods was heading out the front door, perhaps as a lookout, with another in the kitchen. The third hood, along with Canby, Lois and his mother, was in the living room. Canby and his mom were apparently still chatting.

Superman was concerned about the man leaving the house. If the thug decided to stroll around the premises, he might be discovered. Worse, if he had Kryptonite on his person, all might be lost. So with that in mind, Superman went down to his knees and began digging with his bare hands. Between his super-strength and super-speed, despite still being greatly weakened, he soon found himself inside the tunnel he made so many years ago.

The Man of Steel hurriedly restored the dirt, rocks and other materials that made up the tunnel roof, packing them into the hole as best as possible such that there was as little a depression on the surface above as possible. It couldn't be helped that the topside ground appearance might suggest that perhaps something had dug up the earth at this location. *Hopefully they think we have large moles in Smallville.* He allowed himself a grin for the first time in awhile.

Quickly, Superman ran through the tunnel towards the woods. He had to duck because the tunnel was built when he was a few inches shorter. As he retreated from the farmhouse and the Kryptonite, his strength returned. Before long he had pushed open the trapdoor and was above ground, back in fresh air, in the wooded area. Superman looked back at the farmhouse.



Sure enough, the thug who had walked outside was in fact taking a leisurely stroll around the house, perhaps because he or Canby had heard something, or perhaps out of boredom.

#### **IN THE FARMHOUSE**

"Well, this is cozy". Lois Lane was sitting on a couch in the Kent farmhouse.

Canby ignored the reporter and smiled at Sarah. "Mrs. Kent, so when do you think your son will be arriving?"

Sarah answered, "Clark said he was coming down as soon as possible today."

Canby said blankly, "Fine, though I'd presume that he'd have to fly here to get here so fast."

Sarah Kent looked at the man quizzically.

Lois said. "There are no commercial flights. Just Union Pacific and Greyhound. Unless he drove, but..."

Sarah interjected with a smile. "Ben Hubbard once took a mail plane to Metropolis. They sometimes allow passengers."

Canby once again offered his *Cheshire Cat* smile. "Well, no matter. I'm sure that your son will be here sooner than we expect, Mrs. Kent."

**ACT 3**

**SMALLVILLE**



**FULLY RECOVERED,** Superman flew clandestinely into Smallville proper and changed to Clark before finding a public phone in the back of Abby's, a grocery store. He called collect to Metropolis. "Bill, it's Clark Kent."

"Kent, the operator said you're in Smallville. But Perry White just told me you were in his office not even an hour ago."

Henderson paused to give Kent a chance before asking, "How'd you manage that so quickly?"

"Trade secret."

"I'm sure that trade secret is a fellow named Superman."

"Well, Canby's such a nasty character, even Superman may not be enough."

"Canby? What's going on?"

"He's here in Smallville."

"**What?!** Are you sure?"

"Not only am I sure, but we've got a bad situation on our hands."

"Go on."

Kent told Henderson about Canby and his henchmen being at the Kent farm under the pretense of Canby buying the property from his mother.

"And you say your mother called you and asked you to come down there?"

"That's right. She sounded like nothing was wrong. Canby's probably fooled her into thinking he's on the level and harmless."

"I'll get the FBI. I'll come down myself and we'll have the place surrounded."

"No, Bill - *wait*. Even though Canby doesn't seem to have openly threatened anyone, it's effectively an implied hostage situation. I don't want to endanger their lives."

"Their lives?"

Kent slipped, but it didn't matter. "Oh, I forgot to tell you – Lois is with them."

"Great guns! And you're telling me to hold off the hounds? Kent, I'm *obligated* to call in the FBI. Walter Canby's a wanted man and now he's got *two* hostages!"



"Now wait just a minute. It's my mother – *and* Lois Lane you're talking about. No, Bill. I have an idea."

"I'm listening, but you'll have to convince me not to take action the minute we hang up."

"OK, so hear me out. My mother said that Canby wants to talk to me. Presumably he wants to make some sort of deal – the lives of my mother and Lois for – something."

"But what? And why *you*?"

"Never mind that. Here's my thought. Remember our chat about Jonas Rockwell?"

"Rockwell? Oh, well, as a matter of fact, I was just on my way to his parole hearing at Strykers Island."

"The timing couldn't be better."

Kent described his plan to Henderson, even down to the details of how Canby was dressed. Henderson reacted. "It's a long shot. I may have to call in a favor with 'the man'."

The reporter asked, "Dick Wemby at Strykers?"

"Oh, well, he owes me, too. But, no – *the* man – J. Edgar."

Kent allowed himself a smile despite the grim situation. "You certainly have friends in high places, Bill."

"Remember that heist I helped crack at the Federal Reserve?"

"How can I forget? Superman had to open the vault with you and the hoods locked inside."

"Well, let's just say Hoover owes me big time. And speaking of time, I doubt if there's enough of that to pull this thing off."

“I’ll stall as long as I can.”

There was brief silence, and then a somber Henderson spoke. “Clark, Canby’s dangerous – what are you going to do? I’d imagine it’s even tricky for Superman.”

“I’ll think of something. Just pull out all the stops, Bill. I’ve a feeling the clock’s ticking and Walter Canby has a short fuse.”

“Let me get cracking and see what I can do. Good luck, Kent.”

“Thanks Bill.”



Kent hung up the phone and walked a few blocks to the Smallville bus depot. Memories of the day he left home for Metropolis flooded back for a moment but Clark focused on the task at hand. He recalled *Kurt's Taxi Service* next to the depot – back then it had a fleet of two cabs. It had grown to four. The reporter told a waiting cabbie to take him to the Kent farm.

***IN THE FARMHOUSE***

Inside the farmhouse, Canby and Sarah were continuing their chat. Sarah was now doing most of the talking, going through Eben’s life history including details of the Depression years. Canby was just biding his time, waiting for his real target to show up. The henchman at the window, Robbie, interrupted, “Car’s comin’ up the road, boss—I mean, Mister Canby.”

Sarah’s face lit up. “Oh, that must be Clark.”

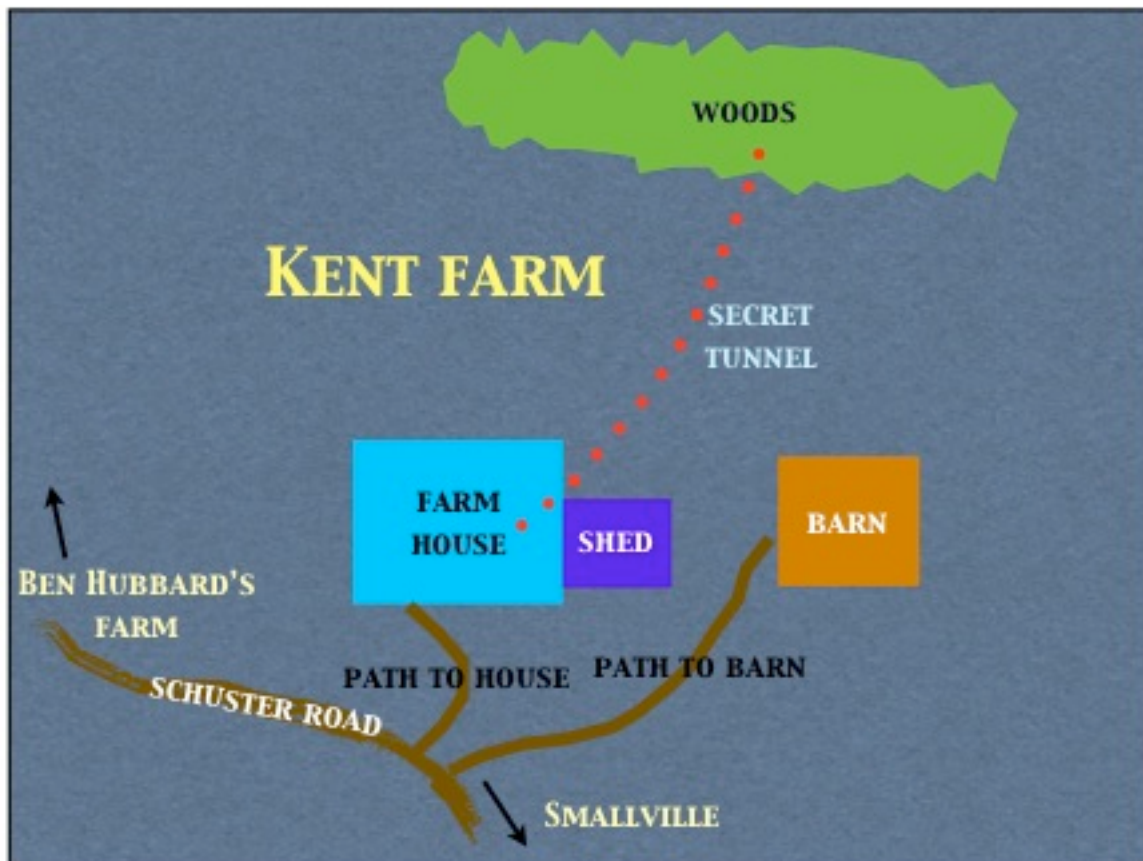
Lois Lane said nothing but the exasperation in her face deepened.

Robbie confirmed. "It's a cab from town. Just pulled up."

Canby offered mild interest at best. "Oh that's nice. Mrs. Kent, do you mind if my associate opens the front door?"

Sarah stood up. "Well, course I do. It's still *my* place you know. Haven't sold it yet." She smiled at Canby, who smiled and nodded back.

**APPROACHING THE FARMHOUSE**



Outside, Clark Kent paid the cabbie, thanked him and told him not to wait. As the taxi from Smallville drove off, Kent walked a few feet up the dirt path to the house and was greeted by one of Canby's henchmen who had a fake smile painted on his face.

"Well, well, if it isn't Clark Kent, great reporter for the *Daily Planet*. You're a long way from the big city, aincha?"

"Hello Cutter." Kent recognized Cutter Greene, a thug who had had some run-ins with Inspector Henderson. He had no patience for the hoodlum, given that the more important quarry was inside the Kent farmhouse, but decided to tolerate a little banter to see if any information could be gained.

Cutter continued. "So, uh, what're you doing out here in the sticks, Kent? Metropolis a bit too quiet these days?"

Kent kept his mean face on. "I think you know why I'm here. To see your boss, Canby."

"Oh yeah, that's right." Kent tried to move ahead, toward the house, but Cutter put a hand out to stop him. Kent looked at the hand on his chest as if he was going to amputate it.

"Don' worry, I'll letcha through. Just a word of caution from the boss."

"Oh?"

Cutter's fake smile vanished. "He said to tell you no funny business. Don't try anything or else what's precious in there" he motioned to the house "will get hurt. Know what I mean?"

"Is that all?"

"Well, yeah, except I have my own message for ya."

"What's that?" Kent was growing impatient.

"Well, me and the boys all know you have a way of contacting Superman, see? So, uh, don't get any ideas." Cutter patted Kent's suit. "It wouldn't be healthy for you or anyone else."

"Oh? How do you know Superman isn't already here?"

Cutter looked up in the sky and waved both arms around, as if to refer to the farmland. "I don't see nuthin' or no one. I don't hear nuthin'." He paused, for effect. "Guess he ain't here." He said it as if he had proven one of Einstein's theories.

Kent pushed past the thug, saying under his breath with a thin smile, "Don't be too sure."

*The reporter was momentarily pleased with what he'd just heard. So Cutter – and maybe the other henchmen – don't know that I'm Superman. Even if Canby is here because **he** somehow knows, he may have withheld that from his cronies because it's valuable information that he didn't want to share, at least not yet.*

As Kent got closer to the house, he wondered when he'd start to feel the effects of the Kryptonite he'd experienced before. But the reporter felt fine – better than ever. *They must have tucked it away – for now, he thought. Still, I can't take the chance that they won't unleash the Kryptonite if I try to make a move to rescue Ma and Lois.*



He walked up to the front door he had known so well as a kid.

**IN THE FARMHOUSE**

Before Clark even had a chance to turn the knob, Sarah Kent opened the door to see her son standing there, plain as day. He said, "Hello, Ma" and then hugged the woman who brought him up since he was the baby who fell out of the sky.

Sarah returned the hug in spades. She spoke softly, though loud enough for everyone in the room to hear. "Oh, Clark, I'm so sorry."

Kent pulled back from the embrace and tensed up, holding her shoulders with both of his hands. "Why, what's happened?" He made a motion to go past his foster mom. "Are you all right?" He knew that Lois Lane was inside but didn't let on.

But Sarah broke the tension with an *aw shucks* grin. "Oh shush, course I'm all right. I'm just sorry I'm sellin' the farm, that's all. The only place you – well, you, me 'n your Pa – ever called home."

Only slightly relieved, Clark walked past his mother into the living room. At the sight of Walter Canby he again stiffened. He wanted to whisk Canby and his men out of the house at super-speed but resolved to hold back because of the Kryptonite threat. It was agony but any false move might risk the life of his mother -- and Lois Lane, who now spoke at the sight of Clark Kent walking in the room.

"Well, *hello* Mister Kent." Her face was a mix of relief and concern.

"Lois? *You're* here?" Kent turned to look at his fellow reporter, putting on as good an act as possible.

She gave a mock smile and shook her head. "You're observant as usual." Then she shot a nasty glance over at Canby and Clark's gaze followed.

Canby looked directly at Sarah, who was side-by-side with her son. "Mrs. Kent, aren't you going to introduce us?"

Sarah said, "I was gettin' to that—"

"No need, mother. Walter Canby and I are old acquaintances." Clark seethed the words out of his mouth and then aimed his eyes at Canby as if heat beams were going to emerge. "Aren't we?"

Canby didn't even bother to hold out a hand. "Oh, now I remember, Mister Kent. Of course, back in Perry White's office."

"You boys are acquaintances? I shoulda knowed when you" she looked at Canby "said you was from the city."

Canby nodded to Sarah Kent. "That's right, Mrs. Kent." Then he turned to her son. "So Mister Kent, we should talk in private. The barn, perhaps? I'd just love your perspective on the farm." He smiled and then looked at Sarah. "My... associates... will stay here. Your son and I shouldn't be all that long."



Sarah nodded. "Very well."

Kent and Canby left through the front door.

To no one in particular, the elder Kent said, "I'm so glad Clark's here. Maybe I'll get the kettle going." And with that, Sarah Kent went to the kitchen, where the third henchman, Danny, was. Lois was left behind in the living room with the one named Robbie.

**IN THE BARN**



It was a short silent stroll to the barn. Once inside, the two men stood in the middle next to bales of hay, facing each other like the sheriff and his opponent in the Old West at high noon. Kent spoke first in a no-nonsense tone as if he was ready to strangle Canby.

Kent spat out the words, "What do you want, Canby?"

The mob man grinned. "Well, well. Clark Kent. Always so serious. I remember you back at the *Daily Planet* during that so-called crime wave."

"And then Superman brought you in. You're an escaped crook. I don't know exactly *how* you escaped, but you'll be behind bars again soon. There's an FBI manhunt closing in on you as we speak."

"Yes, but that's why I decided to come here – the last place anyone would look. And who's going to bring me back, anyway? You? *Superman*?" Canby chuckled. "Oh, that was redundant of me."

Kent didn't take the bait. "You're trying my patience. Why are you here?"

"I think you need to dig deep and find some patience, Kent, because I'm going to tell you a little story."

"I don't have time."

“Actually, I think the reporter in you does have time. As a matter of fact, to answer your question as to what I want, I need to *tell* you this story.”

Canby sat on a bench made out of wooden planks.

“I’ve had a lot of time in prison to think about the man who put me there. How I should strike back at him. Repay him. But I’ll get to that later.

“You see, it all started in the days *before* I was brought in, as you say, by Superman. My associates and I had reviewed a film of you just prior to that. It showed a very interesting thing. You, Clark Kent, running into an alley and, lo and behold, *Superman* running out.”

“So what?”

“Exactly. That’s pretty much what we all said at the time. My associates and I, we’re all pretty smart. At least I’d like to think so.” He smiled. “But no one made the connection. I know, myself, I was so hell-bent on *destroying* Superman that I overlooked the obvious.” His smile became a more sinister one as he said, “But I’ll get to that shortly.”

Kent was listening, but also biding his time. The longer Canby talked, the better. “Go on.”

“Well, I guess I tucked that little piece of film away in my subconscious to return to at a later date. And that time came not long ago, when news reached my penitentiary of a trial. A trial involving Superman.”

Kent knew all too well what he was referring to.

Canby went on. “Between news of the trial and my informants—“

“Your *informants*? You were behind bars.”

“Given that I’m here and not behind bars, it seems like you’ve underestimated me, Kent, as did the authorities. Even after I was ... put away, my network of contacts didn’t disappear. Oh, Henderson did a commendable job at cleaning things up, but he’s a busy man and couldn’t ferret out everyone.”

“Including that woman you sent to Alaska.”

“Oh, nice that you’ve met Sally Lambert. Wonderful gal.” (Clark thought, *so that’s her real name*). Canby smiled. “Anyway, I learned that Superman was on trial for, of all things, murder. It’s the one thing most folks know he *doesn’t* do – kill people. I believe that he has a sworn code of honor in that regard – something like that.” Canby shrugged. “Silly man.”

*He's trying to taunt me, Kent thought. Plus he seems awfully confident telling me all this.*

"Turns out that Superman was on trial for killing someone close to me: my *sister*." Canby's face became taut and angry.

Kent wanted to respond, but kept mum. He had heard stories about Connie being Canby's sister, but now the mob man himself had confirmed it.

Canby got up and was almost in Kent's face. "Superman *killed* my sister!"

Kent finally responded, gradually raising his voice. "I read the transcripts. That's *not* what happened." Canby backed off slightly. Kent continued, on the offense. "Ace Chiles threatened Superman. There was an accident. It was unfortunate, but not Superman's fault."

Canby tried to interrupt, but Kent wouldn't let him, turning things up. "So if *you* were Connie Chiles's brother, how did *you* manage to let her hang out with a sleazy worm like Ace?" Kent closed in on Canby, who had backed away, returning to stand next to the bench. The reporter pointed a finger at the criminal's chest. "You certainly weren't looking out for her! She might be alive today if *you'd* been involved in her life and not a criminal organization!"

With Kent dumping salt in Canby's deep, raw wound, the criminal yelled "**Liar!**" and took a swing at the reporter's jaw, despite his belief that it was made of steel. The reporter super-swiftly pulled back for fear that the criminal would shatter his hand. Then, instinctively, Kent put Canby in a judo hold.

Straining against Kent's grip, Walter Canby spoke almost breathlessly. "Before you... go any further... Kent. Need I remind you or tell you, if Cutter didn't... that if anything should happen to me, the people you care for in that house" he nodded towards the farmhouse "will pay dearly for your actions."

Kent loosened his grasp but held it for a moment and then let go. Canby stepped away, took out his suit breast pocket handkerchief and wiped his face. He then smiled, "Oh, Mister Kent. The best is yet to come." Then the criminal dusted himself off and continued his story, this time standing a few feet away from his adversary.

"You believe what you want, Kent, but the truth is, Superman killed Connie or caused her death. And it was all over a secret she and Ace discovered. Superman brought Ace and Connie to far-off Alaska to keep them from revealing his... *your*... secret identity."

Kent said nothing.

"Then Ace and Connie died, falling from a mountain."

All Kent would say somberly was, “That’s what I heard, too.”

Canby continued. “The information I received said that while Ace must have died on impact, Connie didn’t – and she talked. It’s incredible, but in this remote area of Alaska, a team of men – doctors on a survival trip as it turned out – found her.”

Again, Kent remained silent.

Canby looked down, briefly, and then back at Kent. “Sadly, they couldn’t save her. Her injuries were too grave from the fall. But one of the doctors recorded what she said in a log.”

This was old news to Kent based on his Alaska journey but he said, “Sounds pretty far-fetched.”

“It does, doesn’t it? I guess I can tell you that my reach extends – or extended – into Alaska. Oil is going to be its next great export and that will bring great riches to what will be the forty-ninth state.”

“So?”

“So, I was trying to establish a presence there. A security business.”

Kent thought. *Northern Lights Security, of course.*

“Then when I heard about Connie’s death, my focus changed. I had Sally track down this doctor and his papers. I needed to know what she said to him. But then a peculiar thing happened.”

“Oh?”

“Superman showed up.”

“I read something about him being there.”

Canby smiled. “Oh, I’m sure you did. So although I never got to find out Connie’s last words, my wheels started to turn faster.” He paused, looked at the floor of the barn and then straight at Kent. “I can imagine why Superman would be interested in stopping someone from hearing my sister’s dying words, but why would *he* happen to be in Alaska, of all places? And at the same time as Clark Kent’s trip north? Awfully coincidental.”

“Sounds like you have all the answers.” *I need to keep stalling for time.*

“Well, no, not then, but I felt I was close. And the puzzle pieces were coming together. I just had to *prove* that Clark Kent – *you* – were Superman.”

Kent said nothing.

“So I hired an old acquaintance. Turns out he was Happy King’s brother. You remember Happy King, Kent, don’t you?”

“I do.”

“Ritchie King was good with medicines and pharmaceuticals. Made a killing, so to speak, in the black market.” Canby smiled. “Through his connections he got his hands on a powerful poison. And then under the ruse of a cure for Kryptonite, Ritchie arranged to meet you for dinner.”

“Yes, I remember.”

“You see, Kent, I knew one of the help in that restaurant – in the kitchen – and with Ritchie’s assistance they poisoned your meal. You should have died right there on the spot.”

“You’re wrong, Canby. Another patron got sick and Superman saved his life.”

“Oh that’s where *you’re* wrong, Kent. That other patron was a control – a test – to insure that the same bottle of poison worked. The plan was to use it on *two* meals – yours and some other unlucky soul’s. My informants told me later that the other man became deathly sick and you didn’t. That means Clark Kent is immune to poison that would kill an ordinary man. He’s indestructible. Only one man on Earth has that ability. Ergo, you, Clark Kent is *Superman*.” Canby had a wide smile.

“Or more likely your guy in the kitchen made a mistake.”

“No, I don’t think that’s likely and if you’re wondering why King tried to kill you later with the Kryptonite, that *was* a mistake. A fatal mistake for him. He wanted revenge for his brother’s death. I wanted you alive. So, my men, who were watching the lab, got rid of him per my instructions.”

*That explains why I was spared*, thought Kent. “So, I’ll ask you only one more time. What do you want?”

Canby looked at his watch and then at Kent. “Since the time he – *you* -- appeared on the scene in Metropolis and began to take out pockets of my operation there; when you *humiliated* me and made me front-page news, not in a good way, I might add.” Canby’s anger was growing with every phrase. “As I seethed in prison with my freedom taken from me.” And then he lowered his voice, almost solemnly. “And when I learned that you were responsible for the death of my beloved sister, someone to whom I was like a father...my *only* family...”

It was Canby's turn to raise his voice. "Since then and through all that, I've come to *hate* Superman more than the *Devil* himself. **You!**" He lurched towards Kent and pounded a fist on the reporter's chest. Kent recoiled just enough so that Canby's fist wasn't severely wounded by Kent's indestructible body. He held Canby by the wrists and pushed him away and onto a stack of hay.

*Now it's my turn again*, thought Kent, standing above Canby. "I have no sympathy for you or your kind. You, your men, Ace Chiles and even your sister are and were murderers, thieves and lowlifes. You're the *dregs* of society and make things worse for every decent and honest law-abiding person."

Kent continued. "*You*, of all people, *deserved* to be put away, and you'll be put away again."

Canby, still down, said, "Oh, I don't think so." He got up and dusted himself off. "You see, Clark *Superman* Kent, I hold a Trump Card. I wanted revenge so badly that I found out your secret and then went one step further. I found out what could hurt you *more* than Kryptonite."

Canby went on. "I know you have friends at the *Daily Planet*. *Good* friends. Miss Lane is rumored to be a *very* close friend, in fact. But as they say, blood is thicker than water and it wasn't long before I found out that Clark Kent's mother – that is, Superman's adoptive mother – was still alive and well here in Smallville.

"So I thought – what would hurt Superman more than anything? Even better, what would make Superman do *my* bidding – and be beholden to me? And the answer is: the safety of that woman" Canby pointed towards the farmhouse with a great look of satisfaction "who brought him up in the world.

"Like you murdered a member of my family, I will hover over yours and force you to be at my beck and call." He paused, for effect. "Or else Sarah Kent dies. And as an added bonus consider the life of Lois Lane threatened."

#### ***IN THE FARMHOUSE***

Meanwhile, in the farmhouse, Lois and Sarah were sitting together in front of a rectangular wooden table cut from logs. On one of the table legs was etched the initials "E.K." Across from the women, standing by a door to the kitchen, was Danny. Standing by the window, looking outside was Robbie.

Sarah interrupted a long silence. "Well, I certainly hope that Clark and Mister Canby are almost finished. Wonder what's keeping them." She could see that Lois had noticed the etching in the table. Sarah put a hand on Lois's, "Oh, Eben built that before we... had Clark. From two big, big oak trees that fell one night after a bad storm. I can remember it like it was yesterday."

Lois wondered what was going on between the mobster and her fellow reporter, as well, but there wasn't much she could do, especially with the thugs standing by. She noticed a picture album on the table. She moved a large vase aside to reach it and then smiled at Sarah, saying, "Do you mind?"

"Course not. Do us some good to pass the time 'til they get back. Haven't looked at them pichers for ages."

As Lois grabbed the album, the thug Danny became somewhat animated, straightening up and looking directly at Lois, as if he was uncomfortable with her movements.

But Lois returned an icy stare, followed by a hugely fake smile that quickly vanished, all but sticking out her tongue. She pulled the book onto her lap and opened it up. Seemingly ancient black & white photos adorned each page; sometimes more than one. Each had a handwritten label. Sarah Kent moved closer to Lois and looked on with a little smile, commenting on several photos and clippings.

"Oh, them's Eben's folks from Centreville... Ah, my ma 'n pa... Land sakes - that's when Eben and I were married by Chief Parker." She sighed wistfully. "Father Bennings took ill that day."

Lois thumbed through some more pages and then came to a baby in a crib. "Mrs. Kent, that's got to be Clark!"

"Land o' Goshen! Look at that little feller." Both women were grinning.

More photos... Clark at five years old playing with a toy truck in the barn... Clark at ten holding a baseball in a mitt... Both women did a double take, for nearly the same reason, when they came to a photo of Clark at fifteen wearing a school jacket sporting a big red "S" in front (for "Smallville").

Soon they came to a section with newspaper clippings. They all seemed to be articles from the *Daily Planet* written by Clark. Sarah said, "I'm especially proud of those."

Lois half-chuckled, "You should be." *But some of these were at my expense!*

Sarah turned to look towards the window, getting more impatient. Lois, though, continued thumbing through the book, remembering each and every *Daily Planet* article by her fellow reporter. And then she had to stifle a gasp. It was a full front page saved from the *Daily Planet* - prominently featuring another article written by Clark. A large-type front-page headline read:

***SUPERMAN EXPOSES CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE HEAD AS #1 CRIME BOSS!***



Underneath there was a photo of Superman holding a disheveled man by his collar.

The man was Walter Canby.

Lois composed herself and closed the album but bookmarked the article with her right hand. Danny, bored, started reading a newspaper he had retrieved, folded, from his back pocket. Robbie, though, noticed Lois close the album.

“Finished lookin’ at the pretty pichers, lady?”

Gripping the album with both hands but still keeping her “bookmark”, she answered, with a forced smile, “Oh, would you like to look through them? Never know what you might find.”

Robbie waved a hand and with a disgusted, “Ah!” returned his gaze out the window. As soon as Lois saw that neither man was looking, she put her left hand on Sarah’s right hand and nodded to get her attention. Next, Lois went *shhsh* with her finger and then used it to point to the album, which was on her lap again.

Slowly, carefully, she re-opened the book to the page with the big headline and the article. She turned to Sarah and winked, saying, “Mrs. Kent, was this a flower show in Smallville?” (Lois tried to think of something that would hold no interest to the thugs.) Then the girl reporter pointed to the photo of Canby and looked at Sarah. Lois put her left hand back on Sarah’s right hand to try and steady her, figuring the elder Kent would be aghast. Sarah was in fact startled, almost giving it away by gasping.

But the old woman stared quietly at the photo of her son gripping Canby by his suit. Then she took in the headline and again looked back at the photo, letting both sink in. She thought, *Now I remember when that happened. After all that trouble in Metropolis. Clark was busier than ever and finally brought this man in to the police. Oh, my. Oh, my!...and I let him into my house...*

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FIVE CENTS

SUPERMAN EXPOSES CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE HEAD AS #1 CRIME BOSS!



SUPERMAN DELIVERS WALTER CANBY TO PERRY WHITE, PLANET EDITOR

by Clark Kent Staff Reporter

METROPOLIS --In a dramatic scene, Walter Canby, prominent attorney and leading citizen of Metropolis, was brought to justice today by Superman, and exposed as the Number One Crime Boss in the city that police officials and the Man of Steel had been looking for for weeks. Superman first delivered Canby to the office of the editor of this newspaper, before taking the captured felon to police headquarters.

Canby was one of the last people who would have been suspected as being behind most of the organized crime in Metropolis, as he has been a prominent local attorney for years, and the head of the Citizens For Clean Government, a local organization dedicated to fighting political corruption in the city.

"I just can't believe it," said Inspector William J. Henderson of the Metropolis Police Department, when told the news. "Canby has always worked with

ASSOCIATION BRANCHES REPORTED ACTIVE IN EVERY STATE IN NATION

Man Age 96 Makes First Bank Deposit

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Session Most Peaceful In History

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Eisenhower Names Man In Cohen's Place

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BANK CLOSSES ITS DOORS

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Thoughts flooded through Sarah Kent's mind, followed by a great resolve. She looked at Lois, nodding with a reassuring mix of thanks and acknowledgement. Then the elder Kent turned to look at Robbie, behind her, and Danny, by the kitchen door. She stood and said, "I plum forgot all about that kettle" and walked towards the kitchen door. Danny stood in front of the door, not letting her through, but Sarah pushed him aside and went through the swinging door. He followed.

Robbie muttered, "Where the heck is the boss, already?"

Lois smiled, "Getting impatient?"

He muttered, "Annoying dame."

In the kitchen, Mrs. Kent checked the teapot while Danny looked out the window. She said out loud, "Oh, looks like a problem with the stove. Lemme just get some matches." She opened a cabinet at eye level and then shrugged. "Oh, I know where they are."

Then she moved to a foyer where there was a tall, narrow closet. She opened it.

"Ah - here are the matches."

And then Sarah Kent reached inside.

Back in the living room, Lois Lane decided to open her pocketbook to see if and how Robbie would react, which he did.

"I'd close that thing if I were you, sister."

"Why? Can't a girl powder her nose?"

"Your nose looks just fine to me."

Suddenly the kitchen door swung open and Danny came backing out, slowly, with his hands up in the air. A shrill voice behind him said, "She can powder her nose if she wants to. *Now put your hands up, too!*"

Sarah Kent came out of the kitchen holding a Springfield '03 rifle. The muzzle was touching Danny's chest. She had a mean face on and of course, her finger on the trigger. She looked at Lois and said, "Eben once shot the head off a copperhead with this. Always kept it ready – just in case."

Robbie, momentarily startled, didn't put his hands up, but stepped forward towards Danny and Sarah Kent while reaching into his belt. Out of Robbie's line of sight, Lois Lane picked up the large vase on Eben Kent's wooden table and with a great heave, crashed it on the back of Robbie's head. It smashed to pieces and sent Robbie quickly down to the rug covering the wooden plank floor.

By this time, Danny and Sarah were completely in the living room. Lois bent down to Robbie, who had fallen flat on his chest and face. She wanted to get his gun, which she guessed was tucked in the front of his pants. To reach it, Lois had to move him to his side – not an easy thing for her to do as it was a struggle to move him. As she tried, the front door burst open. It was Cutter, holding a gun and waiving it at Lois Lane. "OK, lady, get up, nice and easy."

"Drop it!" Sarah Kent pointed it at Cutter as Danny ran across the room to a corner.

Robbie replied, "Go ahead – shoot me, grandma." He kept his gun trained on Lois.

"I'm warning you!" Sarah lifted the rifle and looked through the rear sight.

Cutter circled around, with his gun trained on Lois Lane, but walking straight to Sarah Kent. When he reached her, he seized the rifle from her hands and then chucked it into a corner of the room. He looked at Sarah, saying, "The boss had me check this place ahead of everyone else. I saw you had a rifle in the kitchen." He put a hand in his pocket and pulled out a couple of bullets. "Not much good without these." He plopped the bullets on top of a bookcase next to him.

Then Cutter barked an order to Danny. "Get some rope and tie'm up. I don't want any more trouble before the boss gets back. And then see if she's got a first aid kit

somewhere. We gotta see how bad Robbie is.” He pulled Robbie’s gun tucked under his belt and stuck it in his own.

Cutter motioned for Sarah Kent to sit down next to Lois on the couch. All Lois could say was “Sorry Mrs. Kent...”

**IN THE BARN**

Back in the barn, Kent was still trying to buy precious time. But he was worried about his mother and Lois. He spied on them with his x-ray vision while listening to Canby and saw his mother’s failed attempt to corral the hoods with her rifle. Now, more than ever, he wanted to speed inside the house and rescue his mom and Lois, but still felt stymied by the threat of the Kryptonite he felt earlier.

As his super-vision could see no cavalry coming over the hill, Clark decided to take matters into his own hands. It was time to shake things up and put Canby off-guard.



**“OK, Canby, it’s all over!”**

Canby spun and looked towards the entrance of the barn. He couldn’t believe his eyes. It was *Superman*, plain as day. “No, it can’t be.” He then looked back at Kent, who was standing where Canby last saw him. Again Canby looked back towards the barn entrance but this time Superman was standing right next to him. Canby said, “This is some sort of trick.”

Superman smiled. “I can assure you, it’s no trick.” He looked over behind the criminal. “You OK, Kent?”

Canby twisted and saw the reporter respond, “Thanks, I’m alright. You take care of him. I’m going to the farmhouse. Could be Kryptonite there – too dangerous for you.” Canby stepped back so that he could see both men at once. He saw Kent jogging towards the barn entrance until he was out of sight.

“It just can’t be. You’re doing this with your incredible speed. That’s it.”

Superman lied. “No, Canby, not even I’m that fast.” He thought, *the hyper-speed trick seems effective, despite Canby’s doubts. At least now I can operate openly.*

The criminal eyed The Man of Steel suspiciously. Then Canby looked at his watch and smiled but said nothing. Superman said to Canby, “You’re finished. The police will be here soon.” It was another lie, but he wanted to pressure the criminal into a mistake.

“Aren’t you forgetting something? I still hold your mother – or if you still want to play that game – Kent’s mother – hostage, along with Miss Lane. And there’s

something more.” Canby looked back towards the entrance of the barn. *Right on time*, he thought.

Where Superman had suddenly appeared moments before stood another figure, just outside the barn entrance. It was a large, brawny man.

*Kon.*

“Ah, perfect. You see, Superman, I have a hand full of trump cards, for I brought with me an associate I believe you met up in Alaska. He’s actually quite angry with you and wants retribution. I told him to show up here ten minutes after Clark Kent and I entered the barn.”

Superman rushed out to meet Kon near the barn entrance. The husky brute was wearing blue jeans, no shoes and was shirtless. To Superman, he appeared more hulk-like than in Alaska. He then saw that Kon’s right hand was covered with what appeared to be dull-green metallic glove.



Canby continued. “I see you’ve noticed the glove. It holds together the hand I understand you helped shatter in Alaska. Anyway, it’s made of a metal alloy mixed in with a deadly element you’re no doubt familiar with. Deadly to you, of course. Quite a flexible and potent thing, that glove.” Canby paused, “It’s only fair, really, against you, the so-called Man of Steel. At least until you’re more like putty.”

Superman tried to retreat, but the familiar ache was coursing his body and his knees were getting wobbly. Canby was grinning. “Kon was in the basement of the farmhouse, hiding behind a lead-lined refrigerator to make it hard for you to see him, assuming you even bothered to look. Quite ingenious if you ask me.”

Kon closed in on Superman until they were face-to-face just outside the barn. Then he opened his mouth to smile. Superman remembered that during their last encounter, in Alaska, Kon lost a great deal of teeth when he tried to bite The Man of Steel’s indestructible arm.

But someone had replaced them, and his new teeth were glowing green.



“And now, while I explain the terms of your surrender, Superman, I give you *Kon*, the *Kryptonite Man*.”

**ACT 4**

**IN THE FARM FIELD**



**KON AND SUPERMAN** stood head-on in the field outside the barn at the Kent Farm. Superman was already too weak from his hyper-speeding to run off and the pain from the Kryptonite was affecting him, as well – Kon could easily outrun him. But he was still strong enough to stand ... and think.

Canby stood there, too, like some macabre referee. “Kon has a very specific reason for being here, Superman. He’s a killer. He’s murdered men all across the West Coast, many with his bare hands. On the other hand, like you, I abhor killing – at least – with my own hands.”

Superman was focused on maintaining a safe distance from Kon so as to hold onto whatever strength he had left, not really listening to Canby. But then the master mob man caught his attention. “And so I brought him here to threaten Mrs. Kent and now Miss Lane, should you decide not to cooperate. In fact, you’re going to have to *stop* him.”

The Man of Steel didn’t want to waste his breath, but seethed, “I’ll stop you even if I have to *kill* both of you.” And he *meant* it, given what was at stake.

“Oh, I don’t think it’ll come to that.” said Canby nonchalantly.

Superman struggled to stay standing, despite the pain. Listening to Canby made it worse. The mob man droned on. “Besides shattering his hand, I understand that you performed some dental work on Kon back in Alaska – he can’t talk but he can write and informed me about your nasty fight. So I had my man, The Professor – he dabbles in dentistry – perform some surgery of his own, with some help from the late Ritchie King. I’m told that Mister King created a particularly virulent derivative of Kryptonite for the occasion. The special glove was made by Mister King, as well. A shame he became such a nuisance that I had to eliminate him.”

Canby then nodded at Kon, who made a move towards the Kent farmhouse. Superman dove at his feet, the furthest part of him from the Kryptonite teeth and glove, knocking Kon to the ground. Both men quickly got back up. Superman tried to back away from Kon to get out of range of the deadly Kryptonite radiation, but the goon easily closed the gap. The Man of Steel strained to think of something that would allow him to defeat the gorilla from Alaska. *Time might still be on my side*, but he was losing hope of any kind of help would come in time.

Kon, an expert fighter, took a swing at Superman's jaw. He connected but, despite the metallic glove, the goon recoiled in pain due to Superman's remaining invulnerability.

Canby's sermon continued. "Superman, since you will no doubt try to stop Kon, but fail, let me explain how things will be after you've lost. Kon is going to pummel you, a small price compared to the grief you've caused me. After I allow you recover, to an extent..."

Though Kon was in pain from his punch, so was The Man of Steel. He felt a sting from the steel glove worn by Kon – a sensation he'd not felt perhaps since the time in Latin America when he took a prison guard's bullet. He thought, *what's left of my invulnerability won't last much longer. Now's the time to try and beat Kon.*

"...we will fly back to Metropolis where the *Daily Planet* will sponsor an emergency press conference to be broadcast on coast-to-coast television and radio..."

Superman lashed out, nailing Kon under his jaw and in the neck. It momentarily stunned the huge hoodlum and made him gasp for breath. The Man of Steel then kicked Kon in the stomach with his right boot, causing the goon to stagger back, but not fall.

"...You and I will appear together, with you announcing that my capture and subsequent incarceration was part of a pre-meditated plot, executed out of desperation because you, Superman, failed to identify a so-called number one mob boss in Metropolis who you fabricated as a diversion from your futile efforts..."

Superman ignored Canby and focused on Kon, who was clearly angered by his inability to best The Man of Steel so far. The goon rushed in, this time with a powerful blow to Superman's gut using his gloved hand, knocking him to the dirt. Superman blinked, and when his eyes re-opened, Kon was standing there, smiling, with the ugly, jagged glowing teeth looking like a grisly serpent ready to swallow its prey. Superman tried to swing at Kon's mouth from his prone position but he missed. *My strength is going*, he thought.

"...Clark Kent will then write a front-page article in the *Daily Planet* exonerating me and implicating" Canby chuckled, "Superman per the press conference..."

Kon pulled Superman up to his feet by his super-shirt and then socked him with a right cross on the left side of his face. It stung, and Superman grunted out loud. He thought, *my invulnerability ... fading.*

“...You will then announce that you are leaving Metropolis forever...”

Superman, wobbling, took a wild swing at Kon's face, but missed and fell into the thug. The two hugged like boxers in the ring before the referee separates them. The closeness of the radiation sapped Superman even more. Kon then gripped Superman by his uniform, again, and began to pummel his face. He even began using his bare left fist, no longer fearing what remained of Superman's invulnerability. Superman thought, *can't lose consciousness. Must think of a way out.*

“...but in reality you will accompany myself, my associates, and of course Miss Lane and Sarah Kent...”

The Man of Steel had one thing left: his mind, super or not. Superman fell to the ground, partly because he could no longer stand, but also to buy himself some time to think.

“...to a private secluded estate, perhaps in the Caribbean or the territory of Hawaii...or both...”

Superman had precious seconds on the ground to take a breath and gather his thoughts. *Kon seems invincible but with so much at stake I can't give up. Think!* But his respite was short-lived. He felt powerful hands grip his body and was being lifted in the air!

“...where you will remain my servant for as long as I choose to let you live...”

Straining somewhat, Kon raised the Man of Steel and held his horizontal figure above his head, like a triumphant gladiator in front of ancient Roman Coliseum Crowds.

“...and of course, any misstep by you during that time against myself or my associates would result the immediate demise of Sarah Kent or Lois Lane...or both...”

Superman then felt himself flying through the air, though not under his power, as a result of a great heave by Kon. He then landed on his back by the side of the house near the attached storage shed; it felt like every part of his vertebrae had cracked. The pain was excruciating and he came close to blacking out.

“How do you like my terms, Superman? Are you ready to capitulate?” Canby shouted out the words as The Man of Steel was now several yards away.



But Superman wasn't finished. As Kon slowly and proudly walked over to him, Superman's mind raced. Despite the dizziness and relentless pain that he wasn't used to, The Man of Steel strained to focus on any possible advantage. After all, Kon wasn't invulnerable.

Superman tried to stand, but each time he did, he collapsed. After a third try, he stood, barely. Something was nagging at him. *Something that might be helpful.* As Kon approached, The Man of Steel looked out beyond the area of the barn and saw the clump of trees where he had been earlier in the day. *That's it!* He thought.

The Man of Steel staggered into the shed adjacent to the house. *It still has a lot of Pa's old tools,* he thought. He could hear Kon's grunting and his footsteps, in pursuit. Superman had only moments. There were shovels, a rake, a pitchfork – and a sledgehammer. He remembered that tool in particular because Pa used it to straighten shoes for their old mare, Comet.



Superman fetched the large, heavy, rusty sledgehammer, but as he did, Kon grabbed him around the waist and dragged The Man of Steel out of the shed. Kon then knocked Superman's hand so that he lost his grip on the sledgehammer, causing it to land outside of the shed. He then lifted and tossed Superman again so that he was now several feet away from the goon. Again, Superman struggled to stay conscious despite the horrible pain. He wondered why he wasn't finished – an ordinary man might have been – and then thought that some residual invulnerability was helping him to survive this far. But perhaps not much longer.

Kon approached Superman, with his mouth wide open, now seemingly intending to *bite* the Man of Steel as he tried to in Alaska, but this time around with his deadly dental work. At the same time, Canby saw that Kon was closing in for the *kill*, assuming that a Kryptonite bite might be the end of his enemy, and shouted, "No, you fool! I need him alive!" The criminal ran over to the Kon, attempting to pull him away, but the crazed goon swung and knocked Canby in the stomach with his ungloved hand. Canby crumpled to the ground, more out of breath than anything else, and stayed there. With the distraction, Superman was able to stagger away from Kon and towards what seemed like his only hope.

The muscular thug then turned his attention back to the scrambling Man of Steel. With Kon only a few feet away, Superman moved backwards towards the outside of the storage shed that was adjacent to the barn. He took a particular path to the outer storage shed wall, hoping Kon would follow. His movements were almost a meander, but Superman had a reason.

As Kon closed in once more, his again mouth wide open, clearly poised to *bite* Superman, taking slow deliberate steps, Superman pretended to accidentally fall backwards. With The Man of Steel lying on his back, Kon gave off a strange, muffled but maniacal laugh that only a mute could make and then approached, his garish mouth agape. The goon slowed slightly to savor the moment, his steps pounding in the dirt like a pile driver.

And then, just a few feet from his target, Kon suddenly disappeared!

He had stepped on the spot where Superman had dug the hole that he then hastily filled in earlier in the day - the hole leading to the secret tunnel. Kon was startled, but immediately tried to climb out of the depression. The metallic glove made it difficult for his right hand to grip the dirt and roots surrounding the hole - but he used his powerful legs to help propel him upward from the pit. However, the weakened Superman, still on his back, was waiting for him. As soon as Kon's head popped up out of the hole, Superman focused all his might into a kick - a kick with his right boot directly at Kon's mouth.

The kick stung Superman, and he thought he felt some teeth pierce his boot, even touching the skin of his foot. He quickly reached his right boot with his hand and pulled a few Kryptonite teeth from it, tossing them as far away as possible.

But as pained as Superman was, it was worse for Kon, who yelped in anguish as the recently fit teeth went flying, with most of them falling below the surface into the tunnel below.

With renewed resolve, Superman stood, took two quick steps back and grabbed the sledgehammer that had fallen by the shed. As Kon attempted to scramble out of the hole, he stuck out the hand protected by the metallic Kryptonite glove. Using all his strength, Superman swung and crashed the sledgehammer down on Kon's exposed hand, causing it to literally become unhinged and shatter. Superman swept the lethal remains of the glove into the hole with his foot as Kon, now in immeasurable agony, still attempted to escape from the pit. That moment allowed Superman to wonder where Canby had gone, but the criminal seemed nowhere in sight. His slowly returning x-ray vision was hazy at best and didn't help him find the criminal.

Suddenly Superman was knocked to the ground. Kon was now completely out the hole and had thrown his whole body at The Man of Steel. Though his Kryptonite teeth were missing, giving Kon an even scarier appearance, Superman guessed that some of the deadly fangs might have been swallowed, for he still felt the familiar twinges of pain. However, now the Kryptonite effect was minimal, allowing Superman to shrug off Kon's brawny frame. The brute fell back to the ground, but he immediately got up. Kon saw the sledgehammer discarded by Superman, picked it up and darted towards The Man of Steel. Superman could clearly see the wrath of Kon in his attacker's face.

As Kon charged his adversary, he reared back and smashed the sledgehammer on the side of Superman's head. But Pa Kent's tool left the Superman unharmed as it broke in two. He didn't know whether it was because of tool's age or Superman's returning invulnerability – or both – and he didn't care.

The resurgent Man of Steel then struck back. At another time he might have pulled his punches, for fear of killing his opponent. In this case, still somewhat weakened from the Kryptonite, Superman had no such compunction. With his strength flowing back into his muscles, The Man of Steel unleashed a swift right cross to the left side of Kon's head. The behemoth staggered backwards but then charged at Superman, unleashing a right cross smashing Superman in the belly.

The goon cried out in pain. Superman, realizing that his invulnerability had returned to a large extent, hit the right side of Kon's head. The burly fighter reeled, seemingly ready to fall, but *still* remained upright. Then Superman gathered all of his recovering strength and kicked Kon in the stomach, sending him into a concrete wall that provided support for the side of the shed, resulting in Kon's head bouncing off the cement.

With that, Kon slumped to the ground, his head and back against the wall, clearly unconscious. Superman backed off to distance himself from the remaining Kryptonite that might have been inside the goon, and then, wiping his face with his cape, focused his super-hearing in on a rapid heartbeat that wasn't Kon's.

It was coming from the barn.

#### ***IN THE FARMHOUSE***

In the farmhouse, Sarah Kent and Lois Lane were ushered by Danny over to two wooden chairs by a fireplace at the far end of the living room. Robbie was stretched out on the couch, a cloth with ice under his head, moaning. Cutter kept a gun on the women while Danny unraveled some rope he had found in the basement. He began to tie up Lois Lane, first.

Sarah Kent spoke. Her nice-old-lady tenor was replaced by an almost wicked-witch tone. "You creeps'll never get away with whatever you're trying to do."

Danny said, "Shut up, grandma."

Lois Lane struggled as the ropes were being tied around her. "Don't you talk to her that way!"

Suddenly there was a knock at the front door. Cutter kept his gun on the women, but backed over to the window. He looked out and was relieved. "It's the boss! Finally!" He paused and looked as far as he could see through the window. "But I don't see no Clark Kent."

The thug opened the front door. The man outside smiled. "Hello boys. We're pulling up stakes. Let's get out of here."

Cutter did a double take. "Huh? But—"

Danny had started to tie up Sarah Kent in the wooden chair. He shouted back. "Boss, what happened? Where's that nosey reporter you were wid?"

The man at the door just said. "The police are on their way. We need to get out of here, fast."

Cutter was eyeing the man at the door. Something didn't seem right, but he couldn't put his finger on it. Danny once again shouted back, "You mean, leave these two here? After all the trouble we went to?"

Danny stood up, and with his gun no longer pointed at the women, began to walk over to Cutter and the man at the door. At that moment, the kitchen door burst open and they heard, "OK, boys. Hands up!"

It was Inspector Bill Henderson, holding a gun, with another man next to him carrying a gun. Cutter turned and attempted to pull his weapon, but the man with Henderson shot him and the thug fell to the floor. Danny dropped his weapon and put his hands up.

And then another shot rang out. It was Henderson – he shot Robbie, still lying on the couch – the prone, pained thug was going for a gun next to him on Eben Kent's table. Lois then said to Henderson, who was freeing her from the ropes, "Inspector, boy am I glad to see you!"

The cop smiled. "I thought you usually reserve that for *Superman*."

Sarah Kent, freed by the man with Henderson, noticed the familiar face at the front door and swiftly went to fetch her rifle that earlier had been thrown into a corner of the room. She knew it was empty but wasn't sure if the man at the door did. She aimed it at him and shouted. "Now, Canby, where's my son?"

The man put his hands up, more out of confusion than anything else, and answered, "Excuse me?"

"My son, Clark. Where is he?"

Henderson realized what was going on. "You're Clark Kent's mother, is that right?"

The man at the door spoke again, "Clark Kent, the reporter?"

Lois Lane then jumped in and stared at the man. “You were with him before. What’s going on here?”

Henderson held a hand up. “Now hold on here. I can see there’s some confusion.” He turned to the man at the door. “He’s not Walter Canby.”

The man laughed. “Oh, no, most certainly not. I’m Jonas Rockwell.” He nodded at Lois. “Miss Lane, you and I talked recently.”

Lois stared at him and then, eyes lit up, said, “Of course!”

She turned to Sarah Kent, who was clearly befuddled. Henderson explained. “Mrs. Kent.” Then he briefly nodded at Lois Lane. “Miss Lane – this was *your* discovery” and then turned to look at Sarah, “Jonas Rockwell is the *brother* of William Canby. They’re twins.”

Lane interjected. “Well, actually, they’re two of *three* brothers - triplets.”

Rockwell jumped in. “I didn’t know any of this until Miss Lane visited me in prison.” He looked at the floor. “I was saddened to hear that one of my brothers, Burt, died a few years ago.”

Lois, who had been staring at Rockwell, turned to look back at Sarah Kent. “So you see, Mrs. Kent—“

But the elder Kent had disappeared through the kitchen door. The rifle in the corner was gone as were the bullets on the bookcase.

#### ***IN THE BARN***

Superman found Walter Canby back inside the barn. He could see that Canby was a different, with a look of defeat in his face. “And now, Canby, you’re going back to prison. Only this time, you’re not going to that country club in the mountains, but solitary at Strykers.”

Canby retreated from Superman. “Oh, no, I don’t think so. Not there.” He stepped back and seemed to stumble over a bale of hay. Superman went over to him and bent to pull him up, but Canby was fast – he reached into a pocket and discarded a dark grey cover that concealed a dull green object. Superman recoiled, and he himself fell backward, but onto straw-covered planks. Just then he remembered that Ritchie King had said before his murder that he had made another lead-lined pocket for an “old friend” – no doubt Canby.

The master mob man stood, and with a maniacal smile said, “You see, Superman, I still had one more trump card left.” He held the piece of Kryptonite over the prone Man of Steel. It was shaved at one end with the sharpness of a knife.

"I don't know what your disgusting alien body is like inside, but I assume that you have an aorta" he aimed the Kryptonite at Superman's neck "right about here. *This is for Connie!*"

Canby swung back, like a pitcher in a twisted wind-up, and then the dull green instrument of death came crashing down towards Superman's neck. At the same time, a shot echoed through the barn, and Canby clutched his back before collapsing to the ground.

Sarah Kent pointed her rifle downwards, and still gripping it, walked over to her son. She saw the Kryptonite on the floor, picked it up, walked briskly out of the barn and heaved it as far as she could. She noticed people from the farmhouse rushing towards the barn, presumably having heard the gunshot, and went back inside to kneel beside her son.

The elder Kent spoke. "Are you ok?" Still sharp as a tack at her age and not knowing if Canby was conscious, much less alive, she left nothing to chance, and refrained from adding "son".

Superman looked up and smiled, taking the cue. "Yes, I'm all right, Mrs. Kent. He tried to hurt me, but missed. Thank you." He winked.

"Nasty green stuff."

Superman was getting up now, "Oh, the Kryptonite. Yes, very much so."

He stood, and they hugged, but Sarah quickly broke the embrace. "People are coming. That pretty Miss Lane. Some policeman. And someone who looks like" she nodded at Canby, motionless, "him." Then she whispered, "Maybe you should—"

Superman nodded, and in a blur, changed to his Clark Kent clothes. After he did, though, weary from the ordeal – he collapsed to the floor.

At that moment, Lois, Henderson and Rockwell, along with some of Henderson's men came in. Henderson and his men were holding guns. Henderson said, "What in blazes!?"

The men and Lois Lane ran over to Clark. Lois bent down to him. "Clark, are you ok?"

Clark, who had momentarily passed out – for real – opened his eyes. "Oh, hello, Lois. Boy, am I happy to see you..." He smiled.

Near them, a somber Jonas Rockwell bent over his brother, feeling for a pulse. To his relief, Canby was alive. Rockwell yelled, to no one in particular, "Get an ambulance!"

Henderson motioned to one his men, and said, "Jurgens, get the medics" and his man scurried out of the barn.

Upon hearing Rockwell's voice, Canby strained to open his eyes. Rockwell spoke, "Hello, Walter."

Canby couldn't believe it. "You—who... are ..."

"I'm your brother, Jonas."

"Joe Nis?"

"Jonas. Jonas Rockwell."

"Rock... Well... I remember. Reading..."

"Yes, yes. And believe it or not, Burt Burnside, too. He was our brother. Our *late* brother, I'm afraid. From what I understand, the three of us were separated at birth."

"Burt Burn... Astonishing. I don't... believe..."

"Well, besides looking like each other, we all had the criminal urge. So we must be related, brother." Rockwell smiled.

"I can't—" but Canby had faded back to unconsciousness.

"Hang in there, Walter."

Rockwell stood up. Everyone had been watching the scene. He walked over to Henderson. "Thank you, Inspector. I wouldn't have believed it myself."

The police inspector responded. "And we'll honor our part of the bargain." He looked at his men and ordered them to put handcuffs on Rockwell.

Henderson's man Jurgens ran back in with some men in white uniforms carrying a stretcher. Lois Lane said, "That was fast!"

Henderson said, "We figured there'd be injuries and I arranged through the Smallville police to have medics standby when we got here."

Kent, who was now standing, gently pulled Henderson over to a corner of the barn and nodded back at Rockwell. "So what ended up happening, Bill?"

Henderson responded. "We cut a deal. Didn't even make it to the parole hearing. You didn't give me enough time." He smiled. "And J. Edgar came through. Even sprung

for a private jet aero plane to get us here.” Henderson lost his smile and continued. “Rockwell gets a reduced sentence. In fact, he’s going to the Hackenbosch Prison where Canby – his brother – was.”

Kent said, “Just the same, someone had better keep an eye on him.” He pointed towards the barn entrance. “And, Inspector, there’s a carcass alongside a shed out there that needs to be hauled away to a maximum-security cell. Take a look.” Kent nodded in the direction of the shed.

Henderson sprinted outside and saw Kon slumped against the outer wall of the shed. When he returned inside the barn, Kent was talking to his mother and Lois Lane. The Inspector interrupted Kent. “Who was that brute? And what happened to him?”

Kent just grinned. “One of Canby’s goons who badly needs to see a dentist.” Henderson gave the reporter a quizzical look, but said nothing more to Kent. He called out to one of the FBI men and instructed him to haul the big man away in an ambulance under special guard.

A medic bent over Canby and then called out to Henderson. “It’s just a flesh wound. Seems to be in shock, though. We’ll take a look.”

As Canby was carried out on a stretcher, Kent saw this and said, “And *he’d* better go in solitary this time, Inspector!”

“There’s such a cell waiting for him, Kent, arranged by these men from the FBI.” He nodded at some of the men that came there with Henderson. “You didn’t think I had jurisdiction outside of Metropolis, did you? But they deputized me just for this occasion. Hoover did it over the phone, in fact.”

Kent said, “Well, I’m impressed.”

Lois Lane joined in. “You mean, Inspector, you’re a Fed now?”

Henderson smiled, “Well, just an honorary one. It’s back to Metropolis after this, you know.”

Kent grinned, “But Bill, it could be a whole new career for you...”

Henderson replied, “Well, maybe one day, but for now I’ll stick to Metropolis.”

Rockwell was brought over to Henderson by an FBI man. The criminal said, “Inspector, if it’s all right, I’d like to ride with my brother in the ambulance. I mean, it’s been all these years, and...”



“Well, I suppose it’s ok.” Henderson spoke to the FBI man. “Jurgens, go in the ambulance with them, will ya? Make sure they’re cuffed to the vehicle and you ride with them – in the back.” Jurgens nodded and Rockwell said, “Thank you, Inspector. I’m grateful.”

**ACT 5**

**IN THE FARMHOUSE**

**SOON HENDERSON AND THE FBI MEN LEFT**, along with Rockwell, leaving Sarah Kent, her son, and Lois Lane back at the farmhouse. While Lois called in the entire story to Perry White from a kitchen phone, Clark and his mother spent a few minutes chatting about what had happened, sitting in the den.

Clark sat next to his mother on the same sofa where Robbie the thug lay a little more than an hour ago. He put his arm around her and hugging her, said, “Ma, you need to be very careful about who you deal with. I can’t always be here to protect you, you know.”

Sarah sounded just a bit embarrassed. “Yeah, that man Canby sure turned on the charm.”

“Don’t feel too bad -- he fooled a whole city for awhile.”

“Well, things turned out ok now, didn’t they, son?”

Clark removed his arm and shifted so that he could look at his mother. “Eventually, but you and Lois were in deadly danger. It got pretty dicey for awhile.”

“Clark – that man – Canby. He came here to threaten *you* – didn’t he?”

“That was his plan, yes, it seemed that way.”

“But did he do it ‘cause he knows, I mean, he found out that—“

Clark lowered his voice. “That I’m Superman?”

Sarah Kent nodded.

“He seemed to have evidence. Of course I didn’t let on that his proof was right on the mark. In the end, I think I did a convincing job of making him think that we’re two different people.”

“Land sakes, how’d you manage that?”

Clark told his mother about his visit to Professor Lucerne and “hyper-speed”. She smiled, “This Professor – is he ‘bout my age?”

“*Ma!*” Sarah Kent just grinned as her son went on, describing hyper-speed. “I used it to appear as myself *and* Superman. It wasn’t easy. I practiced back in Metropolis until I felt comfortable with it. The hardest part was changing my clothes constantly, in the blink of an eye, in fact.”

“How’d you know’d you’d need to use it – this thing the Professor taught you?”

Clark explained that he thought he might need to speed back to Metropolis while in Alaska. “Beyond that, I don’t know, Ma – just a hunch, I guess. But it drains me quite a bit – you saw.”

“Oh, I thought that was the rock – the Krypto—“

“*Kryptonite*. Well, all told, both things knocked the wind out of me.”

Sarah Kent got up and peeked into the kitchen. Lois was still on the phone and smiled to Clark’s mother, whispering, “I’ll be a few more minutes.” Sarah smiled back and returned to Clark in the living room.

Excited, she said, “Show me how you did it then. Real quick, ‘fore Lois comes in.”

“Oh, Ma, I told you, it’s very draining.”

“Hush, you can take a nap afterwards.”

Rolling his eyes, Clark got up from the couch. “All right. Here goes.”

Suddenly, Sarah Kent saw her son Clark ... dressed as Clark ... and her son ... as Superman. They were standing side by side in front of the fireplace. Each smiled and even looked at *each other!*

And then they heard, “Superman! What are *you* doing here?” Lois Lane had come from the kitchen. She started walking towards both “Superman and Clark”, but Sarah Kent said to the girl reporter. “Oh, Superman just flew in to see how things were. He was just leaving – uh, told us there’s an emergency.”

Superman then headed for the front door and opened it. As Lois fixed her eyes on him, he said, “Sorry, Miss Lane, I’ve got to fly”, and disappeared through the door. She turned around to look at Clark, who by that point was sitting on the couch, closing his eyes.

Lois was about to look out the window to watch Superman take off, when she heard Clark groaning. She went over to him and said, “Clark, are you all right?”

“Oh, sure, Lois. Just beat. It’s been quite a day, you know.”

***IN AN AMBULANCE, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE KENT FARM AND SMALLVILLE***

The ambulance carrying Canby, Rockwell and FBI man Jurgens made its way down Schuster Road towards Smallville, heading to the town hospital where Canby could be examined and treated, if necessary. A Highway Patrol car carrying Henderson and two other FBI men provided an escort. Jurgens stayed in the back of the

ambulance with Rockwell and Canby. Canby was cuffed to his stretcher and Rockwell was cuffed to a handle protruding from the side of the ambulance interior. Jurgens sat at the rear of the ambulance bay where he could view both prisoners. Behind him was a sliding panel that could be opened, allowing him to speak with the driver.

Rockwell sat on a short bench in the vehicle alongside his brother who by this time was wide-awake, looking at his doppelgänger. Canby smiled. "I still can't believe it. You're like a dream."

Rockwell grinned, "I can assure you I'm not."

The two exchanged capsule summaries of their life histories, some of which they knew from newspaper accounts, most of which they didn't know, and quickly established a rapport. Each felt like they were talking to a mirror.



Ten minutes after leaving the Kent Farm, the Highway Patrol escort vehicle and ambulance veered onto a main road leading to town but soon came to a halt. After a minute, Jurgens opened the sliding panel and spoke to the driver. "Why aren't we moving?"



The driver leaned his head back, saying "bridge construction" and nodded at the windshield of the ambulance. Jurgens peered through the window and saw a man in the distance wearing a hardhat holding a red flag to signal "stop". Three cars and two trucks were in front of the Highway Patrol escort. Jurgens muttered, "Figures", and closed the panel.

Meanwhile Canby and Rockwell continued their conversation. In a short matter of time, a strong bond built between the two men. It was as if years that they should

have had growing up together and knowing each other were being compressed into the handful of minutes they were now sharing.

Outside at the bridge construction site, Rick Westin was nearing the end of a bad day. He had gotten almost no sleep the night before, what with a new baby and a little too much to drink down at the local bar with some friends. His job inspecting the rivets, nuts and bolts in the repair job of the tenth-of-a-mile bridge that spanned the Tecumseh River required focus – something he didn't have that day.

With his boss hounding him and irate drivers honking, not to mention an intense hunger that made him think solely of Betty's chicken potpie waiting for him at home, Westin had become uncharacteristically careless in what would be his final inspection of the trestle that day.

And that was a particularly unfortunate thing, because when the construction flagman was finally allowed to let traffic through, the two heavy load trucks waiting to cross the single open lane of the span, one carrying a full load of cement, and the other gravel, stressed the structure more than it could handle. Had Rick Westin been in top form, he would have noticed several rusty bolts not quite secured into girders supporting the bridge that was under repair.



The first truck safely made it across to the other side but caused the span's underpinnings to nearly come apart. It was the second truck that proved to be too much for the structure, resulting in two of the girders coming loose and crashing into the torrent below. In turn, the road carried by the bridge buckled and then split apart under the weight of the second truck, causing the heavily laden vehicle to fall into the river. The Highway Patrol car behind it fared only a little better: it tumbled onto a rock embankment that separated the bridge from the river, ending up mostly submerged in the rushing waters, with only its trunk and rear tires still on land.



The ambulance driver had stopped just short of the bridge and uttered an expletive as the scene unfolded in front of him. The three men in the ambulance bay felt the sudden stop. Once Jurgens heard the driver's shout, he opened the sliding panel, and seeing that part of the bridge was missing, went into action. He turned towards the rear of the ambulance and crouched while moving toward the back panel doors to avoid hitting his head on the interior roof.

For Walter Canby, opportunity knocked. Though handcuffed to the stretcher secured to the floor of the ambulance, his feet were mobile. Without hesitation, he

stuck his left leg out and tripped the FBI man. Jurgens went tumbling into the rear of the vehicle, striking his forehead on a steel handle bolted into the panel surrounding the exit doors, sending him sprawling onto the narrow floor of the ambulance bay.

As soon as Canby saw that Jurgens wasn't moving, he turned to look at his brother, who was close to the now-prone FBI man. Wary even a semi-conscious Jurgens might hear him, Canby whispered, "Get the keys!" and nodded in the direction of the motionless lawman.

Rockwell hesitated for a moment, but then saw a strange mix of pleading and opportunity in his brother's face. That was all he needed to be convinced. He slid as far as the cuffs would allow and stretched enough to pull Jurgens close to him. Jonas then reached into one of the FBI man's suit coat pockets and hit the jackpot on the first try. He anxiously tried each key on the key ring; after several precious seconds he unlocked his brother's cuffs and his own.

Now came the hard part. What was going on outside?

Both men climbed over Jurgens to the back door and opened it, only to see a line of cars and other vehicles stretching back down the road from which they had just come. They jumped out and walked to the front of the ambulance to find construction workers scrambling down the embankment both to the Highway Patrol car and towards the river where the truck had plunged. The lookalike criminals noticed that the ambulance driver's seat was empty and assumed that the driver had run down the embankment with the other rescuers to help. Then Canby scrambled to the rear of the ambulance and back inside. When he reappeared, Rockwell saw him briefly open his suit jacket to reveal *two* guns tucked in his pants. He had gotten both from Jurgens along with the FBI man's wallet.

Beside the ambulance and shielded via his coat jacket from anyone who might see, Canby handed one of the weapons to his brother and smiled. "Time for you and me to start a new life together – *brother*." Rockwell paused – he was at a crossroads and both men knew it. Rockwell could refuse and eventually gain freedom via his shortened prison sentence. Or enjoy a tentative, risky escape now. But in a matter of seconds, he smiled back at his brother, nodding, and then both walked in the opposite direction of the bridge disaster. Just before doing so, they briefly looked back at the collapsed bridge and then, with their eyes following the fallen girders towards the river, saw the Highway Patrol car submersed in the waters. Both could see that Henderson and the other FBI men had made it safely to the opposite shore of the waterway.

With that, the twin brothers quickly bolted, with a freedom seemingly within their grasp.

**ON THE BUS, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SMALLVILLE AND METROPOLIS**

With all the hoopla at the Kent Farm having died down, Clark insisted that he stay with his mother overnight just to make sure she recovered from recent events. But Sarah Kent, stubborn as ever, swore she was fine. To be sure, Clark arranged to have Cousin Edith stay with her at the farm and even have neighbor Ben Hubbard, just returned from a trip, to look in on her.

As a result, at sundown, Lois and Clark having said so long to Sarah Kent, took the last bus of the evening bound for Metropolis from the Smallville depot. They sat down at the rear of the bus where it was a bit more spacious. As they pulled out of the depot, the two reporters engaged in chitchat about the weather (ominous rainclouds obscured the sunset) and the town of Smallville (Lois compared it to her hometown of Pittsdale). Then Clark delved into matters more relevant to their recent experiences. "You know Lois, next time you do any research into something so big and important, let me know. Maybe I can help."

"Oh Clark, I just couldn't. I wanted this one all to myself."

"Well, you certainly got yourself into a lot of trouble."

"It didn't start out that way. It was just a lot of investigation at first. I wasn't planning on getting involved with Walter Canby - *or* his brother. Just to dig up facts about their past."



"So tell me - just how were you able to keep tabs on Canby all this time?"

"Sheer luck, I guess."

"Come on. It had to be more than that."

"Well, the lucky part was at the beginning, for sure."

"Please explain, Miss Lane." Clark smiled.

Lois smiled back. "Walter Canby has a secretary. Or much more than that - a Gal Friday."

"I'll bet it was the woman who called the *Planet* that day to lure me - I mean, Superman - to Canby's place on Dover's Cliff, that night years ago."

"I wouldn't be surprised. Her name is Sally Lambert."

"Aha..."

“You sound like you know her.”

Clark adjusted his glasses. “Oh, well, not really, except I remember her voice from that call. Assuming it was even her.”

***ON THE ROAD, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SMALLVILLE AND METROPOLIS***



Tad Hutchins was late, but it wasn't his fault. A train derailment outside the Metropolis refinery caused him to lose three whole hours on his route. Now his delivery of gasoline would be delayed. He'd need to hole up outside of Smallville overnight at a truck stop before making his deliveries. Hutchins kept his pace up, barreling down Miller Road, but watching his speed. Couldn't afford an accident, what with his Esso tanker truck containing all that highly combustible fuel. And now the road was getting damp as rain began to fall.

***ON THE BUS, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SMALLVILLE AND METROPOLIS***

Lois continued her conversation with Clark. “Well, anyway, I lucked out because Lambert and of all people, my sister, use the same hairdresser.”

“You don't say.” Clark's eyes lit up. “Say, when is Lucy going to give Jimmy her phone number? He's really sweet on her.”

“You'll have to ask her. May I continue?”

“Yes, Miss Lane.” Clark's singsong voice projected a mock apology.

“So after awhile they became acquaintances. Somehow their hairdressing schedules seemed to mesh. Surprising, given Lucy's timetable.”

“She still working for Pan Am?”

“Not any more. Jumped to TWA. Got a raise and a promotion.”

“Good for her! Anyway, go on with your story.”



“Well, Lambert must have felt comfortable with Lucy and started telling her about a friend she visits a lot in Barrysburg.”

“Hmmm...”

“So one night Lucy mentioned it to me, asking me what’s so important that could be in Barrysburg and I got to wondering. The only thing near that town is Hackenbosch Prison. Out of curiosity—“

Clark smiled. “More like a good reporter’s intuition.”

“Flattery will get you nowhere, Mister Kent.” Lois imitated a dead serious tone that became a smile. She continued, “Well, I was curious to know who Sally Lambert was visiting. One of Inspector Henderson’s men showed me a list of inmates. It’s not a large facility, you know.”

“Yes, I’m aware.”

“There were exactly twenty names listed as having come from Metropolis. But only one name stood out.”

“Walter Canby.”

“Exactly!”

“But that didn’t mean Lambert was seeing *him*. Oh, no, don’t tell me – you smelled a story and you tailed Sally Lambert.”

Lois’s eyes lit up. “She took the bus. I took my car. Did it twice, just to be sure.”

“Well, ok, but like I said, so what? There are lots of prisoners in that place.”

“Mister Kent, ye have little faith.”

“Not really, Lois.” He winked. They both looked at the window as rain began streaking it.

“I got Inspector Henderson to arrange a visit to the prison.”

“Presumably that’s when you had to explain your research to Bill.”

“I did, but in return he arranged a tour of the place with the warden.”



“Hopefully you stayed out of sight. I would imagine that in order to work for Canby, this Sally Lambert had to be pretty crafty. In fact, I wouldn’t be surprised if she knows a lot about you, me *and* our co-workers, including what we look like.”

“Oh, I was careful. Plus I made sure my tour coincided with her trip, of course.”

“Of course. And you saw her meeting with Canby.”

“You got it.”

“And presumably Lambert told Lucy about a trip to Smallville.”

“She did – the last time they saw each other. I had no idea why Canby was here, of all places – no offense to your hometown, Clark. But I figured that she was coming down here to meet up with Canby after he escaped.”

“Hmmm...I wonder, then, what happened to her...” He yawned.

“Am I boring you, Mister Kent?”

“No, but it was a long day. Mind if I close my eyes for a few minutes?”

Lois smiled. “That’s all right – it was quite an ordeal. Go ahead, Clark.”

Exhaustion was not a normal experience for Clark, but he was still feeling the effects of the Kryptonite and hyper-speeding, and dozed off, helped by the vibration of the bus along the now rain-slicked road.

**ACT 6**

**SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SMALLVILLE AND METROPOLIS**

**SALLY LAMBERT KNEW HOW TO PILOT A BOAT** as well as she could a plane. Although the latter was much more difficult and dangerous, navigating a river like the Tecumseh wasn't easy. There were plenty of tricky currents and obstacles to make steering a challenge. But she and Canby had chosen it as an escape route – just in case things fell apart at the farm, which they did, unbeknownst to her. It was ideal, being that it was a tributary of the Metropolis River and would allow them access to the city's waterways – and the ocean. The river escape was especially convenient if there were police roadblocks.

Sally had bought the small yacht using forged credit documents. *By the time they're discovered, we'll be out of the country*, she thought. She anchored herself by the Sherman Dam, an earthen barrier created by the Army Corp of Engineers just before World War II. Its purpose was to prevent the Tecumseh from flooding the valley and Smallville, especially on rainy nights like this one when it was swollen. A drainage channel brought water from the reservoir created by the dam to the river that led to Smallville.

She kept a small light burning and waited anxiously. Her instructions were to stay for 36 hours after Canby's last signal to her, and then if no one showed up, ditch the boat before going into hiding.

In the meantime, Lois Lane looked out the water-speckled window of the bus as it slowed down. It was making a final stop near the outskirts of Smallville at a one-horse town called Kirbyville before its long run across the countryside to the suburbs of Metropolis. She couldn't see it, but two men wearing raincoats and rain hats were waiting just outside the town's lone gas station to board the bus.

Clark Kent, though, found himself back in the barn at the Kent farm. It seemed like the barn was now in the vortex of a violent thunderstorm. He could almost *feel* the electricity from bolts of lightning outside, followed by deafening booms of thunder. The reporter's eyes were shut tight. As he struggled to open them, Kent felt a tremendous ache throughout his body.



Kent gradually opened his eyes and saw that he was lying on the floorboards in the center of the barn in his suit, shirt and tie – his “Clark Kent” clothes. Above him, holding a stick of Kryptonite was Walter Canby. Kent barely got the name out. “C-Canby...”

“No, Kent, sorry to disappoint you. I’m Jonas Rockwell.” Rockwell laughed.

More lightning crackled, followed by thunder that shook the barn. Then Rockwell moved to his left, and another man looking just like him appeared. He, too, was holding a stick of Kryptonite. Kent said, "A-are you--?"

The man laughed and said, "Oh no, I'm not Walter Canby. Don't you remember me, Kent? I stole that snapshot from a kid showing someone in street clothes changing to Superman. And later I fired my gun at you. *Point blank range*. I'm a pretty good shot. No way I could've missed. You should have been on the floor, dead, but a bullet can't kill The Man of Steel. Lame lucky silver dollar trick on your part. Only a fool would've believed that. My brother Jonas tells me you pulled a similar stunt on him."

He laughed again. "Anyway, Kent, I'm offended – how could you forget Burt Burnside, The Tulip Man?" Then he reached from behind him. "Here, have one." Burnside threw a tulip on Kent's prone body. "Sorry I don't have lilies". More laughter from him, and then he moved to his left.

Still another man appeared, also holding a deadly green stick. "Hello Kent."

Clark could only grunt and nod. He was no longer sure what he was seeing. The man continued. "No, no, I'm not Canby or Rockwell *or* Burnside. I captured that pretty policewoman you pretended was your wife. You were foolish not to *really* marry her. She would've been quite a catch, worthy of a super man." He paused while a huge spoke of lightning lit up windows and entrance to the barn, accompanied by an explosion of thunder.

"Anyway, I could have retired rich if you hadn't stopped me. But now I'll get my revenge. Oh, I have a name, but you all called me Mister 'X', so Mister 'X' I am." He chuckled.

Then, Clark Kent, with all his remaining strength, strained to look around him and saw that he was suddenly in his Superman uniform. Worse, he saw four men – identical – each holding a stick of deadly, green Kryptonite – moving clockwise in a circle, closing in around him.

And then one of them spoke. "If you're wondering Kent – Superman – *I'm* Walter Canby. These are my brothers." Then Canby nodded at Mister 'X'. "Well, he isn't exactly, but in a sense, he's a brother, too."

Canby looked back at Superman. "We all have reasons to see you dead. And once you're gone, Metropolis – and much more - will be ours. We'll run a criminal empire beyond imagination. And no one will be able to stop us. Certainly not you. We're going to haul your alien corpse back to Metropolis and sink you to the bottom of the harbor. Good-bye – Clark Kent alias Superman!"

They all circled around, closing in with the deadly sticks of Kryptonite. Superman tried to struggle free but it was useless. All he could do was lie there, helplessly, and listen to the four identical criminals chanting together:

“Die!”

“Die!”

“Die!”

“Try!”

Clark felt like he was rising from a deep dark pit. But instead of climbing out, he kept shaking himself. Then he realized he was *being* shaken and strained to open his eyes. He heard. “Try! Try to wake up, Clark! *Please try!*”

“L-Lois?” His eyes were open.

“Thank goodness.”

“I, uh, must have been dreaming. I think it was a nightmare.” He shook his head to shed the cobwebs.

“Tell me about it later. We’ve got trouble.”

Clark briefly peered outside the window, seeing in the pitch darkness that the Smallville-to-Metropolis bus was now deep into the countryside that separated the two locales. He saw, too, that the weather had taken a turn for the worse, what with buckets of rain pummeling the roof of their vehicle. Lois continued, “Something’s going on up front. I can’t see much, but it sounds like the bus driver’s having an argument with someone. Can you--”

The girl reporter was interrupted by an announcement from the front of the bus. A voice called out. “Attention everyone! We’re going to make an extra stop! Everybody please remain in your seats!” The familiar voice made the *Daily Planet* pair shudder.

“That voice – Clark, what’s going on?”

Clark didn’t answer. He peered ahead, focused on the source of the noise, and then said. “*Great Scott!*”

“Clark, what is it?”

But Kent didn’t answer. He left his seat and bounded down the aisle towards the front of the bus. He approached the source of the announcement standing in the aisle by the first set of seats. The man was holding a gun and pointed it in the

general direction of the passengers. Another man was in the bus entryway holding a gun on the driver.

The gunman in the aisle spoke. "I thought I made it very clear. No one is to leave his or her—" The man then looked closely and smiled. "Well, well. If it isn't my dear friend, Clark Kent."

At the sound of Kent's name, the other man looked their way, still with his gun aimed at the driver. "Kent? *Here?*"

This time Clark Kent, with hands in the air, spoke: "You men need to give yourselves up. You'll never get away with this." Kent thought, *I might disarm the man in front of me, but that could risk the life of the driver.*

The gunman nearest to Kent spoke. "Oh, we will, Mr. Kent, we will."

"Walter Canby!" It was Lois Lane, who had walked down the aisle. Kent adjusted his stance so that she was completely blocked by danger from the gun, but she poked her head around Kent, nudging a clearly distressed seated passenger.

"Well hello Miss Lane, but I'm afraid you're wrong. I'm Jonas Rockwell. *He's* Walter Canby." Rockwell nodded to the gunman next to the driver. Canby smiled back.

Rockwell turned back to Kent and was dead serious. "No, Mr. Kent, as I started to say, we'll get away with this. My brother finally convinced the driver to turn onto Miller Road. At a certain point we'll take leave of you there, no harm done."

He gave a curt smile and continued. "In case you're wondering, my brother had a flesh wound. And earlier he convinced me that crime still *does* pay." He then stepped back into the driver's well alongside Canby. Between the two of them their guns covered the driver and the passengers.

Lois whispered to Clark: "Miller Road. That goes near Squall Canyon. By the Tecumseh River and Sherman Dam."

But Clark was focusing on the threat at hand. He sent a thin invisible beam of heat vision into the barrel of Rockwell's gun, melting it enough so that a bullet would have trouble emerging. *Hope he doesn't smell the melted gun barrel*, Kent thought. But he didn't have a clear shot of Canby's gun muzzle, and a super-speed disarming of the criminal was nearly impossible given the cramped logistics. Then the reporter answered Lois Lane, having looked ahead down the road with his super-vision, "Yes, it wouldn't surprise me if Canby has Sally Lambert waiting on the river in a boat for them."

Canby called out. "Very good guess, Mister Kent. In fact, we're just about there now."

At the same time, Tad Hutchins was making his way across the road atop Sherman Dam. Despite being late, he slowed his tanker due to the rain and the narrowness of the road. Hutchins knew that to his right was a reservoir – *was that a boat with a light? In the pouring rain?* – and, on the other side, a canyon that carried the Tecumseh River to Smallville.

To his despair, ahead, he saw headlights bearing down on him.

Meanwhile, the stubborn bus driver had what he thought was a better idea than to let a couple of thugs divert his vehicle. As they approached the dam, he turned the steering wheel sharply and opened the door of the bus, hoping the lurch would to propel both Canby and Rockwell out. Rockwell knew what the driver was doing, and instinctively tried to fire a shot at him. However, with the weapon's chamber blocked, all it did was explode his hand. As he recoiled in pain he fell backwards into his brother, with both of them tumbling out the open bus door landing hard on the road between the dam and the lake. In the confusion, Clark gently nudged Lois onto the lap of a passenger, after which he stepped down to the entranceway of the bus from which the two criminal brothers had just disappeared.

Meanwhile, the rain-slicked road was too much for the bus, and it careened through a wooden guardrail separating Miller Road from the precipice that led to Squall Canyon. Gravity immediately took it and its frantic passengers on a death spiral towards the gorge below. With the bus door still open, Clark Kent tumbled out. Lois Lane, now prone in the aisle, managed to see her colleague disappear. She barely got off a cry of "*Clark!*"



Tad Hutchins saw his life pass before him. At the last minute, seeing headlights coming towards his tanker, he turned the steering wheel sharply right towards the lake. At the same time, he opened his cabin door and jumped. He landed on the road, and, though breaking an ankle, scrambled as far back down the highway towards the woods as possible. The tanker wasn't as fortunate. A rocky embankment separated the road from the lake, causing the Esso truck to bounce like a toy. Only this toy was filled with volatile gasoline. All it took was one spark caused by friction between the tanker and rocks to result in a sudden, huge fireball that lit up the darkness.

As that was going on, each person on the bus was hanging onto the seat in front of him or her for dear life, but they could all feel it turning, with gravity pulling the passengers forward. Some of them screamed, some of them prayed, and some of them were too shocked to utter any sound.

For those who prayed, their pleas were answered.

More than halfway down into the canyon, suddenly the bus's downward movement stopped. The vehicle then leveled off – and began rising. The passengers were still screaming and in shock, not knowing what was coming next – that is, all but one:



Lois Lane, who had been through this countless times before, knew why the bus had righted itself.

***Superman!***

After Clark Kent had purposely fallen out of the bus, he quickly changed, mid-air, in the darkness and pouring rain, into his familiar red, blue and yellow uniform. Within moments, using his infrared vision, he spotted the bus and caught it. Superman next carried the bus up, up and away, gently landing it alongside the highway near the dam, but tucked away where the forest resumed after being separated by the dam, lake and river.

Once the bus was secure, he poked his head inside. "Everyone ok?"

It was, of course, Lois Lane who yelled back. "Superman! Am I sure glad—"

The Man of Steel filled in the rest. "Yes, I know – you're sure glad to see me." He smiled but then said, urgently. "Miss Lane. I'm putting you in charge. As you can see, I'm going to be busy." Superman nodded at the fiery scene behind him.

"But Superman! What about Clark?!" She cried out, but to no avail, as Superman had already sped off towards the dam. The girl reporter then noticed a figure in the woods, limping his way to the bus. He was hard to see, so she called out, ever hopeful, "Clark?"

A voice called back, "No ma'am. Name's Hutchins." He got closer. "Your bus have a first aid kit?"



The gasoline-fed fireball had been huge and extended its reach to the forest on the Smallville side of the dam. Knowing that the downpour would help only a little bit, Superman stood in front of the inferno and reared back to send a burst of super-breath toward the flames that were consuming trees by the lake. In seconds there were just embers left. He did the same for the gasoline-fueled fire on top of the lake. Before long, darkness resumed as the many fires were doused. The pockets of flames that remained functioned as bizarre illumination for the scene.

But then Superman saw a new problem: the fireball had blown a hole in the earthen dam. Water was flooding through the dirt barrier; with the lake already overflowing from the rainstorm, the pressure was too much for the man-made structure. Before having a chance to do anything, Superman watched helplessly as the dam burst completely and a massive angry wall of



water gushed through to the chasm below. The Tecumseh River was now pushing its newfound and raging waters towards the town of Smallville.

Superman was determined not to let the wave of water reach the town of his boyhood. His first priority was to repair the dam so as not to add to the problem. With lightning speed, he went into the nearby forest and felled a number of trees. Putting them on the side of the road near the bus, Superman plunged into the canyon to gather huge boulders; he put them on the side of the road near the bus. Everyone on the bus was riveted to the windows or had come outside, watching the unbelievable scene unfold, like a film sped up. Then Superman deposited the trees and boulders into the massive gap made by the raging waters, where the dam used to be. He added dirt and smaller boulders to plug up any holes. Before long, the torrent was a trickle. *The dam will hold – for now*, he thought.



There was one more thing to do. The Tecumseh River was still out of control, below, due to a combination of the burst dam and rainstorm. Like a tsunami, it was bearing down on Smallville, whose outskirts were only a few miles away. Superman took off over the canyon and then reached the headwaters of the surge. Flying high enough over the torrent, he unleashed a powerful wide beam of heat vision, focusing it on the water's crest. Almost immediately, vapor began to form above the river and before long, the seeming tidal wave had simply joined with the rainstorm, with its fury diffused.

The crisis had been averted.

Superman turned, took a quick look back at the bus with his amazing vision to make sure everyone was still all right and then super-swiftly flew to Kirbyville, which he estimated had the nearest working telephone. The proprietor of Kirbyville's lone gas station, an elderly man, was just closing up shop when the Man of Steel swooped down in the rain. As the man lifted a "CLOSED" sign in his window, Superman knocked on the glass entrance. The startled man dropped the sign and took a step back, eyes wide open. Superman shouted through the glass, with rain pouring down around him. "There's been a terrible accident! Call the police and have them come out to the Sherman Dam right away! Have them call for an ambulance, too – more than one!"

The startled man said nothing, so Superman shouted. "Please – this is serious – lives may be at stake!"

With that, the man shook his head and rushed over to his telephone. He shouted back to Superman, "OK!"

Superman yelled back, "Thank you!" and flew off, back to the dam.



Despite the road having been destroyed, through the smell of gasoline and the pounding rain, Lois Lane had ventured from the relative safety of the bus out to the dam. She had taken a flashlight given to her by the bus driver to make her way down the center of what was left of the highway that crossed the earthen structure.

Along the way, above the sound of the downpour, she called out “Clark!” multiple times. Each time there was no response, her heart sank. But the girl reporter kept her resolve and made it to the forest on the Smallville side of the dam. Once again she called “Clark!”

Still no response. She stood there for a full three minutes, shining her flashlight on the woods where Superman had taken several trees for the makeshift dam repair. Then she turned and slowly headed back to the bus, saying in a low voice and crying, “Oh Clark...”

“Lois? Is that you?” It was a strained voice from the shore, by the woods.

“Clark?!”

“Yes, Lois, I’m here. I’m a little shaken up. Must have conked out for awhile. Shine your light towards my voice. I can see it.”

She did, and saw a reflection off of his glasses. Soon he was almost in front of her, on the broken road, and she rushed to him. They embraced and she said, “I thought I had lost you.”

“Lois, it would take much more than that...”

“Thank goodness Superman happened to show up ---“

Clark knew all too well what was coming next from his fellow reporter.

Lois pulled back and said, “Wait a minute—“

“Lois, I’m wet and shivering. I’m assuming you came from the bus. Can we talk later?”

“OK Mister Kent, but you have a lot of explaining to do, what with Superman appearing after you – disappeared?”

But Clark knew that there was a more important matter - something Lois had to see before they went back to the bus. He had seen it, with his super-eyes, but didn’t want to be the only one to know. Though Lois was holding the flashlight, he pretended to accidentally nudge the torch, sending the beam towards the side of the broken up highway by the lake. The beam illuminated two dark figures on the rocks

next to the water. Steam was rising from them. This time Clark took the flashlight from Lois but also put a hand out to stop her. "Hang on, Lois."

"Why? What's the matter? Why are you shining—" Then she could see it, too. Two bodies. They walked closer, but Clark stopped Lois again. "Please Lois, this could be pretty gruesome."

"It wouldn't be the first time", she said. *OK*, he thought. *She's right*.

Their faces still somewhat recognizable – and identical – Walter Canby and Jonas Rockwell lay charred and quite dead. The fireball had gotten them not long after they fell from the bus. They had crossed the road and were attempting to scramble down the rocks when the deadly flames reached them. An odd, out-of-place but mildly humorous thought struck Clark. *Canby bought the farm, after all...*

But Clark wasn't finished. He shone the light out on the lake. Something large was floating there by the shore. It was the burnt-out remains of a boat. Lois and Clark climbed down the rocks, aided by the flashlight, and made their way a few feet from the boat. The rain was beginning to subside and visibility was a bit better, but the flashlight was still a necessity as all the gasoline-fueled fires on the lake had been extinguished, leaving the scene pitch black.

There on the boat, the *Daily Planet* reporters could see another body. Clark could clearly make out who it was. "I'd wager that that's what's left of Sally Lambert."

"Oh Clark!"

"She was waiting for Canby, and Rockwell I guess. No doubt a getaway boat. The lake, the Tecumseh, and then the Metropolis River. From there, the harbor and who knows where. Not a bad escape route." said Clark.

By the Smallville side of the lake the woods began to flash with shades of red. Before long, as Lois and Clark climbed back to the top of the dam, to the wrecked highway, they were met by a police car. In the distance they saw more swirling red lights coming down the road.

Help had arrived.

**EPILOGUE**

**SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SMALLVILLE AND METROPOLIS**



**ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE** for another bus to pick up the passengers by the dam, as the original vehicle was declared to be out of commission. Before long, the weary passengers piled onto the vehicle and by 3AM, it was on its way to Metropolis. The two reporters were once again in the back of the bus. Clark was back to normal, not fatigued at all; Lois was over-tired and as a result, unable to sleep.

Lois said, "Hard to believe."

"What is, Lois?"

"*Everything.* Everything that happened today. Canby dead. Sally Lambert dead. And even Jonas Rockwell. And how on Earth did he happen to come on the scene?"

"Oh, just a little plan Bill Henderson and I cooked up. We figured that he could convince Canby's henchmen that the plot against my mother and me – and you - had been abandoned, allowing the Inspector and the FBI to make their move."

"That's one thing I don't understand, Clark. I can't help wondering why Walter Canby was so interested in your mom. I mean, you explained that it was a scheme for revenge, but against whom?"

"Well, Lois, Canby knew that Superman and I are pretty close. He was angry at Superman, but he's a hard person to pin down, so Canby tried to strike back at me, I guess. As a way to get revenge against Superman."

"Makes sense, I suppose." She yawned and was finally getting sleepy. "You and Superman *are* close." Lois Lane clearly was so tired that she forgot her suspicions earlier, by the dam. Her eyes closed, but Lois had one more thing to say as she drifted into slumber land, "I wonder if Superman considers *me* to be close to him..."

And as the girl reporter fell asleep, putting her head on Clark's shoulder, he replied, "More than you know, Lois. More than you know..."

**CLOSING CREDITS**

**“SUPER-SHOWDOWN IN SMALLVILLE!”**

***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 / Burt Burnside /  
Jonas Rockwell / Mister 'X'*  
Barbara Fuller.....*Sally Lambert*  
Frances Morris.....*Sarah Kent*  
Frank Richards.....*Robbie*  
Richard Benedict.....*Cutter*  
John Kellogg.....*Danny*  
Bruno Sammartino.....*Kon*  
Frances Bavie.....*Edith Watkins*  
Phyllis Coates.....*Laura*  
James MacArthur.....*Tad Hutchins*  
Efram Zimbalist, Jr.....*FBI man Jurgens*  
Sal Mineo.....*Rick Westin*  
Jackie Gleason.....*Bus driver*  
Radio announcer.....*Sam Balter*

**SAGA EPILOGUE**

**ONE YEAR LATER**

**KENT FARM**

**IT WAS TIME FOR CLARK'S ANNUAL VISIT** to his mom for her birthday on March 11. They had a few folks over – Ben Hubbard, Cousin Edith, Chief Parker and some other friends. Later the company had all gone home, leaving Clark and his mom to sit on the porch. It was an unusually warm evening for this early in March.



“Son, that sweet Lois Lane. How is she?”

“She’s fine, Ma, just fine.”

“Do you two ever, well, *see* each other outside of work, social like?”

“Ma!”

“Now hush, Clark, I know that you get all touchy with this talk. But, well, none of us is getting any younger.”

“Now you sound like Perry White.”

“I like your boss. You remember that time I met him. I’ll take that as a compliment.”

“Ma, we’ve talked about this. The threat to anyone I... I...”

“Fall in love with?”

“Well...”

She stood and faced Clark, who was still sitting. “Now you listen here, Clark Kent. Some people may think this Superman side of you makes you a strange visitor from another planet, but you’re nothing more than Clark Kent. Born and raised by two loving parents, God rest Eben’s soul.”

“Never two better parents, Ma.” Clark smiled.

“But if anyone thinks you’re something less than human, well, I’ll get my rifle out and—“

“Now hang on. That’s just it. I’m *not* human. I’m from another world. But that’s *not* important. What really worries me, Ma, is that someone nasty could try to harm those I get close to. I mean – look at what that man Canby tried to do. That’s *exactly* what I’m talking about!”

“So what are you going to do? Leave the planet Earth?”

“Why, no, of course not!”

“But you did everything you could, I guess, to keep folks from knowing that you ‘n Superman are the same, and look what happened.”

“What’s your point, Ma?”

“My point is that there’s always the danger of someone finding out your secret, son. You were careful, but someone came close to hurting me – and your friend Lois – anyway.”

“*That’s my point!*”

“No, what I’m sayin’, son is that – you might as well enjoy life to its fullest – and ‘specially the love of your life, because if something bad’s gonna happen, it’s gonna happen. And knowing you, you’ll do everything in your power – with those *amazin’* powers – to make sure it don’t happen.”

“Ma—“ Clark was still protesting.

“Clark. I loved Eben with all my heart.”

“I know that. So did I.”

“But your love for him was that of a son to a father. It’s not the same as with two folks who are in love, like Eben an’ I were.” She paused and then sat next to him, putting an arm around him. “Son, when you’re the ‘other guy’, you’re ‘Superman’ and you can do all these incredible things. But part of that nickname Eben gave you – *Superman* - has a ‘man’ in it.”

She continued. “You’re a man. You need a woman. I think Lois is the one. I think you know that, too.”

“Ma, Metropolis needs me. The *world* needs me.”

Sarah raised her voice just a little. “And *you* have needs, too. It’s not being selfish to want someone an’ to be with them. You’ve given plenty of yourself to your big city and even the whole wide world. And you’ll always do that, the Good Lord willing. But it’s time you opened yourself up to something that’s probably been eating at you



for a long, long time, son.” She lowered her voice and smiled. “I know – I can tell – I *am* your mother.”

She hugged him, then pulled away to look at her son, and Clark smiled back. It was a crystal clear night and he looked up at the stars while considering his mother’s words. It was a minute before he said anything, and then, “You know, Ma, I’ve fought all sorts of nasty men – and women. I fought off an asteroid once, too.”

“I remember that – you saved the world, but you told me later that you had a rough time.”

“Yes, but in all those cases, I fought – and won.”

“That’s right.”

“But there’s one force I can’t overcome—”

“Krypto—whatever?”

“No, not Kryptonite. Well, yes, Kryptonite, but that’s not what I mean, Ma. The one force I can’t overcome – and don’t want to – is – *you*...”

Sarah smiled. “So what does that mean? You’ll listen to what I’m tellin’ you? Maybe give Lois a call – an’ not about work ‘n such?”

Clark took a deep breath. “You know – she might turn me down.”

“No. I seen the look in her eyes around you, son. I think she been waitin’ for you a long time.”

Clark grinned and tightened his arm around Sarah Kent. “You know, Ma, I know you don’t have a TV, but there’s a popular television program called ‘Father Knows Best’”.

“Cousin Edith had it on once at her place. That Robert Young is mighty handsome.”

“Well, anyway, there ought to be one called ‘Mother *Really* Knows Best’ ... starring you, Ma.”

“Aww...”

They hugged, and Clark was back in Metropolis the next day.

**FROM THE PRIVATE FILES OF LOIS LANE**

*Despite us being co-workers, Clark and I have been seeing each other for about a year. I think the world of him, and well, yes, I know I'm in love with him. I guess there was a time when I thought I was in love with Superman, but maybe that was because I was overwhelmed by his powers and him being dashing and different – all those things.*

*Or maybe it was something else.*

*Anyway, Clark phoned a little while ago. He said he's coming by tonight for something special. I don't think he's going to pop the question. The way he described it – and not very well, mind you – it sounded like he was going to tell me a big secret.*

*I wonder...*



