

SMALLVILLE

"Bat"

by

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Registered: WGAw

"Bat"

TEASER

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - THATCHER RANCH - DAY

Sunlight hammers a PLAIN MAILBOX labeled "THATCHER" on a lonely road. A simple house, barn, and pastures lay beyond.

The picturesque setting is shattered by the SLAM of a screen door, as

MARCUS THATCHER, 17

storms out from the main house. Full backpack in hand, determination across his face.

Marcus gets a few steps away when the door SLAMS again,

ROBERT THATCHER, 60's and fed-up, follows.

ROBERT

You're not going anywhere, Marcus.  
Get back in the house. We're not finished.

MARCUS

I don't have to answer to you.  
You're not my father.

ROBERT

You're right. I raised your father  
to be more mindful of his elders.

MARCUS

Maybe if you actually treated me  
like your grandson instead of a  
problem I'd have turned out more  
like him.

ROBERT

Come back inside, this minute.

Marcus reaches his limit, shoulders the pack, walks away.

Robert, at wit's end, can only watch him leave.

INT. ENTRANCE - CAVE - DAY

Shards of amber sunlight stab deep into this grey waste, framing Marcus, teenage spelunker. He enters, climbing gear at the ready.

Leaving the warmth of day, Marcus steps into the cold shadow of the cave. He pauses, flips on a flashlight, continues past

A JAGGED CREVICE

Home to a roost of bats, decorated with a few slightly protruding meteor rocks. Marcus' FOOTSTEPS echoes O.S.

Tiny green eyes flicker to life.

DEEPER INTO THE CAVE - NEAR LEDGE

The narrow beam of his flashlight finds only abyss below.

Marcus drops his gear, switches on a tiny lantern.

AN ANCHOR

Pops into the wall

A ROPE

runs through it, then through a

CLIMBING HARNESS

Marcus checks the line, satisfied, he swings himself over the ledge.

Marcus pauses a moment, glances down, leans back, ready to repel.

THE ANCHOR SHIFTS

The rope slides a little. Marcus tries to pull himself up when--

THE ANCHOR SNAPS

Its metallic KA-PING! ECHOES through the cave.

Marcus clutches the ledge. Starts to slip. He hears FLAPPING of leathery wings O.S., looks up to find

MARCUS' POV - A SWARM OF BATS

Barreling toward us, green eyes flickering. The swarm grows nearer, FILLS FRAME BLACK as Marcus SCREAMS O.S.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - THE TALON - NIGHT

LANA exits the Talon, nightly bag of garbage in hand. She heads for the dumpster, hears a SCRAPING O.S. Lana turns, looks down the alley.

Nothing.

Lana tosses the sack into the bin, turns, finds a terribly ragged, barely recognizable Marcus staggering toward her.

MARCUS  
Laaaaannnaaaaa.

LANA  
Who are you? Are you alright?

Marcus trudges closer.

LANA  
(nervous)  
Stop. Wait there, I'll get help.

Marcus advances, one slow step after another, relentless.

MARCUS  
Laaaannnaaaaa.

Lana starts for the door, Marcus lunges with speed we didn't expect, grabs her. She stares at his beaten, dirty face and barely human eyes, panics.

LANA  
Stop it!  
(he won't)  
Let me go!

His grip surprisingly strong, Lana can't break free.

Someone charges in from O.S., knocks Marcus loose.

Lana turns, expecting Clark, but finds

A TALL, DARK STRANGER (BRUCE)

Handsome, mid-twenties, impeccably dressed. No plaid. Definitely not Clark.

The Stranger turns to look for Marcus. Finding nothing, he looks back to Lana.

BRUCE  
Are you hurt?

Lana shakes her head.

LANA  
I'll be alright.

BRUCE  
Do you know that guy?

LANA  
I'm not sure.

The Stranger nods.

BRUCE  
I'm looking for Lex Luthor. I understand he owns this place.

LANA  
Co-owns. I'm the other half.

BRUCE  
Miss Lang?

Lana nods, a little surprised.

LANA  
Do I know you?

BRUCE  
I doubt it. Just someone who does their homework.

LANA  
Wish I could say the same.

He offers his hand. Lana takes it.

LANA  
Lana. Thank you.

BRUCE  
You're welcome. I'm Bruce. Bruce Wayne.

OFF Lana...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. HALLWAY - SMALLVILLE HIGH - DAY

End of the school day, students flock to their lockers and flow out of the building. Through the tide, Lana and CHLOE walk together, CLARK and PETE in tow.

CHLOE

Color me jealous.

LANA

I'm a little surprised, Chloe.  
You're usually so anti-establishment.

CHLOE

I'll admit I don't usually fall for the billionaire playboy type. You have to look at the whole package. A young boy witnesses his parent's brutal murder, only to become sole heir to their empire. Heart-throb good looks and a checkbook that puts Lionel Luthor to shame.

CLARK

Why do you know so much about this guy, Chloe?

CHLOE

This would be the part where I confess my hidden passion for the "Gotham Gazette's" social pages. If I had such a sordid habit.

PETE

You're the last person I ever figured would.

CHLOE

Call it a tabloid break for the serious journalist.

CLARK

So, Lana, Bruce just tossed this guy off you?

LANA

Blind-sided is more like it.  
Whoever that guy was, he was pretty strong.

CLARK  
Did you get a good look at him?

LANA  
Not really.

The quartet turns a corner, right as a JANITOR fixes a "MISSING" poster with Marcus' face on it.

Lana stops, stares at the poster. Chloe and Pete continue on, EXIT.

Clark drops out, crosses to Lana. His eyes go from Lana to the poster, and back again.

CLARK  
Marcus Thatcher?

OFF Lana...

INT. LOWER LEVEL - BARN - KENT FARM - DAY

Golden rays of late-afternoon sunlight pour into the barn. JONATHAN is elbow-deep in tractor engine. Clark sits behind the wheel. MARTHA stands nearby, supervising.

Jonathan withdraws from the engine, grabs a rag.

JONATHAN  
(to Clark)  
Try it now.

Clark flips the ignition switch, the tractor RUMBLES to life. Jonathan, nods to Clark, who shuts the tractor down.

Jonathan pulls out a pair of earplugs, tosses them on a nearby workbench.

JONATHAN  
Marcus has been missing for a few days. It was in this morning's paper.

MARTHA  
Don't you know him?

CLARK  
(slightly awkward)  
We played together, when we were kids.

MARTHA

What happened?

CLARK

You know how it is. Sometimes, you just stop playing together.

JONATHAN

Well, son, what have you heard about him lately?

CLARK

I asked around after school today. He still lives with his grandparents. Sounds like they're pretty strict.

MARTHA

Losing his parents in the meteor shower was really hard on them.

Clark nods, shakes off fleeting guilt.

CLARK

I found out he likes to explore caves. He tried to get into the Kewachi Caves once, but he couldn't get past security.

(beat)

Has the sheriff found any leads?

JONATHAN

Nothing yet.

CLARK

I saw a missing-persons poster at the school, are they up anywhere else?

JONATHAN

I'm not sure.

MARTHA

Clark, you sound pretty concerned about this.

CLARK

(dodging)

I just want to make sure Marcus is alright.

JONATHAN

Of course, Clark. We're all concerned. You just seem a little more worried than the rest of us.

OFF Clark...

INT. LIBRARY - LUTHOR MANSION - DAY

LEX LUTHOR returns a crystal stopper to its decanter.

LEX

I know I said "stop by anytime," but this is a little odd, Bruce.

Bruce is comfortably sprawled out on Lex's \$10,000 leather sofa, basking in the kaleidoscope light filtering through the stained-glass windows.

Lex hands him a drink.

BRUCE

It was the opening of the Luthor Burn Ward at Metropolis General.

LEX

Right, after the unveiling of the Wayne Foundation Cancer Center.

BRUCE

Your exact words were, "Come visit me in my rural exile. Please, Bruce, you have to save me."

LEX

That was over a year ago.

BRUCE

Fourteen months.

LEX

What took you so long?

BRUCE

You know how hard it is finding free time when you're a young industrialist managing a global corporation.

LEX

I wish I did, but my father still runs LuthorCorp.

BRUCE  
So he does. I forgot.

LEX  
You never forget anything.

Bruce sips his drink.

BRUCE  
How is Lionel these days?

LEX  
I'll be sure to tell him you asked.  
I doubt you came all this way just  
to brush up on gossip.

Clark ENTERS, blows past Bruce, clearly a man on a mission.

CLARK  
Lex, I need any maps you have from  
the Kewachi Caves.

LEX  
Hello, Clark. I don't think you've  
met my guest.

Clark turns, sees Bruce on the couch.

LEX  
Clark Kent, Bruce Wayne. Bruce,  
Clark. Smallville's very own Boy  
Wonder. Why the maps, Clark?

CLARK  
One of my classmates has been  
missing for a few days. He likes  
caves.

LEX  
I read about it. Thatcher, right?

Clark nods.

CLARK  
I thought he might have decided to  
investigate the caves, since  
there's no security after your  
father abandoned them.

This finally gets Bruce's interest.

BRUCE

What was Lionel Luthor doing with Indian caves?

LEX

Conservation effort. I'll fill you in later. I'll see what I have around, Clark.

BRUCE

Why would you give the maps to him? Shouldn't you pass this on to the local sheriff?

Clark squares off with Bruce, finds his attitude a tad annoying.

CLARK

(at Bruce)

What's wrong with me looking over a few maps?

BRUCE

I don't see a high school kid solving a missing persons investigation. Unless you've been deputized, it's really none of your business.

CLARK

I'm just trying to help a friend.

LEX

Gentlemen, I hate to play referee.

(to Clark)

Bruce has a point, the Sheriff is trained to manage these things.

(to Bruce)

Clark also has a point. I'll call the Sheriff to find out if they've already searched the caves. If Clark knows about Marcus' hobby, the Sheriff probably does, too.

Lex leaves Clark and Bruce staring each other down, grabs his scotch, throws it back.

LEX

Clark, I hate to be rude, but Bruce and I were in the middle of a conversation. I'll let you know what I find out from the Sheriff.

Bruce watches what he sees as a nosy kid, Clark stares down a callous rich-boy.

LEX

Clark?

CLARK

Thanks, Lex.

Clark EXITS. OFF Bruce...

EXT. CORRAL - THATCHER RANCH - NIGHT

Pale moonlight cascades over pastoral fields and a slumbering herd. On the back of one dreaming cow

A VAMPIRE BAT

Feeds with a gentle sucking, its green eyes glint in the night. A drop of blood trails down the bovine's side.

Behind that slightly chilling scene, Marcus, less tattered, still ragged, approaches

ANOTHER COW

Which spooks at his approach, Marcus closes in a flash, grabbing the cow hard, his head lurching forward to feed. The victimized cow MOOS LOUDLY, startles the rest of the herd into a frenzied cacophony of GRUNTS, GROANS, and MOOS.

IN THE MAIN HOUSE

Lights flash on, the front door opens as Robert Thatcher bursts into the field, shotgun at the ready.

ROBERT

I don't know who that is, but you'd better get the hell away from my herd!

MARCUS

His head pops up from behind the cow.

ROBERT

lowers the shotgun.

ROBERT  
(squints)  
Marcus? Are you alright? We've been  
worried about you, son.

Marcus comes out from behind the cow, square to Robert. The bats release their prey, circle wide around Marcus as he approaches.

MARCUS  
Don't call me that. I know you  
never wanted me here. You don't  
have to worry about me, ever again.  
I found a new family.

Marcus steps closer, the swarm of bats swells in size, their circle widens, their SCREECHES grow louder.

Robert takes a step back, nervous and unsure.

ROBERT  
Don't be ridiculous boy, your  
family is here, in this house.

MARCUS  
My family is in this field.

The swarm has grown so large its circling path envelops Robert, the sheer volume of their SCREECHING is near-deafening.

ROBERT  
(shouting)  
What's wrong, Marcus? What have  
they done to you?

MARCUS  
(shouts back)  
They saved me, gave me a home.  
Don't try to follow me. Don't ever  
try to find me.

One of the bats' wings clips the back of Robert's head, startling him.

THE SHOTGUN ROARS

With a single blast, upward. One bat falls. The entire swarm surrounds Marcus, then in a flurry of motion are gone.

Robert, alone with the cows, stares at

THE FALLEN BAT.

INT. TORCH OFFICE - SMALLVILLE HIGH - DAY

ANOTHER BAT, this time on a computer screen.

CHLOE (O.S.)  
*Desmodus rotundus.*

Chloe in her usual position, perched before a monitor. Clark stands behind her.

CHLOE  
The vampire bat. Fish & Wildlife confirmed it this morning.

CLARK  
I've never seen one around.

CHLOE  
No reason you should. They're not native to North America.

CLARK  
So how did that one end up at the Thatcher ranch?

CHLOE  
An excellent question, which is why I thought of it first. I did a little digging, and found something from, no surprise, the meteor shower.

Chloe clicks the mouse.

CLARK  
Let me guess, radioactive vampire bats?

CHLOE  
Maybe.

Clark leans in, looks at

CHLOE'S SCREEN

An article from the Smallville Ledger, including photo of a wrecked tractor trailer.

CHLOE  
A travelling circus was on its way out of town when the storm hit.  
(MORE)

CHLOE (cont'd)

Some of their trucks were carrying wild animals. Not all of them were accounted for.

CLARK

Do you think there are refugee bats in Smallville?

CHLOE

That's a theory, but there weren't any problems until just last night. If they were a threat you think we would have heard about them sooner.

CLARK

Maybe something woke them up. What do you know about them?

CHLOE

Blood-sucking aside, they're not so bad. They usually feed on sleeping cows, don't drink much, rarely attack people, and are only a threat because they can spread disease to other cows. What I thought was most interesting is that they're known to adopt orphans, which is really rare among wild animals.

CLARK

They almost sound friendly.

CHLOE

Almost.

Clark leaves the monitor, grabs his knapsack and a stack of "MISSING" fliers.

CLARK

I've got to get going. Thanks for the copies.

Clark heads for the door, finds Bruce in the doorway. The two lock eyes for a moment, neither willing to budge.

CLARK

You're in my way.

Chloe glances up, sees Bruce, freezes.

Bruce steps through the doorway, then off to one side. Clark eyes him for a moment, then EXITS.

Bruce glances around, sees Chloe's deer-in-headlights facade.

BRUCE

I'm looking for Chloe Sullivan.

Chloe gulps, tries to play it off.

CHLOE

You're good. You found her.

Chloe stands, casually wipes her palm on her slacks, offers her hand to Bruce. He takes it, shakes.

BRUCE

I'm Bruce--

CHLOE

Wayne. I know.

(off Bruce)

I read the Gotham papers.

BRUCE

I gave up on them years ago. I still read yours.

Now Chloe is a little surprised.

CHLOE

How could the quintessential small town high school paper possibly catch your eye?

BRUCE

Two reasons. One is that it caught Lionel Luthor's interest. The "Torch" owes at least one resurrection to a grant from the Luthor Foundation.

Chloe is both embarrassed at the association, and disappointed that's all Bruce wants to know about.

BRUCE

The second is that during your tenure the "Torch" has run a series of fantastic tales, which on the surface read like the stuff of tabloids.

(off Chloe's reaction)

However, reading between the lines reveals there might just be something to it.

CHLOE

Allow me to suppress my boosted ego  
long enough to ask one question:  
why are you here?

BRUCE

To offer a proposal.

OFF Chloe...

INT. LIBRARY - LUTHOR MANSION - SUNSET

The day's final rays dazzle through stained glass. Lex sits  
at the desk, looks at his laptop screen.

Bruce ENTERS, breezes to the bar, liberates the scotch, takes  
a healthy swig.

BRUCE

It's comforting to know that I can  
always rely upon your refined sense  
of scotch.

Lex closes the laptop.

LEX

Scry Tech.

Bruce takes another sip.

LEX

LuthorCorp is positioning itself to  
buy out Scry Tech, the majority  
shareholder of which is, for the  
moment, Wayne Enterprises.

BRUCE

Really?

LEX

Now we both know why you're here.

BRUCE

Probably too late to convince you  
it's your charming personality?

LEX

What is it you hope to gain, Bruce?  
The buyout is obviously my father's  
idea.

(MORE)

LEX (cont'd)  
If you've been following our  
relationship, and I assume you  
have, you know I won't be able to  
talk him out of it.

Bruce makes a controlled landing on the sofa, preserving his  
scotch.

BRUCE  
I haven't asked you to, Lex.

LEX  
What does my father want with Scry  
Tech?

BRUCE  
Maybe you should ask him.

OFF Lex...

INT. TALON - NIGHT

The place is packed. Lana, tray in hand, deftly navigates the  
throng.

Clark ENTERS, flashes the stack of MISSING posters to Lana.

CLARK  
I've been putting these up around  
town. Would it be alright if I hung  
a few up here?

LANA  
Of course. I thought the Sheriff's  
office usually handles that.

CLARK  
Marcus is a friend. I want to help.

LANA  
I believe you, but I didn't think  
you two were close.

Chloe breezes past, saunters to the counter, beaming with  
pride.

CHLOE  
Triple-Turkish Delight, extra  
foamy, please.

Lana maneuvers behind the counter to whip it up.

LANA

Nice to see someone in a good mood.

Clark crosses to the counter, stands by Chloe.

CLARK

Talk about an understatement.

CHLOE

A girl can't be happy once in a while?

LANA

You're six stops past happy, Chloe. What's made your day?

Chloe looks from Lana to Clark, decides to spill the beans.

CHLOE

An exclusive interview with Bruce Wayne.

Clark and Lana look at each other a moment, then back to Chloe. Neither gets it.

CHLOE

Bruce Wayne never gives interviews. Ever. He's notoriously private about his private life, and he's offered me an exclusive.

(beat)

That's great!

CLARK

(unimpressed)

If you say so.

Both Chloe and Lana shoot Clark a look.

LANA

I may not share Chloe's euphoria, but at least I can be happy she's getting something that's important to her. What's your problem, Clark?

CLARK

Don't either of you wonder why Bruce Wayne would even be in Smallville, much less give a high school newspaper his first exclusive?

LANA

Why does that matter to you?

CLARK

Someone should be asking these questions. Why is he here? Why the Torch? Why an interest in high school girls?

CHLOE

Clark, that's just wrong.

LANA

He was a perfect gentleman when he saved me.

CLARK

Guess I ought to be jealous.

Lana stares at Clark for a second, outraged. In a split-second of retribution...

LANA

Yeah. You should.

Lana leaves for the back store-room, EXITS.

Clark watches her leave and kicking himself, EXITS the front door.

Chloe alone, no cheering section or highly-caffeinated reward. OFF Chloe...

EXT. MAIN STREET - THE TALON - NIGHT

Clark exits the Talon, still steamed, when

A TERRIBLE SCREECHING NOISE O.S.

Stabs into his ears. Clark glances at the other PEDESTRIANS. Nobody else hears it.

THE SCREECH STABS AGAIN

Further away. Higher up. Clark works through the pain, realizes the source is moving.

SCREECHING O.S.

Further down Main Street, and moving fast. Clark makes sure the coast is clear, superspeeds in pursuit.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

A thin mist ferries small streams of moonlight through the maze of overgrown tombstones.

Clark powers into view, tracking the SCREECH O.S. He comes to a stop in the middle of the graveyard, spots

A DARK FIGURE SURROUNDED BY BATS

Clark peers through the darkness, taking a step forward.

THE FIGURE

Opens it's mouth, and that hideous SCREECH blasts from it.

Clark reels, grunts in pain. The figure hears this, closes its mouth, turns, its face caught in a shaft of moonlight.

CLARK

Marcus?

MARCUS

What do you want, Clark?

Clark takes another step forward. The bats swarm, circling wide around the two of them.

CLARK

Are you alright? Everyone's worried about you.

MARCUS

Nobody worries about me. Least of all you.

Clark advances slowly. Marcus is cleaned up a bit. Looks a lot better, stronger.

CLARK

Why don't you tell me what happened? I'm sure we can explain everything to your grandparents.

MARCUS

They don't care, Clark. They never wanted me. Nobody does.

CLARK

That's not true, Marcus.

THE SWARM

Moves faster now, closing in on Clark. He takes another step.

MARCUS

Maybe you're right. I've got a new family now.

CLARK

I don't understand.

MARCUS

You don't have to. Just leave me alone!

THE SWARM

Circles even tighter around Clark, obscuring his vision in a cyclone of wings and fur. The whirling speeds even FASTER, then...

Stops.

Clark stands alone in the graveyard. No Marcus, no bats.

OFF Clark...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. KITCHEN - KENT HOME - NIGHT

CLARK, at the kitchen table with Jonathan and Martha. He's just told them about the graveyard encounter.

JONATHAN

And you're sure it was Marcus?

CLARK

Pretty sure.

MARTHA

Did he say anything?

Clark nods.

CLARK

He's not happy with me.

MARTHA

Why? Clark, what happened between you two?

Clark's reluctant, glances at his parents. He gives up.

CLARK

You're going to laugh. It sounds stupid now.

(beat)

When we were in the third grade, the teacher asked the class a question. She called on Marcus to answer it. He did. I thought he had the wrong answer, and that what he said was funny.

MARTHA

So you laughed?

CLARK

Really loud. The entire class stared at me, because they knew he was right. Marcus just stared straight ahead. He never looked at me.

MARTHA

Then what happened?

CLARK

Nothing.

JONATHAN

That was it?

CLARK

It was enough. I was so embarrassed, I couldn't talk to him for the rest of the day. That day turned into a week, and we haven't spoken to each other since.

MARTHA

It's a shame you two never managed to patch things up.

CLARK

I wanted to, but I froze every time I tried to talk to him.

JONATHAN

What matters is how you handle things now, son. Just be careful. Sounds like that screech of his packs quite a punch.

CLARK

It does. I'm not sure he knows it, though. It looked like he was using it to find his way in the dark.

JONATHAN

You used it to track him down. That's an advantage.

MARTHA

Maybe you should talk with the Thatcher's and see if there's anything they can tell you.

OFF Clark...

INT. TORCH OFFICE - SMALLVILLE HIGH - DAY

No sign of Chloe, but Clark and Pete are in the middle of discussing...

PETE

A vampire? Are you serious?

CLARK

I know it sounds crazy, even for the Meteor Capitol of the World. He's as fast as I am. He has some kind of link with those bats, but I don't think he was controlling them. It was like they were protecting him.

PETE

Think there's a kryptonite connection?

CLARK

There always is. If those bats were effected by kryptonite and bit Marcus there's no telling what might happen.

(beat)

What if he really is a vampire?

Chloe crosses the threshold on that last part. Clearly rushed, she hurries in, crosses to her desk.

CHLOE

You're not on about Bruce again, are you Clark? That would be pretty low, even for you.

CLARK

Very funny.

Chloe whips out a compact from her desk, checks her make-up.

PETE

That looks like primping with a purpose.

CLARK

Must be time for her exclusive.

PETE

What exclusive?

CHLOE

Bruce Wayne.

PETE

For real?

Chloe beams for a moment, then back to the hair.

PETE

Why?

CHLOE

Now you sound like Clark.

CLARK

Careful, Pete. She doesn't like that.

PETE

I think it's cool you get the scoop and all, but why would he agree to do it?

Chloe stops primping.

CHLOE

I'm only saying this to keep Clark's farm boy mind out of the gutter.

CLARK

Trough.

CHLOE

Whatever. Bruce already knows a lot about the Torch, he's been reading it for years.

(off their reaction,  
corrects)

Two years. He's a fan.

A beat as they regard her with disbelief.

CHLOE

(she breaks)

He wanted to see the Wall.

PETE

The Wall of Weird?

CLARK

You showed it to him?

CHLOE

He knew about it. Or suspected I had something like it. He already knew the stories. It's not like I told him anything new.

PETE

Then why would he want to see it?

Chloe stops, thinks.

CLARK

Maybe there's some things on it  
that he didn't know.

CHLOE

He's been following the stories. He  
wanted to see what I thought about  
a common thread between them.

Chloe looks back into the mirror, misses Clark and Pete's  
shared glance. She checks her bag, realizes...

CHLOE

And, of course, my favorite lip  
gloss is in the car. You two better  
be gone before I get back.

Chloe dashes OUT. Pete and Clark exchange a glance, then  
focus on the Wall of Weird.

PETE

He's seen the Wall. I bet he's  
studied this stuff for years. You  
know what that means?

CLARK

He's studied me. Whether he knows  
it or not.

OFF Clark...

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - PORCH - THATCHER RANCH - DAY

Clark stands in front of the closed screen door, Robert on  
the other side.

ROBERT

Clark Kent? Marcus never mentioned  
you.

From inside the house,

JUNE (O.S.)

Oh, for heavens sake, Robert.  
Marcus never mentions anybody. Let  
the young man in.

Reluctantly, Robert opens the screen door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MAIN HOUSE - THATCHER RANCH - DAY

Clark sits on a simple yet tasteful couch.

JUNE THATCHER, silver-haired salt-of-the-earth, hands him a glass of lemonade.

CLARK

Thank you, Mrs. Thatcher.

JUNE

Please, call me June.

Clark smiles.

ROBERT

So what can you tell us about  
Marcus?

JUNE

Robert, where are your manners?

ROBERT

That's why you're here, isn't it,  
Clark?

CLARK

Actually, I was hoping to ask you  
about him. We're not close.

ROBERT

We've already told the Sheriff what  
little we know. Marcus doesn't tell  
us much of anything.

JUNE

Which I suppose is really our  
fault.

ROBERT

June!

JUNE

We never talk about it, and we both  
know what went wrong.

Robert doesn't want to hear it, knows June won't stop.

ROBERT

The death of our only son was  
devastating.

(MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)

It almost ruined our marriage. We withdrew from each other, and from Marcus.

JUNE

He never felt as though we wanted him with us, and he grew more distant as he got older.

ROBERT

June and I realized our mistake, and tried to be more involved. It was too late. Marcus had become a teenager, and refused to be engaged by us or anyone.

June and Robert exchange a look. Robert nods, June rises, heads for a nearby roll-top desk.

JUNE

We searched his room looking for something, anything, to help us find him. We didn't come up with much, but this.

June pulls out a magazine, sets it on the coffee table in front of Clark. Clark looks, sees

LANA'S (AGE 3) COVER OF TIME MAGAZINE

The heart-wrenching photo of her in tears and her fairy dress, a poster child for the meteor shower that devastated Smallville.

INT. TALON - NIGHT

Lana tidies up the counter, turns, finds Bruce perched on a stool. She watches him for a moment.

LANA

Coffee?

BRUCE

Never drink it. Don't take that personally.

LANA

I won't.

Bruce just watches her for a moment. Lana meets his gaze, catches herself, smiles.

LANA  
So, what brings you into a coffee shop?

BRUCE  
Time. I need a few minutes of yours.

LANA  
(considers briefly)  
Alright.

BRUCE  
Tell me about Lex.

LANA  
That's very direct.

BRUCE  
I don't like to waste time.

LANA  
I hear you and Lex go way back. You know him.

BRUCE  
I know about our collective sordid past. What I know less about is new and improved Smallville Lex.

LANA  
Was that why you saved me, to pump me for information?

BRUCE  
Partly.

LANA  
Why?

BRUCE  
Lex and I knew each other socially. When our companies meet on the field of finance, it's important to know my allies from my enemies.

LANA  
Which one is Lex?

BRUCE  
That's what I need to find out.

LANA

I see.

Lana watches him for a moment, warming up to him.

LANA

Has anyone ever told you that you're a little... intense?

BRUCE

It happens when you lose your family at a young age.

(beat)

But you already know all about that.

(off Lana)

I read.

LANA

So do I.

(off Bruce)

I'm sorry about your parents.

BRUCE

Yours too.

LANA

Seeing them murdered must have been rough.

BRUCE

Probably just as hard as seeing yours killed. Ultimately, both were random and senseless tragedies that shaped who we are.

LANA

So that's why you try to lose yourself in women and booze?

BRUCE

That's very direct.

LANA

Why waste time?

Kindred spirits lock eyes for a moment, until a COUGH O.S.

The moment shattered, Bruce and Lana find CLARK standing just off to the side.

CLARK  
 Sorry, didn't mean to break you two  
 up.

BRUCE  
 Don't be silly, Clark.

LANA  
 Clark is never silly. You two have  
 that in common.

CLARK  
 I wonder what else we--

An O.S. SCREECH jabs into Clark's temples, he winces.

LANA  
 Clark are you alright?

Bruce watches Clark, more curious than concerned.

The SCREECH pierces Clark's skull again, he tries to ignore  
 it, but can't shut it out.

BRUCE  
 Clark?

Clark bolts for the door, EXITS. Bruce shares a look with  
 Lana, EXITS.

EXT. TALON - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Bruce bounds out of the Talon.

BRUCE  
 Clark?

No Clark. Bruce stands alone, looks in vain. Where the hell  
 did that kid go?

OFF Bruce...

EXT. BARN - THATCHER RANCH - NIGHT

The pastoral barn is bathed by pale moonlight, warmly lit  
 within. Scared cows MOO and GRUNT O.S.

The interior light snaps off as Robert Thatcher exits the  
 barn, shotgun in hand. Peering O.C., he finds...

EXT. CORRAL - THATCHER RANCH - NIGHT

A fallen cow, the rest of the herd stands well away from the thing hunched over it.

Robert raises his shotgun, trains it on the shape.

ROBERT

Marcus?

MARCUS

Leave me alone.

ROBERT

Marcus, come home. Let us help you.

Marcus rears up from his bovine feast, his blood-stained chin glints in the half-light. The sight is startling, Robert falters a moment.

MARCUS

What makes you think I want help?

ROBERT

There must be some way to fix this,  
to make things right.

Marcus stands, wipes his chin as he strides menacingly toward Robert.

Robert panics, FIRES.

Marcus BLURS into view, snatches the shotgun.

MARCUS

Maybe there is.

Marcus lifts Robert up with one hand, drags him off into the now-foreboding barn.

INT. BARN - THATCHER RANCH - NIGHT

A shadowed hand FLIPS on the light-switch. In the new light, it's an older woman's hand.

JUNE THATCHER

Enters, scans the barn. Her heart skips a beat when she sees--

MARCUS hunched over Robert's fallen figure.

JUNE

Oh my God!

Marcus whips around, HISSES, lunges for her.

JUNE

Marcus?!

She SCREAMS, the barn goes BLACK.

EXT. BARN - THATCHER RANCH - NIGHT

Clark superspeeds into sight, stops, surveys the ranch. His eyes narrow, as we switch to...

CLARK'S X-RAY POV: The entire ranch now a ghostly translucent blue-white. He PANS across the ranch, stops at the barn; two fallen skeletons, barely moving, a third strides out.

It's Marcus, as he EXITS the barn.

CLARK

Marcus! Wait!

MARCUS

I told you to leave me alone,  
Clark.

CLARK

Where are your grandparents?

Marcus glances at the barn out of reflex, catches himself.

MARCUS

They're out for the evening.

CLARK

I know what's going on.

MARCUS

If you did, you'd leave, before  
someone you care about gets hurt.

CLARK

I can't let you go, Marcus.

MARCUS

You can't stop me, Clark.

CLARK

Don't be so sure.

Marcus BLURS out of sight, his SCREECHING echolocation staggers Clark for a moment.

Clark glances, realizes Marcus didn't see that. He superspeeds to the barn.

INT. LOWER LEVEL - BARN - KENT FARM - NIGHT

Martha, bushel of corn in her arms, switches on the light with a free finger, ENTERS, crosses the floor.

The light goes OFF, plunging the barn into darkness.

MARTHA  
(note to self)  
Better have Jonathan replace that  
bulb.

MARCUS (O.S.)  
The bulb is fine, Mrs. Kent.

Martha turns, searches the darkness. An O.S. WHOOSH! of speed ends right behind her.

MARCUS  
Tell Clark to forget he ever knew  
me. Again.

The bushel hits the barn floor, corn cobs tumble, rolling out the door. Martha SCREAMS.

The LIGHT flips on. Marcus flinches, recoils over Martha.

Clark superspeeds into Marcus, the two go tumbling across the barn in a flurry of motion.

Clark pins Marcus, who smiles, blood trickling on his chin.

MARCUS  
Good hit, Clark.

Marcus throws a hard punch, knocking Clark off of him.

MARCUS  
Too good.

CLARK  
Stay away from her!

Clark and Marcus BLUR toward each other at superspeed, collide in the center!

OUTSIDE

A few planks are blown off the barn by the impact.

INSIDE

Marcus and Clark trade a volley of punches, spins, and pins. Marcus grabs Clark's arm, SPINS him around once, throws him into the barn light, which SHATTERS.

Darkness.

MARCUS instinctively opens his mouth, echo-locates. Clark cringes from the SCREECH only he can hear. This time, Marcus notices, stalks toward Clark and Martha.

SHK-CHK! O.S. - a rifle bolt slides into place.

JONATHAN

Get away from my family!

Jonathan stands at the door, hunting rifle at the ready.

Marcus glances from Jonathan, back to Clark. He SCREECHES at Clark, more fiercely than ever. Clark SCREAMS in pain, drops to his knees.

MARCUS spins, BLURS past Jonathan.

CLARK staggers to his feet, plunges the ringing from his super-sensitive ears. He struggles for the door.

JONATHAN

Clark!

Clark stops, sees Jonathan over Martha's unconscious body.

OFF Clark...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SMALLVILLE MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

AN I.V. BAG DRIPS slowly into transparent tubing that snakes to the needle in Martha's pale arm. She sleeps beneath ashen lids, framed by a single light above.

JONATHAN sits at the edge of the light, holds her hand. Clark stands in the shadows beyond, concerned.

CLARK

I couldn't get there in time.

JONATHAN

She's still alive, son. That's what matters.

DR. MORTON enters, open chart in hand. He notes the eager eyes of Jonathan and Clark drilling into him, closes the chart.

MORTON

Mr. Kent, your wife is suffering from an atypical hemolytic anemia.

CLARK

Anemia? Like a lack of blood?

MORTON

An unusually low red-blood cell count, yes.

JONATHAN

What do you mean "atypical?"

MORTON

Her condition is more severe than we would expect based on the amount of blood she lost in the attack.

Dr. Morton pauses, glances at the chart, then back to Jonathan.

JONATHAN

There's more. Isn't there, Doctor?

MORTON

Something is destroying her remaining red blood cells. We don't know what or why.

(MORE)

MORTON (cont'd)  
Transfusions can replace what she's  
losing, but they're not a cure.

Jonathan and Clark exchange glances. Morton catches this.

MORTON  
What was it that you said attacked  
her?

SHERIFF ADAMS stands in the door.

SHERIFF  
That's what I'd like to find out.  
(to Morton)  
Pardon the interruption, Doctor.  
(to Clark)  
I need to speak with you.

Clark looks to Jonathan, who nods his consent.

INT. HALLWAY - SMALLVILLE MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Sheriff Adams keeps watch on Clark, who tries hard not to  
keep staring at his feet.

SHERIFF  
What really happened?

Clark shifts, glances to the side just as LEX rushes down the  
hall, BRUCE trying to keep up.

LEX  
Clark, I heard about your mother. I  
promise she'll get the best medical  
care available, from the finest  
doctors in Metropolis.

SHERIFF  
Mr. Luthor, you're interrupting a  
police investigation.

LEX  
I'm sorry, Sheriff. Clark is a  
friend.  
(Bruce notes that)  
In many ways I'm closer to his  
family than my own. I want to help  
in any way I can.

SHERIFF  
Then step aside and let me question  
my witness.

Lex watches the Sheriff -- she's not backing down -- nods, moves aside. Bruce follows him, but keeps his eyes on Clark.

SHERIFF

Mr. Kent, there is something out there that has attacked twice tonight.

CLARK

(unconvincing)  
Twice?

BRUCE'S POV - as he reads their lips.

SHERIFF

I'm not sure you should act so surprised. The nine-one-one call was made by a young male, from the Thatcher Ranch. None was present when the deputy arrived.

Clark shifts nervously. Bruce watches the shuffle.

CLARK

Maybe it was Marcus.

SHERIFF

(not convinced)  
Their missing grandson? Maybe, but I can't ask him. He's still missing.

The Sheriff watches Clark for a reaction.

So does BRUCE.

BRUCE

Sheriff, I'd never dream of telling you how to do your job, but have you checked out the teeth-marks? Dentition might shed some light on the attacker.

SHERIFF

Thank you, Mister---

BRUCE

Wayne.

SHERIFF

Mr. Wayne, we have examined all three victims. The teeth marks appear human.

(MORE)

SHERIFF (cont'd)  
(off Clark)  
No, Mr. Kent, I'm not saying you're  
the attacker. But we both know  
you're not telling me everything.  
When you decide you want to help  
your mother, call me.

Sheriff Adams EXITS. Both Lex and Bruce watch Clark.

OFF Clark...

INT. LIBRARY - LUTHOR MANSION - DAY

CLOSE ON A BULLS-EYE as a dart THUNKS just off-center.

LEX cocks back his next round, LIONEL storms in, a fury of  
silk and purpose.

LIONEL  
Damn it, Lex, what the hell is  
going on?

Lionel's warpath plants him directly between Lex and the  
dartboard.

LEX  
You're in my way.

LIONEL  
Answer the question.

LEX  
The one you asked, or the one you  
want answered?

LIONEL  
Pick one.

LEX  
Why did I request a copy of the  
details of the Scry Tech takeover?

LIONEL  
It's just business, and of no  
concern to you, Lex.

LEX  
Yet you took the time to berate me  
in person?

LIONEL

I came here because that Wayne boy is up to his usual antics and I won't have you getting involved with him again.

Lex strolls over to his desk, eyes the dart still in hand.

LEX

I can take care of myself.

Lex takes a seat. Lionel squares off across from him.

LIONEL

I recall the pair of you were the terror of the social pages in two cities. Consider this timely advice, and my presence here a sign of how serious it is.

LEX

My friendship with Bruce or my interest in the family business?

LIONEL

I'm only looking after your best interests.

LEX

One of the few things I can count on is that you act in your own best interest.

LIONEL

You have a bright future, son. Don't throw it away on Bruce Wayne.

LEX

That sounds like a threat.

LIONEL

You know I never make threats, Lex. The board won't appreciate complications in what should be a simple take-over that will enhance our shareholders value.

His point made, Lionel lowers his hackles, crosses to a bookshelf, looks over its selection.

LEX

I bet they'd like it even less if they knew about the fortune you've spent on special projects here. Projects that will do nothing to enhance our stock price, leaving them vulnerable to a suit by the shareholders.

Lionel casually examines a volume.

LIONEL

A threat?

LEX

Timely advice.

(produces a thick binder)

This claims Scry Tech's crystalline-replication process will help our semi-conductor unit. That's a lie.

LIONEL

Is it?

Lex sets down the binder with a THUMP.

LEX

The process only works with crystals. Our own people aren't doing any work with those, but I know of one crystal that you might be interested in. One that's found in just one place. Smallville.

LIONEL

If you think that the Board will believe--

LEX

I don't have to convince the Board of anything to make your life uncomfortable. I just have to point them in the right direction.

Lex whip-throws the dart, which

NAILS THE BULL'S-EYE DEAD CENTER

Lionel locks eyes with his nemesis/protégé, Lex matches his stare unflinchingly.

LIONEL

I hope you know what you're doing,  
Lex.

LEX

I think we both know what I'm  
doing, Dad.

Lionel smiles, wide, menacing, and creepy all in one, EXITS.

OFF Lex...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SMALLVILLE MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Sunlight slips in through open blinds, as Clark and Jonathan  
ENTER. Both smile as they see

MARTHA, awake, peaked but improved. Doctor Morton examines  
her chart.

CLARK

You look better, Mom. How do you  
feel?

MARTHA

A little... drained, for lack of a  
better word.

MORTON

We put her on a hormone therapy  
that stimulates the growth of new  
red blood cells. The rate of  
production exceeds the rate of  
destruction. As long as that  
continues, it's possible that the  
destructive process will exhaust  
itself.

JONATHAN

So she'll be alright?

MORTON

Based on these results, I expect a  
full recovery. I'd like to keep you  
here another day for observation,  
Mrs. Kent.

MARTHA

That's fine.

CLARK

Doctor, would this treatment work  
on someone with a more severe case?

MORTON

We still don't understand the  
underlying cause but, yes, it's  
possible. The Thatchers are also  
responding well to the same course.

OFF Clark...

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A PHOTOGRAPH OF MARCUS stares blankly from a missing-persons  
poster, until it's RIPPED down.

CLARK moves along Main Street to the next, TEARS IT DOWN.

MARCUS (O.S.)

Does this mean you don't care  
anymore, Clark?

Marcus stands right behind him. Clark blinks stupidly for a  
second.

CLARK

You're out in daylight?

MARCUS

I'm nocturnal, not combustible. You  
watch too many movies. Why trash  
the posters?

CLARK

I'm not sure I want anyone to find  
you, considering what you did to  
your own family.

MARCUS

I've found a new family. One that  
wants me.

CLARK

Your grandparents care about you.  
They just haven't been good at  
showing it.

MARCUS

How would you know? You haven't  
spoken to me in years.

CLARK

Is that what this is about?

MARCUS

Get over yourself. You made your choice when you decided to never talk to me again. A simple apology and I would have forgiven you. Instead, I forgot you. You were just another in a long line of people who ignored me.

CLARK

I know, and it was all my fault. I want to make it up to you. I think I found a cure.

MARCUS

Why would I want that? Maybe you want to stop me because you can't stand me being more like you. A new family, new power.

(glances at Talon)

A new girl.

Clark glances at the Talon, turns back to an O.S. WHOOSH of superspeed.

Marcus is gone.

OFF Clark...

INT. TALON - DAY

Clark bursts through the front door, stops short when he sees

BRUCE, LANA, AND CHLOE at the counter, a large map between them. They stop their conversation at Clark's approach.

CLARK

Hey, did you guys see Marcus?

The trio exchange glances.

CHLOE

You've seen him?

CLARK

I think so. If you find him, just be careful.

(re: map)

What's that?

BRUCE  
It's a map, Clark.

Clark looks a dagger at Bruce, who takes it in stride.

LANA  
Bruce was looking for you,  
actually.

CLARK  
Doesn't look like he tried too  
hard.

CHLOE  
Just listen to him.

Clark shrugs.

BRUCE  
I'll try to keep this quick, so you  
can get back to your adolescent  
angst. I laid out the locations of  
each attack or sighting. They all  
fell within a five-mile radius of  
one another.

CLARK  
The town is called Smallville. Most  
of it is within a five-mile radius.

BRUCE  
(pointedly ignoring him)  
Whatever or whoever the Sheriff is  
looking for must have a home-base.  
Given the psych profile, maybe a  
cave. I checked out the U.S.  
Geological Survey database.  
(points to the center of  
the circle)  
The Kane Strike Mine, abandoned  
decades ago. Your missing friend  
might somehow be connected.

CHLOE  
We thought Marcus might have been  
the first victim.

LANA  
But if you just saw him, maybe not.

Bruce watches for Clark's reaction. Clark catches it, forces his eyes back to the map.

CLARK

Why are you getting involved,  
Bruce? I thought this belonged to  
the professionals.

LANA

He was just trying to help, Clark.  
You, of all people, should  
appreciate that.

Disgusted, Lana grabs a crate, EXITS through the stockroom's  
swinging doors.

INT. TALON - STOCK ROOM - DAY

Lana absentmindedly blows into the windowless room a few  
steps, notices there's no light.

Balancing the crate, she fumbles for the switch, but finds

MARCUS' HAND

Blocking her. Her eyes go wide, but Marcus' swift hand  
stifles her scream.

THE CRATE SMASHES TO THE FLOOR

Distracts Marcus for a second, in which Lana slips away in  
the darkness.

Marcus' mouth opens, he ECHO-LOCATES.

Lana feels her way along the wall, nearly reaches the back  
door, when

MARCUS GRABS HER

Marcus leans in to Lana, trapped in his steely grasp, covers  
her mouth.

MARCUS

Time to meet your new family.

CLARK BURSTS THROUGH THE DOORS

Finds an empty room and a broken crate.

OFF CLARK...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. CAVE - DAY

Marcus faces the roost's nook, with Lana pinned under his arm. She struggles in vain against his vise-like grip.

MARCUS  
(to roost)  
Take her.

Green eyes peer silently outward from the darkness.

MARCUS  
She's like me. We're both alone.  
Nobody wants us. Bring her over.  
Make her like me.

LANA  
What are you talking about?

MARCUS  
Don't you get it? I know you. Your  
parents died, your aunt left you.  
We're alike. Now we can be together  
forever. We'll never be alone  
again.

LANA  
Marcus, you're insane. Let me go!

From O.S. a WHOOSH of superspeed. Marcus turns to find...

CLARK standing in the entrance, the last light of day casts his heroic silhouette.

CLARK  
You heard her.

MARCUS  
(to roost)  
Take her!

Marcus shoves Lana toward the roost. She tries to stop herself, but TWISTS HER ANKLE, stumbles headfirst into the rocky wall. She falls, unconscious.

CLARK RUSHES toward her, but is violently intercepted by Marcus.

The two grapple, Marcus steering Clark toward the ledge. Clark DIGS HIS HEELS deep into the stony ground, carving parallel trenches as he brakes.

CLARK TIGHTENS HIS GRIP on Marcus' arms, spins, tosses him hard into the cave wall. SMALL ROCKS TUMBLE LOOSE from the impact, dust trailing.

IN THE CREVICE

Fragments of kryptonite loosen, shift slightly, as

THE ROOST ERUPTS, a blossom of black wings and sonic chirps fills the cave.

BRUCE ENTERS, peers through the swirling cloud of bats, sees Lana, fights his way through to her.

MARCUS

Now you're in trouble.

THE SWARM CIRCLES Clark, Marcus' jaw swings wide, emitting a stunning SHRIEK.

Nothing. Clark grins, rushes Marcus. Marcus recovers, rockets toward Clark. The two clash again, this time Marcus gets the upper hand, swings Clark hard into the roost' nook.

A CHUNK OF KRYPTONITE breaks free, tumbles out, lands next to Clark.

CLARK COLLAPSES, his VEINS WRITHE BLACK from the radiation.

BRUCE looks up from Lana, sees this as he swats another bat away.

MARCUS

Giving up, Clark?  
(to the swarm)  
Take them all, now!

Marcus CACKLES, his easy victory at hand. THE SWARM picks up speed, flocks toward Bruce and Lana, but

SUDDENLY BANKS HARD, barrels straight at bewildered Marcus. The swarm circles him, faster, and faster, he backs away toward

THE LEDGE, and gaping abyss beyond.

BRUCE REACHES, snatches the kryptonite, tosses it over the edge.

MARCUS, besieged, overwhelmed, scared.

MARCUS

What are you doing? You loved me,  
you cared, you--

MARCUS' HEEL skids over the edge, pebbles and dust kicked back into the void. He halts, arms reeling.

CLARK rises, rushes to help.

The swarm too much for him, MARCUS slips, falls over the edge. THE SWARM flocks after, down into the deep.

CLARK reaches the edge, peers over. Nothing but darkness below. He reaches for his ears.

BRUCE, watching intently, as Clark looks down at

A PAIR OF EARPLUGS, in his hand. Clark tosses them over the edge, remembers Bruce, turns to find

Bruce, busy inspecting Lana's head injury.

OFF Clark...

INT. KITCHEN - KENT HOME - DAY

The clean light of a new day shines brightly into the house, as Clark and Jonathan help Martha inside.

MARTHA

Will you two please relax? I'm  
fine, really.

CLARK

Doctor Morton said you'd take a  
couple days to fully recover.

MARTHA

Since when does a Kent ever take it  
easy?

The family shares a smile.

MARTHA

Though, I could go for a glass of  
orange juice.

Clark heads for the fridge, Jonathan eases Martha into a dining chair.

JONATHAN

What was the word on Marcus?

Clark pours a glass of O.J.

CLARK

His grandparents are going to be alright, but they're still a little shaken.

MARTHA

I can understand why.

CLARK

Sheriff Adams checked out the mine, but didn't find anything. It's like he just vanished.

(delivers the glass to Martha)

There was something about what happened in the cave that was really strange.

MARTHA

What?

CLARK

It felt like the bats were punishing Marcus for abusing his power, even though they gave it to him.

MARTHA

Perhaps they didn't approve of how he used it.

JONATHAN

Everyone who has power has to decide how they're going use it, Clark. Marcus made his choice, just like you.

OFF Clark...

INT. LIBRARY - LUTHOR MANSION - DAY

Lex sits at his desk, examining a file folder.

BRUCE breezes in, cell phone to his ear.

BRUCE  
(mid-conversation)  
Right. Thanks, Alfred.

Bruce hangs up, strolls over to the desk. Lex closes the file.

BRUCE  
The most interesting news: your  
father has abandoned his takeover  
bid for Scry Tech.

Lex refuses the bait, smiles.

LEX  
Really? I hadn't heard.

Bruce now refuses the bait, returns the smile.

BRUCE  
Fancy that. Listen, I've wreaked  
enough havoc on this tiny hamlet  
for the time being. I'm off to  
bigger and bolder things.

LEX  
Gotham must be a ghost town in your  
absence.

BRUCE  
Probably.  
(pulls an envelope from  
his coat pocket)  
A reprieve from your exile.  
(tosses it to Lex)  
The Wayne Foundation is opening a  
new orphanage in a month. You're  
invited. Of course.

LEX  
I don't know how I can pull myself  
away from the bright lights of  
Smallville, but I'll see what I can  
do.

BRUCE  
I'm sure that will be difficult. It  
is quite interesting. So is your  
friend Clark.

(MORE)

BRUCE (cont'd)

A word of advice from someone who's gone a few rounds with the tabloids: the Daily Planet might not be so understanding of a millionaire industrialist's close personal friendship with a teenage boy.

(beat)

Just a thought.

Bruce grins, EXITS.

OFF Lex...

EXT. TALON - MAIN STREET - DAY

Clark's stroll is interrupted by a head-turning, fiendishly sleek silver

MERCEDES SLR MCCLAREN parked in front.

BRUCE EXITS the Talon.

A beat while the two size each other up.

BRUCE

You'll be pleased to hear that I'm leaving this one-latté town.

CLARK

Getting a last peek at the local wildlife?

BRUCE

Let's talk.

CLARK

We are talking.

BRUCE

We're sparring. Let's talk.

Clark watches Bruce's face, decides it's safe, nods.

Bruce scopes out the street, finds nobody, pulls Clark off to one side.

BRUCE

I want to thank you.

CLARK

(unsure)

For what?

BRUCE

I came to Smallville to solve a mystery. Several, in fact, which I suspected were all tied into one root cause. You helped me find the solution.

CLARK

I don't know what you think you saw down in that cave, Bruce--

BRUCE

You can't convince me that I didn't see what I saw, Clark. Relax, I'm not going to expose you.

CLARK

What do you want? I don't have any money.

Bruce smirks, amused by Clark's persistent naiveté.

BRUCE

Let's assume this isn't about money. It's about leaving you here to clean up a mess that you're somehow responsible for.

(off Clark)

I know your secret, Clark. You're not from around here, and we both know I don't mean Kansas.

CLARK

That's crazy.

BRUCE

Not really. Between your records and Chloe's Wall of Weird I've pieced it all together. Your arrival in the Kent family right after the meteor shower. Your speed and strength. It's the only explanation that makes sense. Sherlock Holmes said that once you eliminate the impossible whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. I just had to broaden my definition of "impossible." It was a very valuable lesson.

Clark turns to leave, Bruce grabs his arm. Clark looks down at Bruce's hand, grins.

CLARK

If you are right, then maybe you shouldn't do that.

Bruce considers, releases Clark.

BRUCE

One last thing. I visited the bat's cave and picked up a few green souvenirs. Just remember...

(locks eyes, deadly earnest)

I'll be watching.

Bruce heads for the driver's side of the SLR.

CLARK

Instead of worrying about me, try using your big brain and checkbook to help people.

BRUCE

I am.

(beat)

Don't make me come back here.

Bruce hops into the SLR, which ROARS to life, and PEELS down Main Street.

OFF Clark...

INT. TALON - DAY

Clark walks toward the counter, finds Chloe sipping coffee, Lana behind the counter.

Chloe spots Clark, shares a glance with Lana, deposits her cup.

CHLOE

Time to put that Bruce Wayne exclusive to bed.

(to Clark)

It's an industry term.

Chloe scoops up her bag, EXITS.

Clark stares at the counter, finds courage, approaches Lana.

CLARK

Lana, I need to apologize. I flipped into jerk-mode whenever I was around Bruce. It wasn't fair to you. I'm sorry.

LANA

You were right about one thing, Clark. You had good reason to be jealous.

(off Clark)

I was attracted to Bruce Wayne, but it was never for his money or power. It was his honesty. A guy I've known less than a week speaks to me with complete candor, while the one man I've known nearly all my life can't even begin to open up.

CLARK

Maybe it's because he's afraid you won't like what you find.

LANA

You can't control my reactions. By now you should know me well enough to know what I might think of anything you have to say. We may never be a couple, but I thought you wanted to always be friends.

(off Clark's nod)

Friends have to be honest, too.

CLARK

You're right.

LANA

Then let's start right now. How did you get to the cave so fast?

A beat. Clark evades her gaze, Lana knows he won't tell her anything. She tries to bury her frustration.

CLARK

I wish I could tell you, Lana. I wish I could tell you everything.

LANA

(grabs tray)

Wishing isn't enough, Clark. Not anymore.

Lana walks away, leaving Clark to reflect. OFF Clark...

FADE OUT.

THE END