

Batman/Superman/Wonder Woman:
Trinity

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INT. SMALLVILLE DINER

A small glob of red ketchup on a white plate. A hand dips and slides a french fry through it in a sunny, relaxed restaurant.

CLARK
... and that's how I got out.

The hand belongs to CLARK KENT, approaching his twenties, the boy next door in a world without neighbors. He beams a happy, sheepish smile. Two teenagers (a BOY and a GIRL) sit across from him, speechless.

GIRL
You're not serious.

Clark chuckles and gestures 'cross my heart'.

GIRL
THAT'S your big secret.

The girl folds her arms and leans back in her chair, frowning.

GIRL
I don't believe you.

CLARK
Honest.

The girl slaps the table, laughing incredulously.

GIRL
Come on! You skipped physics?!
That's REALLY the best you got?

CLARK
I told you it wasn't worth knowing.

GIRL
But we gave you such good ones! You
can't honestly tell me that's all.

CLARK
What exactly were you expecting?

The girl just shrugs.

Clark looks around the diner for a waiter. He suddenly looks flushed. He leans forward, elbow on the table, rubbing a hand across his face.

GIRL
Hey Boy Scout, what's wrong?

CLARK

Nothing.

Clark grabs a menu and hides behind it, coughing, fidgeting. He wipes his brow with the back of his hand. His eyes slowly adopt a tint of red, an odd WHISTLING accompanying the change.

The menu erupts into flame, disintegrating instantly. The boy and the girl jump back in their seats as Clark immediately covers his eyes with a hand.

GIRL

Clark, you're freaking us out...

An unusual sound HISSES, like meat sizzling in a frying pan. Clark mutters from behind his hand:

CLARK

It's nothing. I'm fine...

A small amount of steam spills up from between his fingers.

GIRL

Clark, what's wrong?

The girl reaches across the table for Clark's hand. Something red and hot shoots from his eyes and consumes her. She falls to the ground, instantly dead.

The occupants of the diner jump out from their seats and retreat a couple steps, terrified.

BOY

Jesus!

Clark, horrified, whips his head sideways. The red arcs around and slices straight through an old couple and their server, leaving a trail of fire wherever it touches.

Clark falls out of his seat, panicking as the diner erupts into chaos around him. He rolls onto his hands and knees and covers his eyes with his hands.

Clark groans, the red fire shooting continuously, his eyelids melting. He screams, whipping his head backwards. The red beams shoot right through his hands. They tear through the roof and set the whole place ablaze. The roof collapses.

BLACK.

CLARK(VO)

Never again.

OPENING CREDITS

EXT. THEMYSKIRA

An ancient ivory city, lush greenery, and blue ocean. Paradise.

Hundreds of women dressed in ancient Grecian robes and silver bracelets wait, a gorgeous ship coming into port. A cheer goes up as DIANA emerges atop the boat.

In a crowd of beautiful women, Diana sticks out as eternally youthful, luminous, perfect, Venus with a sword. As she descends from the ship, a woman (HYPPOLYTE, Diana's mother) steps forward, beaming.

HYPPOLYTE

It's good to see you again...

Hyppolyte embraces Diana.

HYPPOLYTE

It's time. The Goddesses call for you.

EXT. THEMYSKIRIAN TEMPLE

Diana climbs a long staircase stretching up a mountain towards the sky and a beautiful temple. A pair of guards greet her admiringly yet stoically, bowing their heads.

INT. THEMYSKIRIAN TEMPLE

A towering shrine, lit up with only torches. Five giant stone statues call for reverence: DEMETER, APHRODITE, ATHENA, ARTEMIS, HESTIA.

Stone doors close behind Diana, locking her in. She wanders into the center of the temple, to the focal point of the five statues.

A wind picks up within the temple, swirling. The torches dance. Lightening flickers in the dome of the ceiling, finally surging into the statues and giving them life.

Diana tenses as the statues all look down upon her.

DIANA

Why do you call me here?

APHRODITE

In a city of eternal midnight, a shadow looms high.

ARTEMIS

With strength enough to cower Zeus
himself.

HESTIA

The fire of Hades raging inside him.

DEMETER

Breath to bring eternal winter upon
the earth.

ATHENA

If he is allowed to exist, the
balance that maintains this earth
may very well topple.

Diana looks up at the dome of the temple as an image
materializes: a black cloud growing, cruel wind HOWLING and
raging.

DIANA

What do you want from me?

ARTEMIS

You must travel to Patriarch's world.

APHRODITE

You must venture into the shadows.

DEMETER

You must confront the beast.

ATHENA

You must kill it. Your life and its
for billions.

The black cloud blinks fiery red eyes, bolts or fiery
lightening echoing through its mass. Diana steels herself.

ATHENA

We give you sight.

Red beams of light surge down from the fiery eyes, filling
Diana's. She screams as VISIONS OF APOCALYPSE fill the
screen: skies of fire, obliterated cities, oceans of death
and blood.

The cloud dissipates, freeing Diana from the light. She
sinks to her knees, a shaking, broken mass.

APHRODITE

What you've seen need not come to pass.

ATHENA

We charge you with the mission of
ambassador and defender of mankind.

HESTIA

It is up to you to return them to
our glory.

ARTEMIS

It is up to you to save them from
the darkness that threatens them.

APHRODITE

Only you have strength enough to
inspire greatness.

DEMETER

You're name will be praised for
centuries.

Diana lifts her head, still trembling.

ATHENA

Will you again fight for us? Lay
down your life for the Earth?

Diana gathers herself, standing strong.

INT. THEMYSIRIAN PALACE

Diana sits by a window, looking over Themyscira. Hyppolyte
sits at her throne, unhappy.

HYPPOLYTE

Nothing has changed. Nothing is
different. You should not be taken
from your mission for this.

Diana walks up to Hyppolyte, kneeling in front of her.

DIANA

I will be strong.

Hyppolyte forces a smile and places her hand upon Diana's cheek.

HYPPOLYTE

I know you will be. But they're
wasting you. You could be leading
revolutions, bringing the desperate
and abused together. Instead they
treat you as a simple, thoughtless
soldier.

Diana picks up a sword, playing with it.

DIANA

Diplomacy and politics have not
come easily to me, mother. My name
is only myth, our word unheard.
Warfare, however...

With a dismissive yet expert toss, the sword slices deep
into a marble pillar.

DIANA

Has proven to be a talent. Careful
suggestions don't invigorate the
masses, mother. Actions, heroes do.

Hyppolyte looks at Diana, quietly disappointed.

HYPPOLYTE

The people of Patriarch's world...
you must have patience with them,
dear. The Gods have abandoned them.
Black and white have taken subtler
shades of gray.

DIANA

The distinction between good and
evil is not a difficult one to make.

With that, Diana leaves her mother.

DIANA

A monster is a monster.

EXT. GOTHAM -- MORNING

A dark field of sharp-angled skyscrapers that sun dares not
shine on stabbing into a smog-filled sky. Graffiti and
garbage clutter the streets. A far cry from paradise.

A monorail comes to a stop and doors open, revealing Diana.
She practically glows in comparison to all the pale faces of
Gotham, angelic.

Diana catches sight of a newspaper box. A headline reads
"MONSTER TERRORIZES GOTHAM", a drawing of a bat with violent
red eyes accompanying it.

INT. MUSEUM -- NIGHT

A museum at night, long past closing time.

A pair of boots walk steadily across the floor. They stop as
they come to a group of people huddled together on their
knees in the center of the room, hands tied, eyes blindfolded.

A trio of thugs (LARRY, CURLY, and MOE) stand around a group of frightened hostages, guns pointed at their heads.

CURLY

Relax, folks. Soon as the boss gets back, this'll all be over and done with.

Something in the distant darkness RATTLES. The thugs all take pause.

MOE

You rounded everyone up, right?

CURLY

Yeah, I made sure.

LARRY

You think... you think it's *him*?

Curly sneers, ridiculing the meek:

CURLY

Don't tell me you believe in those stupid ghost stories...

LARRY

I don't know, man... you never talked to Gobs.

MOE

Would you two shut up? Dropping names like that... you trying to give us away? You're acting like freaking amateurs.

Another RATTLE in the darkness. The thugs grow increasingly uneasy.

MOE

I'm going to check it out. You come too, C. L... just try not to embarrass yourself in front of the hostages.

Moe shoves ahead the Curly as they head for the...

INT. MUSEUM - PREDATORS OF THE WORLD EXHIBIT

Moe and Curly walk carefully through the aisles, flashlights on the ends of their guns showing the way. Displays of various predator animals are basked in shadow; lions, tigers, and bears posture as monsters.

The two of them come upon a fork in the path. Moe signals for them to split up and take both paths, moving on before Curly has any chance to object.

We follow Curly as he heads down a corridor of the beasts of the Earth, surrounded by fangs and claws. He passes right by a horned silhouette, paying it no attention. It turns its head as he rounds a corner.

Curly and Moe meet again some ways down, at the tail of an enormous T-Rex skeleton.

MOE

You see anything?

CURLY

No, silent as the grave.

(chuckles)

Get it?

Moe just looks at his partner, annoyed. Curly's smile fades.

MOE

I didn't see anything, either. I think we're good.

A series of noises, REPEATED CLINKS. The two thugs look up to see a small steel orb bouncing down the tail of the T-Rex, hitting every joint. The orb finally rolls to a stop at their feet. They look down, and then back up, exchanging confused gazes.

A BEAT, and the orb explodes in a massive fog of blinding smoke. The thugs thrash around, coughing and wheezing.

Something wraps around Moe's neck and yanks him into the sky. Terrified, Curly makes a break for it, but something catches him by the feet, pulling him into the smoke as he desperately but hopelessly claws at the floor.

INT. MUSEUM

Larry stands in front of the hostages, constantly scanning the darkness with the flashlight of his gun. He whispers into a walkie-talkie

LARRY

(stammering)

C? M? What's going on? You guys okay?

No answer.

Something cuts through the air, shattering the bulb of Larry's flashlight and leaving him nothing but the moon and starlight.

An unnatural fog flows through the floor, coming in on Larry from every direction and gathering at his feet.

Larry panics, jerking his gun about. A black thing slithers through the darkness. The thug fires into the smoke again and again, hopeless.

A small blue light flies through the air, slicing through the tip of the thug's gun. It arcs around, a mind of its own, slicing off more and more of the gun until nothing but a trigger remains.

The blue light arcs back towards the thug one last time, but suddenly darts straight up. His gaze follows it to the ceiling where he finds the other two thugs, tied from their ankles, hanging upside down, unconscious.

Larry looks back down, and BATMAN is within an inch of his face, a black piece of streamlined nightmare. Before Larry can scream, Batman covers his mouth and knocks him unconscious.

Batman stands in the middle of the room, fog flowing around him. The strange blue light arcs towards him, and he snatches it out of the air. A BATARANG.

The hostages sit quietly, frightened, oblivious to what's happened. Something slices the rope binding their hands, freeing them. They carefully lower their blindfolds. They look around themselves, finding nothing but fog and an unconscious thug.

INT. MUSEUM - SCIENCE EXHIBIT

Batman slithers cautiously, glancing around. He notices a shattered display case. On what remains of the glass: a picture of two large hunks of green rock, a card beside it reading "METEOR ROCKS".

Batman turns his head, spotting the final hostage: a pretty girl, blindfolded, gagged, and handcuffed to the railing of an EVOLUTION exhibit. She whimpers, terrified, trying to keep quiet.

As Batman makes strides towards the girl, a massive man falls from the ceiling, cutting him off.

BANE

You must be this Batman I've heard
so much about.

BANE is a monster of a man who barely even resembles humanity. Pipes run up from along his spine into his wrists and ankles, but most prominently into the back of his skull. He's a mess of impossible muscle, wrapped in leather and spikes. A mask leaves only hints of an actual face.

BANE

They call me Bane.

Bane swipes at Batman with a gargantuan hand, but Batman dodges and rolls behind him towards the girl, flipping open a batarang. Before Batman can slice through the chains of the girl's handcuffs, Bane grabs a hold of him, pulling him away.

Batman manages to slip out from Bane's grip, pressing an expert attack to little avail.

BANE

I couldn't have expected any better... but it isn't enough.

Bane, unfazed, finally gets a solid grip of Batman, lifting him off his feet.

BANE

How could it ever be? After all... you're just a man. Nothing more.

Bane slams Batman into a wall, the building shuddering. Batman makes no noise, pinned within his indent.

BANE

Just weak, obsolete flesh beneath a black shell trying to dominate over the cruel and the wicked.

Bane swings Batman around, and drives him into the floor, the building quaking once more. Batman is deeply, severely wounded, yet he surrenders no scream.

BANE

For what purpose? To what ends? What do you expect?

Inches from the girl, Batman reaches weakly for her. Bane only chuckles as he lifts Batman into the air, holding him at arm's length before slamming him once more into the floor, harder still.

BANE

As strong as you are, as hard as you push, it could never be enough. You know it, don't you? You're an intelligent man. The futility of it all isn't lost on you, is it?

Content as Batman lies limply on the the floor, Bane makes his way towards the girl.

BANE

Morality is too heavy a burden to carry if one hopes to achieve anything in this world. Constraints must be shed if greatness is to be achieved.

Bane pulls down the hostage's blindfold and undoes her handcuffs. He locks eyes with her. Softly, he takes hold of her head between his hands

Batman tries desperately to push himself up, but the SNAPPING OF BONE officially renders it pointless. Batman sinks back into the floor, the girl falling right next to him, dead eyes staring pleadingly into his.

Bane heads for the exit, perfectly content.

BANE

I hope this has been enlightening for you.

EXT. MUSEUM - ALLEY WAY

From a rooftop, Diana observes as police descend upon the crime scene. Batman escapes through an alley without so much as a policemen's eye falling on him. Exhausted, he collapses into the waiting BATMOBILE, its canopy closing behind him.

Diana watches the Batmobile come to life and race out the alley. She shakes her head.

DIANA

It isn't him...

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - BED ROOM -- MORNING

An ALARM CLOCK rings obnoxiously in a shabby, unkempt bedroom. A hand gropes at the clock blindly.

Clark Kent, early twenties, sits up in his bed, rubbing his eyes tiredly.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Clark comes out of his room, wearing baggy clothes. He puts on a pair of earphones and turns his walkman to maximum volume, heading for the door.

A picture of Clark and his parents sits atop a coffee table. In the background, Clark exits. Next to the picture, we may notice a pair of glasses. Clark reenters with a frown, grabbing the glasses then heading back out.

INT. SAM'S DINER

That nostalgic fifties diner present in every city: celebrity photos, a juke box, etc. A picture hangs prominently on a wall: the Diner's owner and a family of three, the child in his father's arms. The inscription reads "THOMAS, MARTHA, AND BRUCE WAYNE: 'BEST FOOD IN GOTHAM'"

Clark steps in, glasses on his face, a BELL at the door announcing his entrance. He walks past SAM, the diner's owner, leaping over the counter and into the kitchen.

CLARK

Hey, Sam. How's it going?

Sam, unimpressed, just reads a tabloid with the headline "ANGEL TO COUNTERACT GOTHAM'S DEMON? - NEAR-RAPE VICTIM CLAIMS DIVINE INTERVENTION". Beneath the banner: a blurry photo of a vague feminine-silhouette, flying through the skyline.

Clark glances over his shoulder carefully at Sam, making sure he pays no attention. He pulls his earphones off from his head and lets them rest around his neck.

For the briefest second, we hear incredibly intrusive STATIC, thousands of conversations, all too loud. Clark quickly shoves a pair of EARPLUGS into his ears, silencing the static.

SAM

...I SAID you got company, Clark.

Clark heads for the counter. He sees the back of a bald head sitting in a booth. He frowns, making his way towards it.

LEX

Glad to see you finally managed to make room in your busy schedule of jet-setting and trail-blazing, Clark...

Clark rounds the booth to find none other than LEX LUTHOR, a man only marginally older than Clark but vastly more mature, dressed in a shamelessly expensive suit.

CLARK

Well, well, well. Lex Luthor in my little diner? The Mighty hardly ever venture this far down the mountain.

Clark smiles, taking a seat across from Lex.

CLARK

How's it going, Lex?

LEX

Better than you, by the look of it.

Lex's smile slowly dissolves into a frown.

LEX

Why do you do you come here, Clark?

CLARK

It may be hard for you to believe, but I actually like it here. What's your excuse?

LEX

A faint spark of hope that you may change your mind.

Clark shakes his head.

CLARK

I don't take handouts, Lex.

LEX

And I try not to give them. I know how smart you are, Clark. You'd move up quickly at LexCorp. I can't stand seeing you waste your life like this. You could be great, you could be huge...

CLARK

I don't want to be great and I don't want to be huge. I just want to be Clark Kent. Normal and happy, pretty wife and a little house. My father's shadow doesn't loom over me quite so much as your's.

Lex takes some offense to that.

LEX

Christ, Clark. if you wanted green grass and a white-picket fence, you moved to the wrong city.

Lex shifts in his seat, uneasy.

CLARK

I appreciate what you're trying to do, but this is the last time I'm telling you, Lex.

Lex frowns.

LEX

You're still going to be at the gala tonight, right?

CLARK

I do my part.

Lex nods patiently as he stands.

LEX

I just want to see you be the best you can be, Clark.

CLARK

Well... being the best isn't for everyone.

INT. BATCAVE

A picture of a familiar, pretty girl. She wears a blue robe and a mortarboard, her arms wrapped around a pair of older people on either side of her: her parents, equally delighted.

Dozens of images of the same girl fill monitors of varying sizes. Driver's license, yearbook photos, family gatherings, etc. Delighted, blinding smiles. We finally recognize the girl to be the one we saw murdered at the museum.

BRUCE WAYNE. Still a young man as far as years can measure, but with more wisdom and experience than anyone else would dare gather in a lifetime. He sits sunken in a chair in front of his advanced computer console, his dead face alight with the glow of the monitors.

ALFRED(O.S.)

Still up, I see?

A quick press of a button, and the images of the girl all flicker away to miscellaneous reports of the green meteor rock stolen from the museum.

ALFRED PENNYWORTH, the definition of a kindly, elderly gentleman, emerges beside Bruce.

ALFRED
This world and its troubles aren't
your burden alone, you know. You
should rest, get some sleep.

BRUCE
Every second, the world gets
uglier... and you want me to rest.

Bruce shakes his head stubbornly.

BRUCE
I can't.

Alfred frowns, nodding solemnly.

ALFRED
I know. But you should.

Alfred looks at the monitors and the reports.

ALFRED
What was her name?

Bruce swallows. He clicks back to the images of the girl.

BRUCE
Carmen. She was nineteen. She was
loved.

ALFRED
What happened?

Unwilling to answer, Bruce turns his chair around and stands up, walking away from the console and deeper into the cave, black eternity in every direction.

Alfred can't help but wince as he sees Bruce's bare upper-body. Not so much as an inch of pale flesh goes without disfigurement. Scars. Discoloured skin. Knife and bullet wounds. A fresh set of deep bruises.

Bruce comes upon a secondary console. He brings up reports and statistics on Bane.

BRUCE
His name's Bane.

Bruce swallows.

BRUCE
I couldn't stop him. I wasn't
strong enough.

Alfred watches Bruce for a moment, but he only stands there, statuesque, staring at Bane.

BRUCE
You can go to bed, Alfred. I'll be
right up.

ALFRED
How many times do you expect me to
fall for that one?

Bruce forces a weary grin.

BRUCE
I know you're tired. I'll be fine.

Alfred reluctantly obliges, knowing Bruce wishes to be alone. He climbs a staircase nearly invisible in the darkness. He's halfway up when Bruce calls after him, small but resolute.

BRUCE
I'm going to fix this world. Make
it what it's supposed to be.
Whatever it takes. I promised...

Alfred stares quietly at Bruce, aching.

ALFRED
I know, sir.

Alfred continues up the stairs, disappearing.

Bruce stands alone in the vast emptiness of the cave for a long while, small, ordinary. He heads towards his primary console, staring at Carmen for a moment or two before taking a seat and tapping a few keys.

A collection of newspaper clippings appear on each of the monitors: "GOTHAM CRIME RATE SKYROCKETS FOR FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW", "GOTHAM'S GREATEST RECESSION", "URBAN MYTH EARLY SIGN OF GOTHAM'S TUMBLE" etc.

Bruce leans back in his chair, exhausted. He flips back to the reports of the green meteor rock, setting back to work.

INT. CHURCH

Clark sits by himself, uncomfortably in the back-most pew of a decrepit, ugly, sparsely attended church. Spray-paint taints stained glass.

PRIEST(O.S.)

... the monsters of this world take all shapes. They walk among us everyday in disguise, smiling, pretending they're decent, lying through their teeth. But their hearts are black, and behind their eyes is nothing but hellfire...

EXT. PARK ROW - CHURCH

Diana watches a dozen televisions on display through a store window, all showing the same thing: an old western.

A murderer stands on a wooden scaffold in front of a huge, raging crowd, hands tied behind his back. An executioner wraps a noose around the murderer's neck as a priest reads him his last rights.

Outside the church, A PRIEST shakes the hands of the few attendees as they exit the church. Clark lingers. The priest catches sight of him.

PRIEST

Something the matter?

Clark works up some nerve.

CLARK

In a place like Gotham... like this world... how do you do it? How do you believe there's good?

PRIEST

Gotham City... can be draining on the spirit. The good may not seem enough when you have to dig so deep to find it. But it's there. And it's worth it.

Clark doesn't look convinced.

PRIEST

The monsters of this world... they are capable of terrible things... but take comfort in the fact that the Almighty is in your corner, and there isn't a creature in existence who can stand up to Him.

Clark tries to find words, weak.

CLARK

But what if there was?

Diana overhears Clark.

CLARK

What if there was someone...
something strong enough to kill
anything and everything? Something
to end it all? What if it couldn't
be stopped?

The priest just looks at Clark quietly. Clark forces a tired chuckle.

CLARK

Sorry. I'm just... babbling.

Diana listens with a keen ear. The priest stares at Clark. Clark looks away.

PRIEST

There is evil in this world, to be
sure... but no one can escape judgment.

On the televisions, the trap door falls out from under the murderer, and then silence. Dead silence, despite the screaming, cheering crowd.

Clark leaves the priest, pulling on earphones, heading down the sidewalk, almost deliberately losing himself in the huddled masses, content just to be another face. Diana watches him curiously. She follows after him.

Diana follows from a distance as Clark passes beneath the archway of a public park.

EXT. ROBINSON PARK - POND

A picturesque, natural beauty standing defiantly and almost superficially at the center of a grim and grey city. There doesn't seem to be a soul within it other than Clark, sitting on a bench beneath the shade of a tree, looking over a pond, earphones thumping. Without looking back:

CLARK

You following me or something?

Clark turns his head towards the forestry behind him. For a second or two, nothing happens. Finally, Diana emerges from behind the tree, caught, uneasy. He pulls off his earphones, making space for a seat next to him.

CLARK

Take a seat, if you'd like. I could
use some company. It gets lonely in
this town, you know?

Diana stands quite hesitantly, looking at Clark. Finally, she takes the seat. Clark adjusts his glasses, offering his hand.

CLARK

Clark Kent.

Diana looks at Clark for a second. She shakes his hand, uncertainly.

DIANA

Diana.

Clark smiles.

CLARK

Diana. It suits you.

The two of them stare at the pond for awhile, quietly.

DIANA

This is... nice. This place, I mean.

CLARK

I think so, too. It's quiet.

Clark turns, smiling.

CLARK

Guess we're the only ones. I've been coming here everyday for a month now and I think you're the only person I've seen outside of maintenance.

Diana looks almost stunned.

DIANA

How can that be?

CLARK

Well, Wayne set this place up hoping to bring some sunshine to Park Row. Thought it'd make for a good escape from the hell a lot of people are living around here, I guess.

Clark smiles, a thought occurring.

CLARK

Too bad he's selling to the wrong market. People in Gotham aren't interested in changing everything.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

Their lungs have adjusted to the smog. They've stopped waiting for the sun.

Diana glances up through the leaves at the grey sky.

DIANA

They've given up hope.

Clark pauses. Diana shakes her head.

DIANA

People miss out on great things when they're not willing to make an effort.

Clark's smile fades slightly. He turns back to the pond.

CLARK

Well... sometimes working too hard can mean missing out on a lot, too.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - ELEVATOR

Bruce Wayne coughs hoarsely, painfully into a handkerchief. He observes specks of blood within it. He looks up at his reflection in the mirrored wall of the elevator, staring, dissatisfied, frustrated.

BRUCE

You're pathetic.

He straightens and exhales.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Bruce steps into a corridor, and its off-putting how much different he looks now that he's out for all the world to see. There's a mild bounce in his step, a cockiness in his stride.

A SECRETARY tries not to look too obvious while stealing glances at him. He winks at her. She blushes, and suddenly looks very busy. Bruce's smile widens.

Bruce walks through a corridor and comes to a big oak double door. Doing the most pompous thing he can think of, he swings both of them open, revealing...

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - BOARDROOM

An expansive, high-end boardroom, big round table at its center.

Lex sits at the opposite end of the room, watching Bruce toss his coat on a chair and take a seat.

LEX

You're late.

BRUCE

You're picky.

Bruce leans back in his chair.

LEX

How do you like the building?

BRUCE

It's nice. Seems odd to build it in Gotham, though. Charities don't make for good profit.

Lex smiles.

LEX

We the blessed have a duty to share the wealth, and no town needs it more than Gotham. A little bit of sacrifice and compassion on one man's part can make a difference in countless lives.

BRUCE

What's that polite word people use for endearing stupidity? Oh yeah... "optimism".

LEX

Never count a person out until the bitter end, no matter how downtrodden they may be. Sometimes a person just needs a little kick to inspire them.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CENTER

An extremely modern, metropolitan underground shopping center, far exceeding anything else in Gotham. Giant marble pillars tower like miniature skyscrapers, LexCorp banners cover every wall, and Gothamites pretend they're in a different city.

An enormous man in a raincoat and hat enters, gazing around at his surroundings. He lifts his head: Bane.

EXT. ROBINSON PARK - WALKWAY

Clark and Diana walk together through a wooded area.

CLARK

So how long you been in Gotham?

DIANA

Pardon?

CLARK

Gothamites have their own way about them, and you don't exactly share it.

Diana looks him up and down.

DIANA

Just since yesterday. I'm here on business.

CLARK

None of mine, I'm guessing?

Diana smirks.

CLARK

How long you sticking around?

DIANA

I don't know.

CLARK

You got friends here? Family? A place to stay?

DIANA

No.

Clark shakes his head.

CLARK

That's not smart. Gotham's a rough town. You shouldn't be here on your own.

DIANA

Do you live on your own?

Clark fumbles.

CLARK

Well...

DIANA

You think you're tougher than me?

Clarks chuckles uncomfortably.

CLARK

It's just pretty girl, by herself,
Gotham City...

Clark stops himself.

CLARK

Sorry. Southern sensibility. You
can take the boy out of the farm
but not the farm out of the boy,
you know?

Diana smiles.

DIANA

I knew you weren't from around here.

CLARK

What's that supposed to mean?

DIANA

You can't be. You don't fit.

Clarks smiles, looking to the ground.

CLARK

You're right. I come from some
place smaller.

DIANA

Why would you leave?

Clark pauses, looking at her.

DIANA

Gotham doesn't strike me as a city
someone comes to looking to be happy.

Clark frowns, but tries to keep upbeat.

CLARK

When you live in that small a
town... everyone knows your name.
They... expect things from you. I
just wasn't up to it. I wanted my
own life, you know? I wanted to be
happy on my own terms...

Diana doesn't quite understand.

CLARK

Gotham's a big city. People live for themselves. Nobody knows your name, nobody cares. They don't ask anything from you. To Gotham... I'm just another fish in the the ocean.

Diana nods obligingly. After a moment of silence, she speaks up.

DIANA

You're more than 'just another fish'. No use wanting to be normal. You should strive to do great things. There's no joy in ordinary.

Clark pauses, looking around at the trees, content.

CLARK

Who says?

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CENTER

Bane walks casually through the center, surprisingly incognito for a man his size, people too self-absorbed to notice him.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - BOARDROOM

LEX

You still haven't given me a straight answer on the military deal.

Bruce nods, remembering.

BRUCE

Well, that has a lot to do with me thinking you're nuts.

LEX

A man can allow no obstacle to prevent him from reaching his dream, Bruce. You know the advancements we've been making in the field of...

BRUCE

Advancements sure, but this weapon you're promising --

Lex scoffs, cutting him off.

LEX

You're looking at all the wrong details. This isn't a weapon, it's a tool.

BRUCE

A 'tool' to make the A-bomb look like a sharpened stick. Power like this doesn't and shouldn't exist.

LEX

Not every hand but your's is a wrong one, Bruce. I've already got government backing on this. We're talking about an unstoppable force for *good* here, a world safe from the cruelties of man and nature. A world where no child would ever have to see his parents' blood hit the pavement because of some pointless act of random cruelty.

BRUCE

That's not a button you should be pressing...

LEX

Just stop to think of it, Bruce! Think of the good we could do! They'll praise our names for years, talk about us in history books! We'll be heroes! We could finally live up to the legacies of our fathers, surpass them!

Bruce shakes his head, rising from his seat and turning away.

BRUCE

Sorry, Lex. I appreciate the business you're bringing to Gotham, but that doesn't mean I'm gonna be your safety net on this one. It's just too risky for my money.

Lex maintains composure, forcing a smile.

LEX

Sometimes doing good means taking risks.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CENTER

Bane looks around at the center. He checks his watch and sneers.

BANE

... and so it begins.

Enormous, fiery explosions tear through the station, and continue up through the LexCorp building, shaking its very foundation, debris flying and concrete crumbling.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - BOARDROOM

The entire boardroom trembles, tossing Bruce and Lex off balance.

EXT. ROBINSON PARK - WALKWAY

From the path, Diana and Clark both see and hear the explosions tearing up through the LexCorp building in the distance.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - BOARDROOM

ALARMS blare, and a voice comes over the INTERCOM:

INTERCOM

LexCorp employees: there have been numerous bomb detonations throughout the building. Evacuate through the practiced safety zones.

Bruce looks up from the floor. He slithers off screen and out of sight before Lex can pull himself together.

EXT. ROBINSON PARK - WALKWAY

Without even a moment's hesitation, Diana sprints towards the LexCorp building, leaving a less enthusiastic Clark behind.

CLARK

What do you think you're doing?!

She gives no answer, ignoring him. Reluctantly, Clark follows after her.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Bruce moves quickly through the rushing crowds. He stops the secretary who'd blushed at him, yelling over the crowd.

BRUCE

Where were the first explosions?

SECRETARY

The shopping center. Now come on, we've gotta get out of here!

Bruce breaks away from her and the crowds, pulling on a pair of gloves from his pocket. He comes upon an elevator, far away from the rushing people.

He pries open the doors and dives down the shaft, clutching cable in his hands.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT

Bruce lands atop a cart at the lowest level of the building. He flips open the hatch, dropping in.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CENTER

Bane watches with some satisfaction as people scurry like cockroaches in the light, dodging falling marble and concrete, explosions thundering ceaselessly. He pulls off his coat and hat, tossing them aside. He twists a knob on his wrist, a liquid pumping through his pipes, his muscles inflating.

Elevator doors strain to an opening, Bruce emerging from behind them onto an elevated walkway. At the floor level, he catches sight of Bane, twenty feet down or so. He also notices a display case of medieval weaponry, a large shield grabbing his attention.

Diana and Lex each arrive onto the scene at the same time, scanning the chaos from opposite ends of the center. Clark follows right behind Diana.

Lex surveys the destruction, horrified by the crumbling of his handiwork. An explosion above him frees a huge piece of concrete, sending it tumbling down towards him.

Diana leaps into the air, jetting across the station and tackling Lex, saving him from the falling debris. From the floor, he looks up at her, stunned, but an explosion in a shop calls for her attention. She rushes off to the rescue.

Through the frightened crowds, Bane spots a shellshocked Clark.

BANE

There you are...

THUNDEROUS FOOTSTEPS and TERRIFIED SCREAMS finally shake Clark from his daze. A shadow looms over him, and he looks up to find Bane staring down at him.

BANE

Hello, little man...

Straight above Bane's head, Bruce jumps over a railing, shield held against his knees as he comes down upon Bane, forcing him to the floor.

Bruce rolls off the behemoth and presses the attack, moving far too quickly for anyone to get a good look at him.

He holds the shield in both hands and drives it into Bane's face with a powerful dropkick.

Bane stumbles to his feet and Bruce follows through relentlessly, the shield making for a handy weapon. Bane tries to counterattack, tries to fight, but Bruce slithers and slides around his swipes, masterful, allowing him no rest or successful strike.

With an explosive blow to Bane's skull, the shield breaks in two. Bruce doesn't falter for a second, tossing the remains aside and continuing his attack.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CENTER - SHOP

Inside a fiery shop, Diana hears faint moans of life. She grabs hold of a huge piece of fallen debris, tossing it aside easily. She gathers up a pair of wounded people, slinging them over her shoulders and rushing out.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CENTER

An explosion throws Diana and the coughing wounded to the floor.

Bane starts to catch up to Bruce, occasionally getting a grip of him. Bruce keeps fighting valiantly, breaking through many holds. Bane finally lands a blow, knocking Bruce backwards, sliding and skidding across the floor, hurt.

Bane heads back after Clark, grabbing hold of him and tossing him across the room, knocking over a couple pedestrians.

Bane drives a fist into an enormous marble pillar just as Clark starts to pull himself together. The pillar breaks away, tipping over, falling down to crush Clark along with the mother and daughter on the floor beside him.

Before Bruce can even get to his feet, Diana darts in, catching the pillar, holding it at arm's length above her head! Bystanders stop in their tracks, stunned. Bruce and Clark both look at her, baffled.

A GUNSHOT sounds and a bullet grazes Diana's arm, catching her by surprise and shaking the crowds from their stupor. Her wounded arm falls away from the pillar, but she still manages to support the weight. The mother and daughter make a break for it.

Bruce notices Diana's wound and turns to see Bane marching towards her, gun pointed. Bane begins firing, but Diana lifts her wounded arm and manages to deflect his shots with a silver bracelet.

Bruce rushes towards Bane, kicking the gun out of his hand with one foot and booting him across the head with the other. He manages to hold Bane off just long enough for Diana to set down the pillar, at which point Bane hurls him aside.

Just as Diana exhales a relieved sigh, Bane charges in, driving her through the pillar and then into the floor.

BANE

What was it they used to call you?
Ah, yes... 'Wonder Woman'.

Bane once more takes hold of Diana, tossing her across the station, crashing through a display cart.

BANE

I thought I recognized you from somewhere. Of course, that little show of strength was a good reminder. But then again, I never forget a beautiful face. Such a pretty little thing...

Bane brushes a couple fingers across her cheek before grabbing her entire head in his hand. He lifts her into the air, and drives her face first into the floor.

BANE

Won't be recognized for that anymore, I'm afraid.

Diana lifts her head up from a miniature crater, dazed.

Clark watches, balling his fists. He stops himself. His hands open, arms hanging limply at his sides.

BANE

Another fallen hero.

Bane tries to deliver a punch, but Diana stops his fist dead in a single hand. She looks up at him, furious yet unhurt. She clenches his fist, bone crackling in her grip. Bane grits his teeth in agony as she rises back to her full height, forcing him to his knees.

Diana spins and delivers a brutal backhand, sending Bane stumbling to his feet, completely thrown. She begins working him over, delivering crushing, expert blows, overpowering him by seemingly a hundred-fold. The crowds can only watch, wide-eyed, amazed.

Diana finally gives Bane a ferocious knockout blow, putting him down for the count. She stands over him, fuming, breathing heavily.

The masses approach her carefully as the sprinklers turn on to sate the fires. The people begin to clap and cheer, increasing in strength.

Diana gazes all around herself as the appreciation grows deafening. Lex runs in, arriving at her side. He lifts her arm to the sky in a sign of victory.

Bruce stays on the outskirts, extremely skeptical. Clark just stares, dumbfounded.

INT. NEWSROOM

An ANCHOR WOMAN addresses us, various images and clips punctuating her words.

ANCHOR WOMAN

Fear and pandemonium gave way to hope and inspiration in Gotham this afternoon. Known international terrorist Bane launched an attack on the brand new LexCorp building, detonating numerous bombs, but before any life was lost, relief came from an unexpected place...

Grainy, unprofessional footage depicts Diana saving Clark from the falling pillar. Slowly, we back away from the footage to find ourselves in...

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred watches the news on a monitor. Somewhere further back, Bruce tears through a complex martial arts pattern, savage.

ANCHOR WOMAN(O.S.)

Many have identified the person we're seeing as 'Wonder Woman', the mysterious figure spotted around New York City some months ago. She made quick work of Bane, as well as...

BRUCE

Turn it off.

Alfred snickers, but obliges, moving towards Bruce.

ALFRED

Are we afraid someone's stealing our spotlight?

Bruce doesn't falter.

BRUCE
Glory is detrimental.

ALFRED
That's right, you always have preferred the shadows. Still, it's all terribly fascinating, isn't it? Who'd have thought those rumblings from New York were actually true? Someone with this sort of power... she'll really change the world, won't she?

Bruce tries for an especially complicated kick, but he fumbles, stumbling clumsily to the floor.

ALFRED
The ramifications she brings along with her are just staggering... yet you seem none too eager to speculate.

Fuming, Bruce throws himself back onto his feet and proceeds to nail the kick.

BRUCE
Unless she's trouble, I'm not interested.

Alfred continues, almost whimsical.

ALFRED
But what if this isn't just science waiting to be discovered? What if there isn't any analysis or detective work to be done? What if this is something more... something higher?

Bruce stands perfectly still. He shakes his head, dismissive.

BRUCE
It's never been anything but science... cause and effect, motive and means... that's all it ever is.

Bruce, drenched in sweat, bypasses Alfred, heading for the console. Bruce brings up a newspaper clipping celebrating Diana. Alfred watches Bruce for a moment.

ALFRED
You don't trust this Wonder Woman, do you? You should have more faith in your fellow man... and woman.

(MORE)

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Fighting a war requires allies.
People other than you are still
capable of great things. Humanity
may yet surprise you.

BRUCE

I have faith in humanity. But she's
not human.

Bruce zooms in on a face in the background, the face of
Clark Kent.

BRUCE

Clark Kent. Early twenties. From
Smallville, Kansas. You're going to
scan the databases, find everything
you can about him. We're going to
be keeping a close eye on this one.

ALFRED

What for?

BRUCE

Bane singled him out. I want to
know why.

ALFRED

I thought we were finished with Bane?

Bruce shakes his head.

BRUCE

Seventeen bombs were detonated...
and zero casualties. Someone wanted
attention, not damage. There's a
higher design here.

Alfred looks at the image of Clark.

ALFRED

Is he in any danger?

BRUCE

He may be.

ALFRED

I take it he won't be trusted to
solve his own problems?

Bruce turns away, heading back towards the gym.

BRUCE

This is too big for him.

Alfred mutters to himself.

ALFRED

And I suppose nothing's too big for
you...

EXT. SAM'S DINER

Clark sits on the back of a truck, staring at nothing as Sam
gleefully loads various trays of food.

SAM

This is it, kid. Big times, big
players, big connections... no more
crying babies and snot-nosed kids.
This night could make us.

Clark just watches Sam.

CLARK

I may be leaving soon, Sam.

Sam sets down a tray and turns to Clark.

SAM

What do you mean? Like a vacation
or something?

Clark shakes his head.

CLARK

I don't think I can stay in Gotham.
Something's come up.

SAM

Something wrong? Family troubles?

CLARK

Nothing like that, nothing you have
to worry about. It's just... I
can't be here anymore.

Sam nods quietly, taking a seat next to Clark.

SAM

When are you expecting to leave?

CLARK

I don't know... soon as I can get
my things together. Sorry.

Sam shakes his head, smiling, messing with Clark's hair.

SAM

Don't be. I knew you'd be leaving me sooner or later. You're not meant to spend your life tied down in a small diner with a bum like me. There's something bigger and better coming your way... and that sort of thing ain't usually in Gotham.

Sam jumps from his seat, rubbing his hands together excitedly.

SAM

Well, let's go out with a bang, shall we? Tonight's the night.

Clark can't help but smile just a little.

INT. BLACKGATE PENITENTIARY

A dozen guards escort a heavily chained Bane down a long, empty corridor. Bane snickers.

BANE

You know, it's simply remarkable what friends in high places can mean for a person.

The guards pry open a huge steel door, revealing Bane's cell: it may as well be a penthouse.

GUARD

What are you going on about?

BANE

I'm just trying to express how liberating a friend like that can be. It drastically improves your quality of life. No matter what your problems are, he can help. He always finds a way to loosen your bonds, give you the freedom you need to grab hold of life.

The high-tech chains all around Bane deactivate, snapping open. The guards look up at him, horrified.

BANE

See?

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - SUITE

Diana stands in the middle of a gorgeous, luxurious suite, somewhat put off as employees all swarm about the room, trying to make it the best it can be.

LEX

I hope this is to your liking?

Diana wanders around, slightly bewildered.

DIANA

This... this is simply too much.

LEX

Sorry. I just have to thank you again, and I don't really know how else. Curse of the wealthy. I know I could never repay you... but as you can see, I have enough money to try.

DIANA

You don't owe me anything, Mr Luthor.

LEX

Of course. It's just what you do, isn't it?

Lex smiles, gesturing for the staff to head out. He picks up an apple from a complementary fruit basket, ignoring the other various trays of insanely expensive food.

LEX

Still, heroes are entitled to the glory they've earned. They ought to burn as brilliantly as stars, as shining examples of strength and ambition. Something to give hope, something infallible... something to reach for. We don't have enough of those types of people anymore...

Diana watches Lex carefully. He offers her the fruit..

LEX

Apple?

Diana takes the apple, eyes locked on him.

LEX

But I can't help but wonder: why now? I mean, why Gotham is obvious. It's ugly as sin here. But it's been like this as long as I remember. So there must be something else. Something worse. Something that requires someone as great as you.

Diana looks at Lex.

DIANA

A storm is coming to this city. Worse than the poverty, worse than the oppression, worse than the corruption. A monster of unfathomable power grumbles in the deep. With him will come fire enough to purge the streets of all life and civilization. It won't end with Gotham. He won't be stopped. Your bombs will not harm it, your arms won't faze it. It will kill, it will maim, and there will be nothing left to rebuild from when its time has passed.

Lex stares at her, shaken.

DIANA

I will hunt it down. I will slaughter it as any other beast too wild to be contained.

Lex swallows, quiet for awhile.

LEX

What do you need?

DIANA

The attentive ear of the masses. We need to spread the word as quickly as possible.

Lex nods, thinking. He winces. Almost reluctantly, he begins to manipulate:

LEX

I don't know that that's best, Princess. Around here, people calling themselves 'Prophets' don't carry as much weight as they used to. They're mostly just crazy.

Diana understands, but doesn't yield.

DIANA

Millions are in danger. The people must ready themselves. We don't have time for this.

LEX

Think about it: best case scenario, they believe you. You start a national panic, terror in the streets, the world comes to a stand-still, everything that needs to be done gets bogged down in bureaucracy. Is that what you want?

Lex paces, plotting.

LEX

I suggest we keep this quiet. We'll handle this ourselves. I'll give you every resource. It's the only way to nip it in the butt before it gets out of hand.

Diana looks at Lex, dead serious.

DIANA

I warn you... this is a war you are entering. Do not take it lightly.

LEX

Of course. But in the meantime, the people need to be appeased, reassured. For their own safety, they mustn't suspect a thing...

He walks past her, opening a closet, revealing a gorgeous red dress.

LEX

Tell me, Princess: have you ever been to the ball?

EXT. GOTHAM RITZ - NIGHT

Bruce faces us, distracted. He winces as a shrill voice behind him shrieks:

JULIE

Brucie!!! Be polite! The papers are calling!

Bruce turns around to meet his date: a high class heiress, bubbly bimbo-type named JULIE. That fabricated celebrity smile is already on his face as he wraps an arm around her neck.

BRUCE

Must not have heard them...

Mosh pits of photographers are in mid-frenzy on either side of a velvet red carpet, barely contained by their fences.

A long white limo pulls up, and the photographers just about salivate. Lex exits, waving and smiling to the photographers. They yell after him, and he gestures for silence, reaching a hand into the car. Diana emerges, and Lex gets the silence he was asking for.

Diana stands uncomfortably in front of the limo, absolutely stunning in a flowing red gown. Time seems to stand absolutely still as the photographers stare at this impossible beauty, arms limp at their sides and jaws hanging to the pavement.

The two pits erupt in a frenetic burst of calls for attention and flashing bulbs. Diana winces slightly, blinded, not knowing where to look or how to react, but part of her enjoying it. Lex slides an arm around her waist, and whispers in her ear:

LEX

Stick with me, kid, and we'll be
the stuff of legends...

Lex walks next to Diana, pushing her forward towards Bruce and his date.

LEX

Bruce! Glad to see you made it. I'm
sure you know who this fine lady at
my side is, but I'll introduce her
anyway: this is the girl that's
going to change the world.

Bruce watches Diana, a cold dead skepticism in his eyes instead of the awe in everyone else's. He offers a hand.

BRUCE

So you're 'Wonder Woman'...

Bruce eyes Diana's bare arm. Her skin is perfect, without flaw.

BRUCE

I saw you take a bullet earlier
today. We heal quickly, don't we?

Diana measures Bruce. Something about him makes her terribly uncomfortable.

DIANA

I do.

Julie subtly elbows Bruce in the ribs.

BRUCE
Oh! Sorry! This is...

Bruce just stares at his date, honestly not knowing her name.

JULIE
Julie.

BRUCE
Right. This is Julie.

LEX
Julie! Pleasure to meet you? What do you think, about time to get out of the cold?

The four of them agree, Lex wrapping an arm around Bruce's shoulders and Julie hanging back with Diana.

JULIE
So... who's your stylist?

Diana doesn't understand.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bruce and Lex step into a lavish ballroom to some fanfare, but do little more than politely and tiredly shake hands. Diana draws far more attention and applause.

SAM
THERE HE IS!

Sam catches Bruce off guard, wrapping both arms around him and lifting him into the air. Bruce winces.

BRUCE
Nice to see you too, Sam.

Sam sets Bruce back down.

SAM
Hey! There's someone I'd like you to meet. He's a good kid, you'll get along great.

Sam directs Bruce towards Clark, who works over the buffet table.

SAM
Bruce Wayne, this is Clark Kent.

Bruce extends a hand, his face not betraying recognition.

CLARK

Hey. Really nice to meet you. I guess I should be honored. Not everyday a boy from Kansas gets to talk to a celebrity like you.

BRUCE

Kansas? That's like worlds away from me. What's it like?

CLARK

Sunny, small, sparse... kind of the exact opposite of around here, I guess.

BRUCE

Sounds terrible. Maybe I'll buy a ranch.

Clark chuckles.

CLARK

It was... nice. People really looked out for each other down there.

BRUCE

Gotham must be a breath of fresh air, then?

CLARK

I don't know that 'fresh' is the right word...

Bruce forces a grin.

BRUCE

Well, things change...

Lex remains next to Diana, maneuvering her through the crowd. She whispers to him.

DIANA

I don't like this. They don't give me a chance to say anything. Am I expected to merely be seen and not heard?

LEX

You shouldn't worry about it. The mere image of you says more than either of us ever could with words.

Lex breaks away from Diana, doing his own mingling.

Bruce and Clark watch Diana from a distance. Clark turns his attention to Bruce, who pays him back none.

CLARK

Hey. You don't know kung-fu or something, do you? There was this guy earlier today...

Bruce pretty much ignores Clark, circling around the room.

CLARK

No... couldn't be you.

Clark frowns and takes a seat, staring at the floor, a kid left alone at a party. Two feet enter the frame of his vision. He looks up, finding Diana.

CLARK

So... Princess, huh?

DIANA

You heard.

CLARK

Kind of hard not to.

DIANA

Sometimes I worry I'm not fit for all this attention, all these people looking up to me...

CLARK

Not my cup of tea.

Clark almost seems unwilling to have the conversation, but he covers it up. Diana just looks at him. His dishonest smile fades.

DIANA

All this... it hasn't made you think less of me, has it?

CLARK

Not at all. Heck... I think you're probably the most magnificent person I've ever met.

Diana reads him. She understands yet doesn't:

DIANA

And that's just the problem, isn't it?

Clark's face sinks slightly. Diana forces a smile and turns away, only to find herself swamped in people bidding for attention. Overwhelmed, she pardons herself, managing to force her way towards an exit.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - CORRIDOR

Diana takes a seat on a bench outside the ballroom. She exhales a deep breath, staring at the floor for a moment.

DIANA

You don't like me, do you? I don't fit into this world you've built.

Diana turns her head towards Bruce, who stands at a bit of distance.

DIANA

There's more to you than you let on, isn't there?

BRUCE

Nope. Shallow as a puddle. The illusion of depth is just a trick to get girls.

Diana forces a smile.

DIANA

I've a talent for seeing beyond the masks people wear, Mr Wayne.

Bruce approaches, a meticulously balanced mix of suave and obnoxious.

BRUCE

Really? I'm not so bad at that myself. So what, if you don't mind my asking, is it about me that makes you so uneasy?

Bruce sits down beside Diana. She doesn't look particularly happy about it.

DIANA

Something happened to you... and it's left a black and terrible thing inside you: an ugly, bitter rage that refuses to be strangled, no matter how much luxury and hedonism you try to bury it under.

Diana turns to a cool and calm Bruce.

DIANA

You know... a noble purpose in life
can fill that void.

Bruce looks at Diana, a cynical sneer etched into his jaw.

BRUCE

No it can't.

Bruce's smile dissolves as the only other occupant within
the corridor makes their exit.

BRUCE

What do you want from life, Princess?

DIANA

I want to set an example to be
followed for ages. I want to lead
my peers to a prosperity they'd
only dreamed of. Quite simply, Mr
Wayne, I want a better world.

Bruce nods, taking it in.

BRUCE

Listen: the flashbulbs, the pretty
dresses, the glory... don't let
them go to your head.

Diana smiles.

DIANA

People need idols, Mr Wayne. People
who shine as realizations of
potential, people who exceed
mediocrity.

Bruce shakes his head.

BRUCE

Those people down there... you're
nothing like them, Princess. You've
never known 'mediocrity'. You don't
know how to lead them past it...

She looks down at her dress.

DIANA

Sometimes I wish I could live my
life as an ordinary person does...
live a good life on simpler terms.
But I have been blessed, Mr Wayne.

(MORE)

DIANA (CONT'D)

I have a duty to do what I can with what I've been given. You should consider that.

Bruce snickers, nodding his head to the ballroom.

BRUCE

The magazine covers sure to follow are just unfortunate side-effects, I suppose?

Diana smiles.

DIANA

The greater the image, the greater the myth, the greater the influence, I'm afraid. A necessary evil.

BRUCE

Is that what this is? See, the thing about necessary evils is... they're evil.

Diana looks at Bruce in the eye for a long while, quiet. He sneers and gestures with his glass.

BRUCE

Sorry. It's the booze. It loosens the lips. 'Necessary evil'... what's in a name, anyway? Right, Princess?

LEX(O.S.)

Putting the moves on my girl, Bruce?

Bruce and Diana both look up to find Lex standing over them.

BRUCE

Wouldn't dream of it, Lex.

Lex smiles and turns his attention to Diana, offering his hand.

LEX

Diana, there's something I just have to show you.

Lex pulls Diana away from Bruce, directing her towards the exit. Bruce raises his voice to her one last time.

BRUCE

You be careful to keep your feet on the ground, Princess. People have done some terrible things all in the name of a 'better world'.

Lex drags Diana along with him. He hits the button for an elevator, and ushers Diana into it. The closing steel doors finally break the shared gaze between Bruce and Diana.

Bruce stands up, looking into the ballroom through a window on a door.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - SECURITY CABIN

A door swings open, and Lex practically drags Diana into a security cabin, occupied mostly by a console and dozens of monitors offering angles on different rooms and floors in the building.

LEX

Trust me. This, you gotta see.

He reaches behind him and presses a button at the console. The monitors flicker to stills of Clark Kent on an assortment of backdrops. Diana looks slightly thrown. Lex lets her stare at the images for a moment, then presses a second button.

The stills come to life, depicting videos of Clark doing some very unusual things. In one, he snatches a car falling off a bridge in a literal flash. In another, an icy gale leaves his lips and puts out an enormous fire. A third shows his eyes glowing a fervent red, melting away a solid steel door.

DIANA

What's the meaning of this?

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - BALLROOM

The attendees all congregate happily, chit-chatting. Clark circles around, serving or d'oeuvres. He picks up on a quiet THUNK, confused.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - CORRIDORS

Bruce watches the ballroom.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - BALLROOM

Windows overlooking the city EXPLODE as a SWAT team bursts into the Ballroom, each member heavily armed, covered in Kevlar, faces masked by reflective visors.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - CORRIDORS

Bruce, shocked, heads down a corridor.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - BALLROOM

Bane stands at the head of the pack. He roams through the petrified crowds, a shark in still waters.

BANE

Ladies and Gentleman. This concludes our evening's festivities. Exits are to the left, right, and back of the room, but you won't be needing them. Don't bother trying to run, you'll only draw our attention. Finally, I hope you've enjoyed your dinner.

Bane scans the room, Clark long gone. Bane sneers.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - UTILITY ROOM

Bruce marches steadily and speedily straight across a room and out the other end, attaching some sort of device to a circuit box on his way up a stairway to the rooftop.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - CORRIDORS

Clark dashes through the corridors, frightened. He rounds a corner and stops in his tracks when he finds the way blocked off by Bane, arms hidden behind his back.

CLARK

You better leave me alone.

Bane sneers.

BANE

I don't know what it is about you that possesses him so.

Clark takes a single step forward, and Bane pulls his arm out from behind his back, lifting up a fist-sized chunk of glowing green meteor rock: KRYPTONITE.

BANE

Sorry. No time for fun tonight.

Bane grabs hold of Clark with his spare hand, lifting him into the air, just under the ceiling. Bane swings Clark around, slamming him into a wall, the corridor quaking.

BANE

You should hear the stories he's told, the warnings he's given: "Faster than a speeding bullet. Could change the course of mighty rivers". All ridiculous, of course. The way he talks of you, people would think you were a god.

Bane bashes Clark into the opposite wall.

BANE

But you're proving yourself anything but right now. Is it all true, I wonder? If so, then why resist? Why not rule with an iron fist? Why not take everything you'd ever wanted? As the best of us, it's you're right, is it not? What are you waiting for? Why don't you crush me? There must be a thousand ways for you to do it. You could shatter every bone in my body with flick of your wrist, for instance. Or you could have me burst into flame with a wink of your eye. Or you could have me freeze to death with but a breath from your lips. It's your choice, really.

Bane smacks Clark to the floor with the Kryptonite, busting open the boy's lip. Clark lies limply on the floor, hurting.

BANE

What do you think? About time for a miracle?

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - SECURITY CABIN

LEX

I've seen some things that man was not meant for, Princess. I've heard the siren's song and lived.

Diana just looks at him. Lex snickers, staring at an image of Clark.

LEX

Mild-mannered Clark Kent. Who'd have guessed, the way he keeps it to himself. I, on the other hand... my gifts were a little more obvious.

(MORE)

LEX (CONT'D)

They'd say I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth, that I didn't do enough with what I'd been given...

Lex swallows, turning to Diana.

LEX

You know what he can do. You know the damage he'll cause. You can save us from him. You can stop him. Hell, you were sent to stop him. You have power. We can kill him before he does something awful.

Diana stares at the monitors.

DIANA

This can't be real... we're hunting a monster, not a boy. Lies. These are lies...

Lex is terribly careful, honestly intimidated by her.

LEX

I understand this might be hard for you, but this thing... he can't be allowed to roam freely a second longer. Risks need to be taken. Safety must be assured. At any cost.

Diana thinks of something. From the back of her dress, she pulls out her GOLDEN LASSO.

DIANA

Do you know what this is?

Lex, uneasy, looks at the cord burning fervently in her hand.

DIANA

It's old. Ancient. It will permit no darkness, no dishonesty, no injustice. To be enthralled in it is to be under the judgment of the Gods themselves. Are you willing to go under it's spell? Can you face the undeniable truth?

Lex looks from the lasso to Diana.

LEX

Can you?

Diana hesitates.

EXT. GOTHAM RITZ - ROOFTOP

A hand presses a button on a small remote.

The device on the circuit box in the utility room BUZZES, forcing a malfunction.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ

The lights go out throughout the building, throwing the ballroom into darkness. Emergency lights activate in the hallways.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - SECURITY CABIN

Emergency lights turn on within the security cabin, as well. Lex, confused, turns to the console. Diana makes her escape.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - BALLROOM

The SWATs turn on the flashlights at the ends of their rifles, mildly frightened as they scan the black, guns pointed at the doors.

Bruce bursts into the room through the remains of the windowed wall behind the backs of the SWATs, masked in shadow. He slithers, slides, and tears through them before they can turn to meet him, an impossibly quick shadow ferociously dancing in the flicker of gunfire and flashlight.

Bruce does away with the last of the SWATs, snatching away the man's rifle as he crumples to the floor. Bruce points the gun at the floor and fires.

BRUCE

Blanks...?

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - CORRIDORS

Clark lays on the floor beneath the green glow of the Kryptonite, dazed, hurting. Bane bends down nearer to Clark.

BANE

You're not much of a fight.

Bane sets down the Kryptonite on the floor, inches from Clark.

BANE

Hopefully things pick up.

Bane hears something like an approaching JET. Curious, he turns around in time to see Diana rocketing towards him. She smashes into him, sending him flying backwards and crashing through a wall.

Diana drops back down to the floor. She looks into the distance, making sure Bane isn't getting up. Satisfied, she turns to Clark, offering a hand.

DIANA

We've got to get you out of here.

Clark looks up from the floor, hurting.

DIANA

I'm here to help.

Clark swallows. He grabs her hand, and Diana helps him up, making herself a human-crutch, carrying him along.

A mere moment after they round the corner, Bruce arrives on the scene, bending down and grabbing the Kryptonite. He sees blood simmering atop the glowing, hot rock. He returns the way he came, sprinting.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - ELEVATORS

Diana and Clark come upon a large room with many elevators and stairways. A hand covers Clark's eyes and snatches him away as a FLASH BOMB hits the floor in front of Diana, exploding in a brilliant instant of all-encompassing blinding light.

Diana stands alone in the room, dazed, blinded, lost, and alone in a room with at least a dozen different exits to choose from.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - STAIRWAY

Bruce, calm but strong, kicks open a door and descends a staircase, dragging the exhausted, hurt Clark along.

CLARK

Let go of me!

BRUCE

You can't trust her.

CLARK

And I can trust you?!

BRUCE

At least I'm human.

CLARK

DIANA!!!

Bruce suddenly covers Clark's mouth, swinging him around and slamming him into a wall. More of a demand than a question:

BRUCE

Who are you.

CLARK

What's wrong with you?!

BRUCE

You're more than you pretend to be.

CLARK

Look who's talking.

Bruce, cold as ice, slams Clark into the wall once more.

BRUCE

I can help you. I can save you from this. But you have to tell me who are you and what they want with you.

CLARK

Who the hell do you think you are?! Don't answer, I already know: you're Bruce Wayne. Prince of Gotham. Playboy extraordinaire. You can't help me!

Clark quite forcefully shoves Bruce away into the opposite wall. The Kryptonite falls out from the inside of Bruce's coat. Clark goes white as a sheet when he sees it. He moans painfully as he begins sinking to the floor.

Bruce looks down at the Kryptonite, then back up at Clark, slightly bemused. Bruce places his foot beside the glowing green rock.

BRUCE

What are you, and what do they want with you.

Clark looks up at Bruce between pained, aching gasps. He has no choice.

CLARK

Do you promise...?

BRUCE

What?

CLARK

Do you promise!

Clark swallows, weak.

CLARK

Do you promise to save me?

Bruce watches Clark for a moment. Bruce kicks the Kryptonite aside, letting it fall down the empty middle of the twisting staircase.

BRUCE

I will save you, Clark. I promise.
What do they want with you.

Clark stares up at Bruce, uncertain.

CLARK

I can do things.

BRUCE

What kinds of things?

Clark starts trying to pick himself up.

CLARK

Things that no one should be able
to do.

Bruce looks at Clark quietly for a moment. Bruce helps Clark up and kicks open another door.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - 30TH FLOOR LOBBY

Bruce marches ahead, but comes to a dead stop when he sees Lex holding a machine-gun pointed.

LEX

These... are most certainly not blanks.

Suddenly, the ceiling above their heads collapses, Diana bursting into the room tossing Lex, Bruce and Clark to the floor.

Bruce rises quickly to his feet, but before he can mount a defense, Diana quite angrily hurls him aside, sending him crashing through a fish tank in a distant part of the floor. Bruce hits the floor rolling, coming to a limp stop, fish flopping about around him.

Lex pulls himself together, pointing his gun at Clark. Diana lifts her arms, ready to deflect the bullets with her silver bracelets, but Clark, jumps to his feet. Just as Lex opens fire, Clark shoves her to the floor, fearing for her life.

Bruce recovers, just in time to see the trigger pulled.

Diana looks up, expecting the worst. Instead she sees a steady stream of bullets hit Clark, tearing his clothes to rags, shattering the windows behind him. He covers up, the bullets bouncing off his skin and dropping to the floor. No mark is left, no blood is drawn.

Clark's glasses fall to the floor, breaking. Lex tosses down the gun with a content sigh, out of bullets.

LEX

Told you so.

Clark and Diana lock eyes for a long BEAT, Clark looking almost apologetic. He turns tail and runs, jumping out the window, falling out of frame only to ascend back in, jetting off down the street.

Diana looks to the floor.

LEX

What are you waiting for?

Diana steels herself. She follows off after Clark, no more bound by gravity than he is.

Clark and Diana each rocket past the windows behind Bruce, BOOMING, shaking the building. Bruce barely catches sight of them, stunned.

EXT. GOTHAM

Clark and Diana jet down the streets with a speed that defies reason. He ascends, but she follows. He darts lower, zigzagging across the street and sidewalk, but she follows.

Clark barrel rolls and descends into traffic, darting between cars and through every opening he gets. She stays on his tail, unyieldingly following his frenetic path, even toppling over a pair of cars.

INT. GOTHAM RITZ - STAIRWAY

Bruce hops down staircase after staircase, quick as humanly possible. All the while, he lifts his wrist to his lips, whispering into an invisible microphone.

BRUCE

Sherlock to Watson.

ALFRED(O.S.)

Must I really be 'Watson'?

BRUCE

Bring around the car.

ALFRED(O.S.)

What for?

Bruce jumps over the railing of a stairway, dropping ten feet or so to ground-level and the Kryptonite he'd thrown away. He crouches down and picks it up, looking it over.

BRUCE

When you see it, you'll know.

EXT. GOTHAM

Clark flies all over the width of the street, trying desperately yet unsuccessfully to lose Diana.

Clark comes to an overpass and turns sharply on to it, taking a new street. He looks over to find, much to his dismay, that his pursuers have now doubled. Not far behind Diana is what looks like a stealth jet on wheels: the Batmobile.

INT. BATMOBILE

Alfred speaks through a small monitor.

ALFRED

Sir, is rushing in like this really wise?

BATMAN

No.

Batman taps a few keys and a small circular radar emerges from the center of his steering wheel. A pair of digital crosshairs appear on his windshield, each targeting Diana and Clark. They get a lock, two blips appearing on the radar, red for Diana, blue for Clark, speedometers accompanying them.

EXT. GOTHAM

Clark looks behind him at Diana and the Batmobile. He looks back forward and sees a wall of cars thundering down a huge overpass towards them. Clark turns abruptly, off the overpass and down into the highway. Diana follows.

The Batmobile swerves and performs a rampless jump, smashing through the protective barrier of the overpass. It soars down towards the highway and ONCOMING TRAFFIC!

Clark flies over and onto another overpass, and the Batmobile cuts through the traffic of an exit, following. Diana actually misses the turn!

Clark again turns sharply, this time into an elevated train tunnel, under the overpass.

The Batmobile turns and follows him onto the tracks, just barely ahead of a train.

INT. TRAIN TUNNEL

Clark looks backwards through the darkness, the Batmobile's headlights a pair of demonic eyes staring him down.

Clark suddenly darts sideways and into a station, rocketing up the stairs and to street level. Batman curses slightly inside the Batmobile, unable to follow. He presses onwards inside the tunnel.

EXT. GOTHAM

Clark descends back over the tunnel to a lower street. Diana drops down on top of him, demolishing part of the road, cars skidding and crashing around them. She immediately hurls him into the air, continuously beating him.

The Batmobile emerges from the tunnel and onto open air tracks, tailed by the train. The Batmobile plows straight through some fencing before dropping down to the same street as Clark and Diana. The canopy opens, and Batman emerges, watching the chaos.

ALFRED(O.S.)

What can you possibly do... against something like this?

Batman doesn't answer, just swallows, reaching into the Batmobile and gathering specific weapons.

Clark Kent hurtles through the night sky, smashing into a building across the street and nearly bringing it down on top of him.

Diana tears open the front of her dress at the thighs, freeing her legs.

Clark doesn't even have time to hurt before Diana's flies after him, tackling him through the building's facade.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Diana tackles Clark through room after luxurious room, finally slamming him to the floor of a corridor.

Clark stumbles to his feet, dazed, and Diana lays into him with brutal lefts and rights. She swings her leg around and kicks his head into the wall. She grabs him by the back of his collar and throws him straight through the opposite wall, into a bedroom.

A frightened couple yelp as Clark lands at the foot of their bed. Clark, nice guy that he is, tries to offer a rushed apology, but Diana flying kicks him through a few more walls and into a living room.

Clark smashes down through a coffee table and forces himself to his feet. Diana marches steadily towards him. She gathers her strength, curls a fist, and delivers the most powerful uppercut of her life.

Clark rockets up straight through the ceiling, through room after room, story after story, finally deep into the night sky, Diana following, pounding him all the way.

EXT. GOTHAM

Diana grabs hold of Clark by the foot. She hammer-throws him back down to the city. He smashes through the base of a huge, bigger-the-better CONSTRUCTION CRANE atop a building, then through car after car on the top of a parking garage.

Diana follows after him. Clark pushes his feet into her abdomen and launches her off of him upside-down into a brick wall. She falls to the ground, debris crumbling on top of her, unfazed.

CLARK

Stop this! I don't want to fight!

Diana grabs whatever's closest to her, which happens to be a sedan, and chucks it at Clark. Clark, never having had a sedan thrown at him before, quite understandably doesn't know the proper counter-maneuver.

The car hits him hard, carrying him off the building along with it. It drops down in the middle of an intersection, pinning him to the street.

Diana, never far behind, falls feet first, splitting the car into two clean pieces and sending glass and chunks of steel flying every which way. Bystanders flee, terrified.

Diana throws the two halves of the car in either direction and pulls a dazed Clark up from the ground. She viciously pummels him, finally delivering a blow so hard he rockets down a good block or so, smashing into the side of a building.

Diana picks up one half of the car she split and tosses it at Clark. With a single breath from his lips (ARCTIC BREATH), he turns the car into a solid block of ice. He drives a fist into it, shattering it into a million tiny pieces that sprinkle over him and the sidewalk harmlessly.

Diana delivers hit after hit, unable to budge him like before. He starts to block her hits, occasionally trying to catch hold of her, but Diana simply slides through, exploiting every opening.

Clark finally gets a good grip on her, refusing to let her move.

CLARK

Why are you doing this?!?!

Diana screams back at him, her emotions getting the better of her.

DIANA

YOU'RE A MONSTER!

CLARK

What are you talking about?!

DIANA

YOU'RE GOING TO KILL THIS WORLD!

There's a shakiness, a regret in her voice she had no intention of ever revealing. Clark freezes, stunned.

Batman descends from the sky, catching both Clark and Diana off-guard with a split-kick, sending them both staggering backwards and to the ground, unhurt.

Diana rises to her feet almost instantly, but not before Batman has tossed a silver ball at her. She lifts her arms to block it, but the ball explodes into a bolas, wrapping and constricting all around her, pinning her arms to her chest and bringing her to the ground.

Clark stumbles to his feet as puffs of smoke explode throughout the street. Through the thick haze, Batman leaps at Clark, seemingly enormous, horrifying. Clark is quite awestruck, terrified, stumbling as he backpedals.

Batman leapfrogs over Clark, dropping a strange ball that explodes into a net over him, its four corners digging deep into the ground. The net CRACKLES with a vicious surge of electricity, which doesn't appear to have any effect on the confused Clark.

Clark rockets straight up, tearing free from the net. He stares down at a less-than-amused Batman.

The crane that Clark and Diana damaged begins to tip, breaking from its base, dozens of bystanders far below completely oblivious.

Beyond Clark, Batman sees the crane coming apart. He fires his Batgrapple past Clark, making his way towards the impending catastrophe. Clark turns to see what's happening, catching sight of the crane. Horrified, he jets towards it.

Diana struggles within her bonds, finally breaking free through sheer force. Overwhelmed with battle fury, she rushes Clark, cutting him off and driving him into a building.

Batman arrives at the base of the crane. He wraps a cord around the bending steel, trying to keep it tight and prevent further cracking. He does all he can.

Clark tries desperately to fight Diana off, but she will not yield.

The huge construction crane begins to tip, ready to break off from its base and fall to the streets atop a crowd of people, all of which are awestruck, watching Clark and Diana. Batman strains, helpless against it.

Diana catches Clark around the head. She flips him over her shoulder and into the street. She holds him in a monster sleeper-hold. Clark struggles to escape, fading.

Clark forces himself to his feet, Diana keeping the hold. Clark propels himself backwards, rocketing through buildings' glass windows, concrete walls, and whatever else before smashing into a lamppost a couple blocks down.

Diana releases her grip, crumpling to the sidewalk, unconscious. Clark sinks to his knees, coughing, desperate for new breaths of life.

The huge crane falls from the rooftop despite Batman, tumbling down towards the street and its bystanders. They finally take notice, SCREAMING helplessly, cowering, dropping to the ground.

Just as the crane nears the heads of the people, Clark jets in, catching it, holding it at arm's length over his head. The weight is tremendous, forcing him down on to the street. The pavement cracks, but he does not, the bystanders staring up from the ground at him, stunned.

Batman looks down from the remains of the base of the crane. On the street, Diana pulls herself together, seeing Clark and the crane.

Clark begins to bend beneath the weight, carrying the burden on his shoulders. With a mighty GRUNT, Clark hurls the crane aside, dropping it down on the street, away from the bystanders. The earth SHUDDERS.

Diana and Clark lock eyes from across the street. Stubbornly, slowly, she shakes her head, heartbroken. With a furious ROAR, she jets towards him.

Clark, regretfully, takes off, trying to make an escape, Diana on his tail. Batman dives from the crane, gliding and slowing his fall with his cape, landing in the already following Batmobile.

Batman grits his teeth and accelerates consistently, a digital speedometer exceeding 1000 kmph, the flames of the engine whipping out behind the vehicle like a massive cape of dancing, orange embers. Neither he or Diana can seem to gain any distance on Clark.

As Clark picks up speed, electricity starts to crackle around him, and he blurs. For a moment, everything seems to stop, the whirring engines and the whipping wind completely silenced.

Clark shoots forward at LIGHT SPEED, miles away and out of sight!

Diana finally slows to a stop, beaten. A flash of surging electricity blindsides her. She SCREAMS, falling to the street, unconscious, revealing the Batmobile behind her, weapons relaxing.

Batman emerges from his transport, looking down at the fallen Diana. His gaze floats from her to the distance.

EXT. GOTHAM - OUTSKIRTS

In these rural outskirts, the Gotham skyline is barely a silhouette across the sky.

A RUMBLING begins, the earth quaking. Something impossibly fast, hard, and fiery rockets out from Gotham, carving a trench nearly a mile long through the earth.

Within the dust cloud, something moves. Clark pushes himself up from the ground, panting, shaking his head dizzily. He climbs out of the trench and looks all around himself. He sees Gotham in the distance.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Strange, abstract images:

A ghostly, violent shadow with flaming red eyes. It shuts its eyes and bows its head. It morphs into a familiar farm boy.

Clark walks, eyes to the ground and hands in his pockets in a world of shadow. He takes a few paces, and lifts his head, eyes filled with fire.

The world of shadow brightens to reveal a hellish city: skyscrapers in flame, streets burnt to a crisp, cars toppled, corpses strewn all about. Hell on earth.

INT. BIG WHITE ROOM -- LATER

Diana stirs, waking with a start. As she glances around at her surroundings, she finds herself in a blindingly white room, recalling an asylum cell.

Diana sits up to her knees, uneasy. She looks down to her wrists to find thick iron cuffs, with huge chains binding her to the wall. She notices a single camera in the upper corner of the room, watching her.

She drives her arms forwards, trying to free herself. As the chains extend to their full length, a vicious surge of electricity shoots from the walls, through her chains, and up her spine.

When it finally ceases, she falls back, legitimately hurt, slack returning to the chains. A soft, mechanical VOICE fills the room.

VOICE

This is security protocol 551. Any full extension of the chains will result in an electrical shock, increasing in voltage for every sustained second. Breach of the chains will result in the detonation of a bomb. Have a nice day.

Diana looks around at the room, understandably confused.

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred watches a monitor featuring Diana and the white room.

ALFRED

Is this really necessary, sir?

Bruce tinkers with a new pair of gloves, shards of Kryptonite littered around his work table.

BRUCE

She's dangerous. Better safe than sorry.

ALFRED

Some day being as 'safe' as you are
is going to make you very sorry.

Bruce stands up from his desk. Somewhat bitterly:

BRUCE

She threw me aside like I was nothing.

Bruce grabs a specific shard off the table and slides it into his console. He taps expertly at a keyboard. An enlarged sample of the Kryptonite appears on the main monitor.

BRUCE

This is an untainted piece of the
meteor rock.

Bruce taps at a few other buttons. Cells fluctuate feverishly.

BRUCE

Compare it to a piece with some of
that Kent kid's blood on it.

Bruce brings up another sample on a separate monitor.

BRUCE

Him and the rock seem uniquely
susceptible to one and other. He
somehow causes spikes in its
ionization, and the effect on him
is something like acute radiation
poisoning. Since his metabolism's
as strong as it is, though, he can
actually nullify the interference
once the rock's out of his vicinity.

Alfred just looks on, puzzled.

ALFRED

What is he?

Bruce thinks about it for a second.

BRUCE

Can't say. Too foreign to classify.
Barely even resembles humanity.
He's... new.

ALFRED

How is it he's managed to stay
under the radar so long?

BRUCE

He's afraid of what he can do. He knows what it could mean. Won't give even a hint of what he's capable unless it's absolutely necessary.

ALFRED

All the power in the world... but not the will to use it. No way for a boy to live his life. Such a terrible waste.

Bruce leans back, thinking.

BRUCE

People almost died tonight. I wasn't strong enough, I couldn't stop it... but he was there. He saved them. He was more than I could ever be.

Alfred watches Bruce turn away, moving on without a word. Alfred turns to a monitor featuring Diana. She sits quietly.

ALFRED

You look at this picture, what do you see? Is it a dragon to be slain? A plague to be eradicated? I can tell you what I see: a girl. A girl who's been hurt, angry, scared. Like you have, like this Kent boy has, like we all have. They may be able to move mountains, but so what? If you ask me, they're still human. Just... different. They're here, though. There won't be any changing that. So what's to be done? It all depends on one little question: what do you see?

Bruce pauses, thinking, staring at the outer shell of the cell in which he has trapped Diana.

BRUCE

I see potential.

EXT. BAR

Clark walks across barren, desert land. He crosses an empty highway, heading for an uninviting bar.

INT. BAR

Clark walks through a bar as seedy, low-class as we've ever seen. He glances around, catching sight of a woman being harassed by a THUG in a booth. Clark just frowns, moving to a pay-phone. He inserts a pay-card.

CLARK

Mom? It's me... something bad has happened. I... I've been found. Sorry...

Clark turns his back to the world as the thug stares at him.

CLARK

No, I can't go home. These people are good, Mom. They know how to hurt me. I'll get my things, I'll go somewhere and start over. It'll be okay. Don't be scared. I'll get away. I'll stay out of sight and live as quiet a life as I can. They won't find me. I'll be more careful. I'll be fine. I'll be happy. Things will be better. Mom... it's going to be okay, alright?

Clark looks around, not sure he believes himself. He drags a hand through his hair.

CLARK

I love you too, Mom.

Clark reluctantly hangs up. He dials another number. The thug approaches Clark, looming over him.

CLARK

Hey, Sam? I'm gonna need some help... go to my apartment, and gather anything important... no, I can't go.

Clark pauses, thinking.

CLARK

Meet me at the church on Park Row. Watch your back...

The thug snatches away the receiver, hanging up.

THUG

This here's a private club, buddy...

Clark doesn't look up at the man, not cowering, but withdrawing slightly.

THUG

And we don't take kindly to strangers.

Clark quickly glances up at him. He mumbles:

CLARK

Sorry...

Clark walks away, all eyes on him. The thug looks displeased.

Two more biker-types block Clark's exit. He quickly looks up at them and back to the floor.

THUG

Let me clear that up... we *really* don't take kindly to strangers.

CLARK

Please... I don't want any trouble... just let me leave.

The two men at the door chuckle. All of a sudden, they snatch Clark and drag him across the room, slamming him down on top of the bar. The patrons don't seem surprised.

The head thug breaks a bottle. Clark doesn't struggle.

THUG

You think just because you're out of Gotham, you're out of the rough, *freak*? Well, it's a whole other kind of trouble out here.

The thug grabs Clark's hair and puts the bottle to his throat. Clark just looks up at the thug, withered.

CLARK

Don't push me.

The thug shoves the broken bottle up into Clark's throat, but the bottle comes apart in the thug's hand, not harming Clark. The thug stumbles back, horrified, his hand sliced from broken glass.

Clark easily throws off the two men pinning him, eyes red with fire.

CLARK

You think I'm a freak?! YOU WANT ME TO BE A FREAK?!

He grabs hold of the head thug's hand, crushing it. The thug screams as Clark forces him to his knees.

CLARK
 HOW ABOUT A MONSTER?! HOW ABOUT AN
 ABOMINATION?! WHAT AM I?! WHAT DO
 YOU WANT ME TO BE?!

Someone sneaks up on Clark, smashing a bar stool over his shoulders. The stool simply comes to pieces, and Clark shoves the man aside.

The bartender grabs a shotgun from beneath the bar and fires. Clark just raises his hand and catches the bullets straight out of the air, tossing them aside indifferently.

The thug crawls around the floor, behind a pool table. Clark closes in on him, just brushing off and shoving aside anyone who tries to interfere.

Clark hurls the pool table across the room and bends down to grab the horrified thug. Clark pulls back his fist, the fire raging in and around his eyes.

CLARK
 WHAT AM I?!?!?

Clark breathes heavily, staring down at the now pathetic thug.

THUG
 P-please, man... don't kill me...

Clark freezes as he catches sight of the fiery red glow on the man's face.

Clark lets go of the man, horrified, the fire in his eyes flickering to nothing. He stumbles backwards onto the floor and his rear. He mumbles:

CLARK
 I... sorry...

Clark jumps to his feet and runs out of the bar.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Elevator doors slide open, revealing a cold Lex Luthor.

He emerges from a corridor and stops in a giant, circular laboratory. Light bounces a bright, sterile white off flawless steel. A bulbous contraption hangs from the ceiling above a retractable metallic floor.

A scrawny, middle-aged man in a shabby lab coat stands atop an elevated walkway that rises from the floor and around the contraption, like a ring ready to envelope the tip of a finger.

LEX

How's it coming, Teng?

TENG peers over the railing of the walkway, somewhat frustrated.

TENG

Not great.

Lex starts down a second corridor, one of several, dismissing Teng.

LEX

Start the necessary preparations for prototype Z. Specimen should be here by the end of the night.

Lex comes upon a steel door. He presses a button, and the door slides open, revealing his impressive WAR ROOM, inside which stands Bane.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

Lex marches straight in. The place is full with computers and miscellaneous complicated machinery.

LEX

I told you never to come here.

BANE

No one saw me. I was careful.

LEX

Forgive me for not investing much faith in your capacity for stealth and subtlety.

Bane sneers.

BANE

You think me unruly, partner?

Lex turns to Bane, quietly furious.

LEX

We are not partners. We do not share goals or ideologies. You are an employee, a creature of necessity. We are nothing alike.

Bane frowns, nodding.

BANE

Don't put any faith in this high horse you're riding.

With a sudden and furious flash of movement, Bane smacks Lex to the floor. Just as Bane looms down to grab hold of him, Lex pulls a gun from his coat, pressing it against Bane's head, right between the eyes.

LEX

That skull of your's is pretty thick, but I doubt it's enough to stop a bullet.

Bane is at first shocked, but then sneers, backing away a step.

BANE

You and I are of a kind. We lie, we cheat, we steal, and yes, we kill when we have to.

Lex rises to his feet, putting his gun away.

LEX

I am not a murderer. I do not delight in acts of cruelty.

BANE

I see. Because you insist on zero casualties, you're better than me. None the less, you've grown to be quite the deceiver. Taking advantage of that pretty little Princess...

Lex looks up at Bane, venomous.

LEX

Her name is Diana.

BANE

Take another look at that line you've drawn between us. We get the job done. Whatever that means.

Lex scowls, pausing. He passes by Bane.

LEX

Implanted in Diana's dress was a small, untraceable tracker. It short-circuited soon after she disappeared, but not before it came to a stop just outside Gotham.

Lex steps up to a map of Gotham with a single red light twinkling on the outskirts.

LEX

I think you ought to drop by Wayne Manor.

INT. BATCAVE

Batman, his mask pulled back, quickly skims over a Smallville Chronicle newspaper article: "13 DEAD IN UNFORTUNATE EXPLOSION." He leans back, thinking, fingering a small microchip between his thumb and forefinger: Lex's bug.

Batman looks up, seeing Diana on a monitor. He whispers to himself.

BATMAN

What do you want with him?

He makes a decision, gets up, and heads for the white room. Alfred just watches him go, curious.

INT. BIG WHITE ROOM

Diana sits against the wall, knees drawn into her chest, head bowed, as small as she's ever been.

Slowly, the florescent lights of the room start HUMMING, flickering on and off. Eventually, they buzz and go out, throwing the room into darkness.

DIANA

You'd really like me to be afraid, wouldn't you? I've faced Gods and demons, and you're neither.

A single florescent light returns, and Batman stands in front of her, eyes but an inch away from her's.

DIANA

You're standing in the way of action. Every second I'm here is another moment of relief for that monster.

Batman quietly looks her up and down.

DIANA

If you don't let me go, you will allow the passing of a scourge beyond anything you've ever faced.

Batman observes her quietly for a moment.

DIANA

Blood running through the streets.
Fire searing flesh. Buildings
crumbling. The earth will quake.
the sky will burn. Gods will fall
if you don't let me stop him.

Batman looks at her for awhile. He turns away, heading for the door.

DIANA

You have to LET ME GO!!!

Diana dives at Batman, almost tearing the chains from the wall as she fights through the vicious shock, mere inches out of reach. Equal parts malicious and merciful, Batman kicks her back into the wall and onto her ass, returning some slack to the chains.

DIANA

He can kill you. He can kill everyone. Without trouble.

Batman doesn't falter, turning away. Diana stares up at him, hateful, fuming.

DIANA

I've heard a thousand stories about men like you and their blasphemous pride.

Batman stops, glancing over his shoulder at her.

DIANA

You're just another would-be conqueror, trying to take control of that which is beyond you. Just another spoiled child who can't stand the fact that the world doesn't bend for him.

Batman doesn't say a word.

DIANA

They all end the same.

Batman pauses.

DIANA

What can you hope to do? This is beyond you. It's beyond any of us. The Gods have spoken. We have have no right to question. It's out of our hands.

Batman stares at her for a moment. He leaves without looking back.

INT. BATCAVE

Batman marches through the cave, meeting Alfred, who helps him with the last pieces of his suit.

BATMAN

It's time.

ALFRED

You're sure you're ready? Of course you are. After all...

Batman tosses a MYSTERIOUS BAG and a second utility belt into the Batmobile. He pulls on a new pair of gloves, large cuffs around the wrists.

ALFRED

When is the Batman anything if not prepared?

Batman looks over his gloves.

BATMAN

Time to see what this kid's made of.

INT. CHURCH

Christ gleams golden on the cedar. Not noble. Not strong. Aching.

Clark sits at the back most pew, staring up at the crucifix, resentful.

CLARK

How? How could you let me happen?

A door CREAKS open, giving hints of HOWLING WIND and heavy rain. Sam rushes in, Clark jumping up to meet him.

SAM

Clark, what the hell is going on?

CLARK

I can't say, Sam. I have to leave Gotham. Now. I have to go.

Sam hands Clark his bag.

SAM

Where?

CLARK

I don't know... somewhere far away.

SAM

Will I ever hear from you again?

Clark can't quite look at Sam.

SAM

What are you gonna do?

CLARK

I don't know...

Sam looks at Clark quietly. Sam pulls out his wallet and flips it open. He takes whatever money he has and places it into Clark's hand. Clark shakes his head.

CLARK

Sam, don't...

Sam just smiles. He grabs Clark's hand in both of his and forces it into a fist.

SAM

I'm not doing you any favors. It just sounds like you ain't gonna be able to pick up your check, is all.

Clark smiles, and something between a laugh and a sob escapes him. He hugs Sam, hard.

EXT. PARK ROW - CHURCH

Clark comes down the steps of the church, rain beating down on him mercilessly. He glances down both ends of the empty street. He looks up towards the highest steeple and its cross.

Thunder BOOMS defiantly. Clark notices a horned shadow fall upon the crucifix. He turns up towards the rooftops, and sees a demon staring down at him: Batman.

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred watches Diana on a monitor, hurting, wincing every time she fights against the chains.

ALFRED

Stop...

INT. BIG WHITE ROOM

Diana yanks the chains to their full extension, absorbing the shock and screaming furiously.

Too painful to maintain, she lets the chains fall limp, but then dives forward again, taking the vicious shock. She tries and fails, again and again, impossibly stubborn.

A door opens from a place you'd never have guessed to have a door. Diana pauses, just about collapsing, drenched in sweat, exhausted. Alfred emerges, tray of food in his hands.

ALFRED

You have to stop that...

Diana stares up at him. Viciously:

DIANA

Let me go.

Alfred doesn't look at her, approaching. He sets the tray at her feet.

DIANA

What are you doing?

Alfred frowns and looks up at her, not particularly intimidated. He dunks a spoon into a bowl of soup.

ALFRED

Even the most frightening,
monstrous of captives deserve a
little supper.

Alfred lifts the spoon to Diana's lips. She looks at him, uneasy. He shrugs.

ALFRED

You can try eating with your feet,
if you'd rather.

Diana doesn't quite yet trust him.

DIANA

Why do you follow that beast?

Alfred frowns, a nerve hit. He returns the spoon to the bowl.

ALFRED

There's strength in him. Strength
beyond anyone I've ever heard of,
fact or fiction. And that's why I'm
here talking to you. Don't test him.
Please, for all our sakes, don't
test him...

Diana just looks at Alfred.

ALFRED

He readied himself for the selfish, the vicious, the corrupt... tried so hard to destroy everything that was weak, everything that was human about him... tried to make himself into something that didn't exist. But here you are...

Alfred gathers himself.

ALFRED

He's afraid of you, and he hasn't been afraid of anything in a long time... but he doesn't react to fear like you or I. You may have gifts he lacks, but if you test him... you'll unleash that thing that stews inside him, and there won't be any stopping him.

Alfred nearly pleads.

ALFRED

He wants to help. He wants to make things better. But don't think he can't hurt you. He'll beat you. As impossible as it sounds, he'll find a way to push even harder. He'll cut into you until he finds those things you keep from everyone. He'll dig into them until he's better than you, until there's nothing left of you if he has to. Don't think him a beast. Don't think he's someone you can simply put to rest and dismiss. For your sake, please...

DIANA

Why are you concerned with me?

ALFRED

Because I've seen him look the worst of this world's villains in the eye... men who kill, men who maim, men who laugh... and you're not one of them. You can't be. It's good you're trying to do, isn't it? You're trying to save us, aren't you?

Diana looks at him quietly. He nods.

ALFRED

If you play nice... maybe the two
of you could be friends.

A BUZZ catches Alfred's attention. He frowns and turns away
from her, heading for the door. Diana speaks up, strong:

DIANA

I'm not afraid of him.

Alfred pauses.

ALFRED

No one is, to begin with... but
then they meet him.

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred exits. He barely takes a couple of steps before the
sounds of SHARP GROANS and CHARGING ELECTRICITY return.

Alfred looks to the floor, disappointed. He continues.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - STUDY

Alfred steps out through a grand father clock, closing it
behind him, but not completely.

INT. WAYNE MANOR

He jogs gingerly towards the front door, opening it.

ALFRED

Mr Wayne is not available for--

Alfred goes white as a sheet, backpedaling.

Bane manages to get through the doorway, incapable of being
any more content as he looms over Alfred.

BANE

I'm guessing Mr Wayne isn't in?
Pity. But maybe you can help me?
Tell me: does he share his strange
habits with you?

ALFRED

I... I don't know what you're
talking about. I'm just the hired help.

BANE

See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, I suppose? The problem with that is... evil doesn't just leave because you turn away from it.

Bane grabs hold of Alfred in a single gargantuan hand, lifting him off the floor.

EXT. PARK ROW - CHURCH

Clark stares up at Batman. He calls over the RAIN.

CLARK

You're him, aren't you? The one everyone talks about? You're really... real.

Batman stands quietly. Clark turns towards the church.

CLARK

There's no salvation for me in this place, is there? You're here to punish me like all those monsters tearing this city apart? You know my sins?

Batman remains silent.

CLARK

You would, wouldn't you? It's what you do, right?

Clark shakes his head.

CLARK

I'm not ready to go just yet. You should leave. Now.

Batman scowls.

CLARK

I know you're not afraid of me, but if you don't leave me alone... you're going to be.

Batman stands strong.

Clark balls his fists, and rockets straight up into the air. Batman whips one arm out from under his cape, his Batgrapple in hand. He fires, and the grapple barely manages to wrap around Clark's leg.

Clark flies through the stormy skies, Batman whipping through the wind behind him. He holds on tightly, catching sight of an old factory. He pulls pellets from his belt, hurling them at Clark. They explode in a huge, strange colored smog.

Clark coughs and hacks, dropping out of the sky, landing on the roof of the factory, rolling to a stop. Batman hurls out his cape, slowing his fall. He tosses a batarang. Clark catches it, easily crushing it within his hand.

CLARK
BACK OFF! You don't want to know
what I can do.

Clark notices a small black cylinder in Batman's hand. Batman presses a button on its top.

The ceiling beneath Clark explodes, collapsing.

INT. WAYNE ABANDONED FACTORY

Darkness rules, and light only comes in passing. Clark falls, bouncing off assorted, decrepit machinery before finally hitting the floor. He forces himself to all fours, shaking it off.

Batman drops in after Clark, but in a flash of incredible speed, Clark's across the room.

CLARK
Stop.

Batman hurls a single batarang, but another burst of super speed forces a miss.

Batman fires his Batgrapple straight up, throwing a dozen silver balls to the floor and then a batarang towards Clark as he stops in another corner of the factory.

With another burst of speed, Clark dodges the batarang, but each of the silver balls explode as they hit the concrete, a strange translucent liquid covering the entire floor. Clark slips, falling on his face.

Batman lands atop a catwalk, tossing a final silver ball on the slick floor. It explodes, and the liquid on the floor quickly ignites. Clark's eyes go wide as he looks down to find himself drenched.

Clark bursts into flame along with the floor. Batman paces atop the catwalks, observing.

Clark stumbles a couple paces, frightened. He spins rapidly in place, sucking the fire on the floor into a miniature cyclone of flame. Clark accelerates, destroying the flame.

Clark stops, unscathed, but smoking and clothes burned. He looks into the shadows of the ceiling, unable to find Batman.

CLARK

I can hurt you.

Batman drops down right in front of Clark, pressing the attack. Clark manages to dodge Batman's strikes, faster than him.

Batman tosses a pair of batarangs as Clark stumbles away.

CLARK

I don't want to fight!

Batman just quickly glances above. Clark stops, then follows Batman's gaze up to two batarangs with blinking red lights embedded into the corners between the catwalks and a huge office hanging above Clark.

The batarangs explode, and the office falls on top of Clark, crumbling into a huge pile of wreckage.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - STUDY

Alfred lays on the floor, bloody, wounded. Bane stands at the other end of the room.

BANE

I'm really very impressed, Mister..?
Doesn't really matter, I suppose.

Bane moves towards Alfred.

BANE

I've met the Batman. He holds even the most pathetic lives above his own. So ask yourself, however close or distant with him you may be... would he want you risking your old, brittle bones for his? I would wager not.

Alfred doesn't look at Bane.

There's a loud CREAKING. Alfred suddenly looks horrified. Bane turns his head, seeing the door of the Grandfather Clock swing open. He smiles.

INT. BIG WHITE ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The lights of the room flicker, growing faint. They go out and come back on, weak.

VOICE
Security system deactivated.

A loud CRUNCH near the door draws Diana's attention. The sound repeats. On the third go, the door flies off its hinges. Bane stands in the frame, withdrawing his extended fist.

BANE
Angel had her wings clipped?

Diana tenses.

DIANA
What do you want?

BANE
Don't take that disdainful tone with me, my sweet. Just because I have a couple black marks on my record...

DIANA
You're a criminal, a monster.

BANE
What is 'crime'? The breaking of laws I never agreed to follow. That makes me a 'monster'?

Diana looks at him quietly.

BANE
If you're going to get anywhere in this world, you're going to have to learn an ugly little word called 'compromise'. For example: you can maintain your dignity and stay here, chained... or you can take the help of a monster, and go save the world.

Diana shifts uncomfortably.

BANE
That a girl.

Bane opens a briefcase, revealing a change of clothes for Diana.

INT. WAYNE ABANDONED FACTORY

The debris stirs, a huge piece of steel is launched aside, and Clark reveals himself. He scans the factory, irate, Batman nowhere in sight.

CLARK
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!

Clark waits for an answer that doesn't come.

CLARK
I never asked for any of this! I never wanted to hurt anybody, I never tried to, I never would! What do you want from me?! Why won't you leave me alone?!

Clark again waits for his answer. After a while, it comes:

BATMAN(O.S.)
June 17th, five years ago,
Smallville, Kansas.

Clark stops dead, unable to trace Batman's echoing voice.

BATMAN(O.S.)
There was a fire at a diner.

Clark looks back up into the darkness, intense. With X-RAY VISION, he quietly scans the building. He spots Batman, hiding behind a huge steel cylinder and atop a catwalk.

Clark smashes through the cylinder and the catwalk, Batman rolling out of the way to avoid being demolished, barely keeping balance as the catwalk begins collapsing. Clark hovers over him.

CLARK
You can't hide from me. I can hear your heartbeat a mile away and see through anything in here. I can kill you if I want to.

Batman hurls a batarang and springs himself off the railing onto another catwalk. The batarang ricochets off Clark harmlessly, and he follows after Batman.

Clark smashes down through the catwalk, splitting it in two. Batman loses footing as the whole thing comes down beneath him. He slides down towards Clark and the floor.

Batman reaches into his belt and hurls a small vial into Clark's face.

The vial cracks, throwing acid into the boy's eyes. He stumbles a couple paces, steam billowing off his searing but mostly undamaged face.

CLARK

If you want to fight me, fight me!
If you're trying to kill me, then
do it!

Clark looks all around, his X-Ray vision not quite what it used to be. He spots a black shape behind another cylinder and atop another catwalk.

BATMAN(O.S.)

This isn't a fight, Clark.

Clark jets up and tears straight through the cylinder, grabbing at the black thing. His rage gives way to confusion as he finds himself alone.

BATMAN(O.S.)

And I don't want to kill you.

Batman, hidden, throws his hands down, his fists bursting into green flame with a loud CRACK.

Batman dives at Clark from out of nowhere, blindsiding him with a fiery green fist across the head. The punch completely throws Clark, sending him toppling over the catwalk's railing, falling all the way to the floor.

Clark lands hard, legitimately hurt. A pair of black boots drop in front of him. He looks up, shaking, blood trickling down from the wound the hit gave him and his face alight with a green glow.

Batman stands over Clark, staring at him coldly and both fists ablaze with the haunting emerald fire of Kryptonite.

BATMAN

This is only a dissection.

Batman soccer kicks Clark across the face. Clark grunts and rolls. He tries to escape, flying straight up, but Batman launches himself off some machinery and catches Clark out of the air with another blow to the head, knocking him back down to the floor.

Batman grabs Clark by the collar, lifts him off the ground, then throws him into a wall. Batman presses his flaming green hand upon Clark's face, burning, searing.

Clark furiously balls his fists and clocks Batman across the jaw. Batman stumbles to the floor.

Clark tries to follow through, stronger and faster than Batman, but not by enough and weakening by the second.

Batman counterattacks and dives at Clark, punching him across the head. Batman hits Clark again and again, utterly in control. Clark tries to defend himself, overwhelmed, suffering more and more blows.

Clark breaks through an attack from Batman and rockets into him, jetting towards a wall. Before Clark can slam Batman, he twists through the air, crashing Clark into the wall instead.

Clark tears a long steel pipe from the fallen walkway, swinging it at Batman, trying to keep at a distance. Batman will have none of it, dodging every swipe.

BATMAN

On the line right now is not only everything you are, but everything you could ever be: a light, a guide, an inspiration. I can take it away!

Batman dives over a sweep and delivers a kick straight to Clark's head, sending him stumbling.

Batman wraps a hand around Clark's throat, forcing him to his knees. Clark reciprocates only by grabbing Batman by the throat, rising back up to his feet, overpowering Batman, forcing him to his knees.

CLARK

I gave you every chance...

Batman chokes, weakening, looking up at Clark. With his free hand, he fires his Batgrapple up and behind Clark. He presses a button, and the grapple pulls the both of them towards a distant corner of the factory, Batman slamming Clark high into the wall and freeing himself.

Both Batman and Clark land on a walkway. Clark stumbles to his feet, dazed, and Batman tackles him, carrying him over the railing. They tumble towards the lowest floor of the building, Batman's feet pressed into Clark's abdomen and both fiery hands at his throat.

Batman crushes Clark into the floor, still strangling him. Clark trembles, hurt, empty, beaten.

CLARK

You know what I've done, you know what I deserve...

Clark, beaten to a pulp, can't even fight back, fading, gurgling.

CLARK

I don't want to be what I am.

Batman stares down at Clark. He releases, throwing Clark's head back down to the concrete and taking a step away, disgusted.

BATMAN

You're not a monster. You're just a waste...

Clark rolls onto his side, coughing weakly. Batman twists the cuffs of his wrists and the green fire fades to nothing.

CLARK

No... you can't stop this now...
JUST DO IT!!!

Clark forces himself to his knees.

CLARK

You've gotten this far, it's just another step now! Spare the world from me! It won't take much! Shoot me dead! Snap my neck! Whatever you want, just do it! I deserve it! I want it!

Batman shakes his head, frustrated.

BATMAN

Stop. Stop thinking you don't have any say in this life, that you can't change things. Do you have any idea, any clue what you could mean to this world?! The good you could do, the things you could fix if only you wanted to?! Doesn't that mean anything to you?!?!

CLARK

You don't understand! You can't!
You don't hear them screaming at you, begging!

Clark trembles. He tries to calm himself.

CLARK

I hear *everything*. Every word, every bullet, every scream. Every time someone dies, every time someone hurts, I hear them screaming at me.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

I can't get away from it. The noise... it's everywhere. Here... in these walls, in this city... it's just static bouncing off skyscrapers...

Clark swallows, settling. He sneers.

CLARK

They don't know that I can't help them, that there's too much. They won't leave me alone. I can never be strong enough, I can never be fast enough... I've seen what I am, and it's not what they need. I've seen the fire inside me spill out and do the damage it was meant for. I can't heal their sicknesses. I can't fill their bellies. I can't save them. I'm a weapon. An abomination.

Batman stares at Clark quietly. Somewhere deep, something begins to RUMBLE. Batman gazes around the factory as it starts to shudder, more violently with time, almost coming to pieces, the RUMBLING evolving into ROLLING THUNDER.

BATMAN

I will save you, Clark. I promise.

Something shatters through a skylight and descends between Batman and Clark so quickly Batman barely has time to dive out of the way.

Diana, clad in a battle garment of red, gold, and blue, stands equal distances from Clark and Batman. She glances at Clark, then attacks Batman, hurling him across the factory, flying after him.

INT. WAYNE ABANDONED FACTORY - OFFICES

Dilapidated drywall and wooden pillars are the only echoes of previous life. Batman crashes through a window with frightening velocity, skidding and rolling across the floor to a stop.

He strains, staggering to his feet as Diana comes down through the window after him. He ducks a left hook, and cross blocks a straight right. Bad idea.

Diana punches into his arms, driving them into his chest, shattering the Bat-emblem and sending him rocketing backwards fifteen feet, landing sloppily on his back.

He stares down at his shaking, nearly broken arms. He swallows the pain.

Batman fights, raw, feral, animal, but it does him no good. The blows he delivers upon her have no effect. She simply breaks through them and tosses him aside.

She leaps at him feet first, but he rolls out of the way and onto his feet. He jumps and throws a desperate hook kick, but she catches him in mid-air and throws him through a wooden support beam.

She goes to stomp on him, but again he rolls up onto his feet, stumbling, already broken. She side-kicks him, and he goes flying through drywall.

Diana tears the wall apart, going after him. He tries to push himself off the floor. She grabs his cape and tears it away. She grabs his head by the horns, and drives her knee into his face. His head whips back, the horns breaking off.

Diana throws her leg around and kicks him in the abdomen. He shoots through the air, smashing into an edge between the ceiling and a support beam.

He falls to the floor, clutching his ribs with one arm, the pillar bending, dropping dust and debris on top of him. Blood trickles from his side to the floor. Diana stops in mid-stride when she sees the red.

DIANA

Is that all it takes?

Diana turns away from Batman, thinking him finished, heading back towards the factory.

BATMAN

You stupid, petty little child...

Diana pauses as Batman forces himself up, hardly able to stand.

BATMAN

Trying to make yourself feel like a big girl?

Batman tries to toss a surprise batarang, but Diana deflects it with a silver bracelet, rushing him. She once more kicks him across the room.

Batman bounces off another pillar, landing on a hand and a knee. A single line of blood and saliva drips from the side of his red mouth, teeth grit stubbornly as he refuses to let so much as a gurgle escape him. He chuckles. A cruel, contemptuous thing.

BATMAN

That's a pretty outfit. From your adoring public, no doubt?

Diana grows increasingly irate, a nerve hit. She swings at him, and he ducks. He tries a back kick, and catches her in the gut. He swings an exhausted backhand fist, but she catches his arm and gives him a backhand of her own, knocking him down to all fours.

DIANA

I think I get it. The cape, the fear, the mask. You need it. It suffocates you, this weakness and humanity, doesn't it? You hate that no matter what you do, it's all you are. That's why you hide behind all this shadow and monster's clothing, isn't it? That's why you try to make this city bend to you.

Batman furiously swats her hand away and swings at her harder than he's ever let himself try, clocking her across the jaw. She brushes it off, then catches his follow-through in mid-step. She hits him viciously, hurling him sideways.

DIANA

You think you're fooling me? You think I can't hear your pounding, dying pulse, or the crackling of your bones? You think I can't see the blood spilling freely from you?

He takes the fall better than any before it, shoulder-rolling into a crouch, a batarang in hand. Before he can throw it, she flies forward, grabbing his wrist.

DIANA

You think I don't see what you're doing? Buying time with words? It won't work! Your toys won't save you! You'll make no recovery!

Batman's jaw just twitches quietly as his wrist CRACKLES in her grip. Diana kicks him hard in the chest, and he shoots backwards, landing hard. Again, he chuckles stubbornly.

BATMAN

It's not my recovery you ought to be worried about...

INT. WAYNE ABANDONED FACTORY

Clark, bloodied and defeated, starts to stir. He coughs, dragging himself across the floor.

INT. WAYNE ABANDONED FACTORY - OFFICES

Diana rips away Batman's belt, tosses it aside, and kicks him across the room. He hits a wall and falls to the ground, unmoving.

Diana calms herself, trying to regain at least an illusion of temper.

DIANA

You're not strong enough to fight
this war. You can play no part.
It's too important.

Diana watches him for a BEAT, thinking he's done. She begins to turn away, but he rolls onto his stomach, barely managing to push himself up. Words come out garbled, nearly indistinguishable:

BATMAN

Gonna make something of him...

Diana is momentarily startled. She shakes her head.

DIANA

No. Don't you dare pretend you're
laying your life down for him.
Don't pretend there's nobility in
this. He's never done a thing to
deserve it. He's a monster. Don't
you see what he's capable of?

A small amount of blood drips down to the floor from under Batman's mask. He presses his hand against the wall, forcing himself to his feet.

BATMAN

Don't you?

Diana finally loses it.

DIANA

What's the matter with you?!

She flies after him and slams him into the wall, completely overpowering him. He clutches her hand in both of his, unable to budge her.

She steps around and swings him. He soars uncontrollably through the air, smashing head first into a concrete pillar. His neck whips back as his body wraps around the pillar. He falls to the floor. He lurches, straining to keep his head up.

Frustrated, she grabs him by the head and throws him through a window, what's left of his mask remaining in her hands.

EXT. PARK ROW - ALLEY WAY

Batman flies in a rain of shattered glass, slamming into a dumpster. The storm has all but stopped. He coughs specks of red onto the concrete, a marred face of blood, bruises, and smeared black make-up making an unrecognizable mess of him.

Diana touches down on the pavement, all too lightly.

DIANA

Bruce Wayne?

Diana looks almost sympathetic, rain falling gently on top of her as Batman again starts to stagger to his feet.

DIANA

Are you insane? You have a life the envy of anyone on these streets. You have everything you could ever want, ever need to be happy. What depths of dementia would allow you to find justice in this?!

Batman looks up and at the loop of the Golden Lasso, Diana's greatest weapon, glowing, seemingly come from thin air. He snickers yet again.

BATMAN

Heard about that thing... wondered if it was true. Guess you don't have the guts to try it with Lex or Clark, huh?

Before Batman can even move, the lasso's around his neck, glowing fervently. Diana charges at him, one hand clutched around his throat, slamming him into the steel of the dumpster, furious, demanding:

DIANA

Don't you get it?! Don't you realize this is killing you?! Why get up?! Why make it worse?! Why?! Why do you do it?!

Batman doesn't bother fighting, completely exhausted.

BATMAN
A better world...

Diana shakes her head, breaking up inside.

DIANA
You really think this world will
bend for you? Do you honestly think
you're strong enough?

Batman writhes stubbornly under the golden glow of the lasso.

BATMAN
No...

She pulls hard on the rope and drives him again into the
dumpster.

DIANA
Then why?! If you know it's no use,
if you know you can't help it all,
if you know there's no changing
things no matter how much you want,
then why?! Why are you fighting it?!
What's the point?! What do you expect?!

Batman can't say a word, trying to keep from drifting into a
darkness from which he knows he won't return. She's had enough.

With a furious grunt, Diana throws him behind her. He
smashes into a brick wall and falls to the ground. He
doesn't struggle, just lies limply on the concrete, finally
empty.

She drags him by the make-shift noose through the wet alley.

EXT. PARK ROW

She throws him under the hollow light of a street lamp at
the mouth of the alley. She hurls the lasso over the street
lamp, and watches him for a moment.

On his knees, he looks down at the street. He turns his head
down the road, and in the distance he sees a shut down and
abandoned neon sign reading 'MONARCH THEATER'. He looks up
at the lamp, blinding himself.

HAZY, FRANTIC, IMAGES: the smoking barrel of a gun, a scream,
a shot, pearls rolling into a puddle of blood, spilt popcorn,
a hand resting forever still on the pavement.

A small child stands over a pair of corpses in the street,
all beneath a faint cone of yellow light. It all flashes by
in barely a second.

Bruce looks uncommonly panic-stricken. Diana pulls down on the lasso, lifting him off his knees and to the tips of his toes, strangling him. She tugs again and he's off his feet, hanging by his neck. She just watches him struggle, tying the lasso around the post.

DIANA

You are the end of an era. Your kind will no longer be permitted to use fear and shadow to hold the world in chains.

He swallows hard, gripping the post between his feet weakly and desperately, trying to relieve some pressure. She doesn't react.

DIANA

Die.

Batman shakes for a second, eyes deadlocked on her. All at once, his feet slip away and his head falls forward. He doesn't move. There isn't a snap. He just gently sways back and forth, turning slightly as the rope twists, head hanging heavily forwards. The rain comes to a stop.

Diana just watches him for a BEAT, soaked. Batman doesn't budge. A cold shiver runs up her spine. She looks up and down the street. She doesn't understand the significance of that lamp, that alley, that theater, but feels something in her bones. She backs away from Batman, uncomfortable.

After a few steps, Diana turns and leaves, and for the second time in his life, Bruce Wayne finds himself under that same lamp, in front of that same alley, across from that same theater, utterly helpless and miserably alone.

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred, recovered, slowly walks in the Batcave, eyes locked forward. The head console depicts what looks to be an enlarged version of a life support screen: a single white line and a sustained BEEP.

INT. WAYNE ABANDONED FACTORY

Clark grabs hold of a machine, pulling himself to his feet, straining. Something lands softly behind him.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

Lex and Bane sit with each other, patient.

BANE

How do you know she won't kill the boy?

INTERCUT BETWEEN WAR ROOM AND FACTORY

Clark looks up and sees Diana standing across from him. He pants, exhausted, already beaten too far.

LEX

I'll admit, it's a risk. But he won't give her a reason to.

Clark swallows and tries to stand strong, but sinks to his knees.

CLARK

No... I can't do this. Not with you...

Clark looks at her, pleading.

CLARK

Please... don't. I'll go far away from here. You'll never hear from me again. Please.

Diana stands stoically.

CLARK

These... powers? I don't want them. All I've ever wanted is to live my life as quietly as I can, somewhere where I can be left alone and be happy. I don't want to hurt anybody. Please.

Bane shakes his head.

BANE

She has reason enough of her own.

Diana rockets forward, hitting Clark with a single right hook. He fires backwards, crashing through a conveyor belt. She follows through instantly, tossing him across the factory. He bounces off a catwalk and falls to the floor.

LEX

True enough.

Diana still presses the attack, punching and kicking, fists bloodied, working his body and face over, images of fire and death rushing through her brain and across the frame. She can't help but ease off, if only unconsciously, Clark already far too weak to fight back.

LEX

But there's something else...

Diana shoves her foot down into Clark's throat, strangling him. He struggles weakly, beaten within an inch of his life.

LEX

The way she looked at him...

She stares down at him beneath her foot, torn to pieces.

CLARK

Please...

Diana can't bring herself to do away with him.

DIANA

Shut up. Just shut up...

LEX

She could never do it.

There's a soft drop somewhere behind Lex that grabs Bane's attention. He stands, and Lex smiles, swiveling his chair around to reveal Diana standing in the door frame, a bloody and unconscious Clark at her feet.

DIANA

Finish him.

Lex smiles giddily. A single drop of blood falls from Diana's hand to the floor.

FADE OUT.

BLACK.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

We blink back into existence, staring up at a smiling Lex Luthor.

LEX

Hey, Clark.

Lex, green fire spilling from his Kryptonite ring, backhands Clark to the floor.

LEX

Mortality isn't much fun, is it?

Lex bends down and punches Clark straight across the face.

LEX

You know what you are Clark? Putrid, rotten, spineless. A waste. I hate you.

Lex gives Clark a hard kick. Diana can't keep from cringing slightly as Clark quivers beneath the green fire.

LEX

The way you walk, the way you talk... everything about you. How you pretend you're so ordinary, but stand on a mountain over us all. I can't stand it. I can smell the falseness on you.

Lex can't keep his composure a second longer, kicking Clark right across the face, then grabbing him by the throat.

LEX

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT SOMEONE LIKE ME COULD DO WITH THE POWER YOU HAVE, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT KIND OF MAN I'D BE?!

Lex throws Clark back to the floor and flattens the ruffles of his suit, calming. Clark barely manages to lift his head.

CLARK

Di... please. Help me...

Lex punches Clark one last time, knocking him out. Diana folds her arms, uncomfortable.

DIANA

You promised you'd kill him.

Lex scoffs and turns away from Clark, gesturing for Bane to bring him to a glass cell at the back of the room.

LEX

It's not as simple as it seems. Precautions have to be taken, steps need to be followed. There aren't as many ways to skin this cat as you'd expect...

Diana stares at Clark through a window as Bane straps him to a cold steel stretcher. She swallows, turns, and leaves the room. Lex watches her until she's gone, door closing behind her. He makes for the cell, looking over Clark.

LEX

You could have changed the world, Clark. I gave you every chance, every opportunity, but you didn't have the guts to try. Lucky for us I do.

EXT. PARK ROW

Batman hangs limply from the street lamp, cold and empty, the golden lasso faded to a flaccid gray. Something deep and dark STIRS.

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred rushes around the console, tapping every button he can. A monitor reads "RESUSCITATION SYSTEMS HEAVILY DAMAGED. USE COULD RESULT IN MALFUNCTION. CONTINUE?"

INTERCUT BETWEEN BATCAVE AND PARK ROW

A young boy stands beneath the lamp, staring down at a pair of corpses on either side of him.

He looks all around himself: nothing but darkness outside a circle of light. He doesn't know what to do, too scared to call out. THUNDER GRUMBLES.

He trips on his own feet and falls in between his mother and father. No one's around to pick him up. He rolls onto his knees and starts gently shaking his father.

YOUNG BOY

Come on Dad, he's gone... get up.

He tenderly stirs the corpse. More THUNDER.

Alfred taps frantically. The monitor claims "OVERRIDE SUCCESSFUL."

YOUNG BOY

Come on, Dad...please. Just get up, Dad...

The future corpse of Batman hangs from the lamp, beads of water dripping off an empty shadow. The chest of his suit contracts and retracts around his chest, trying to reopen his lungs to air. The noose wears thin, withered, gray, tearing slightly.

Alfred looks at the heartrate. Flat. He shakes his head and wipes sweat from his brow, desperately typing. A monitor reads "DEFIBRILLATOR SYSTEM. WARNING..." Alfred skips the warning.

Electricity THUMPS in the chest of the Batsuit. The boy shakes his Dad quite hard, frustrated. Another THUMP in the Batsuit. The THUNDER accelerates. The noose tears even further.

YOUNG BOY

Come on Dad, get up! Get up, Dad!
GET UP!

The boy screams, furious. Another THUMP. The THUNDER keeps getting louder. It accelerates, faster and faster. It dissolves into THUMPS. Rapid, consecutive, THUMPS. A PULSE.

Batman's jaw trembles. His hand tightens into a fist.

YOUNG BOY

GET UP!!!

A bolt of LIGHTNING strikes Batman! The rope from which he hangs snaps! He falls into the empty circle of light, the corpses and the boy long gone. Batman gasps shocked, new breaths of life.

ALFRED(O.S.)

Sir! Sir! Sir!

Batman slowly gets a hold of himself, looking up and down the street, confused. Alfred falls back into the chair at the main console, breathing a sigh of relief.

ALFRED

I thought I'd lost you...

Batman looks down at the chest of his suit. It still crackles slightly.

BATMAN

Bane... he came to the Manor,
didn't he? Did he hurt you?

ALFRED

Just a couple scrapes. We must get
you back to the cave. The car
should pick you up shortly.

Sure enough, the Batmobile pulls up to the curb. Batman pulls himself up as the top of the car slides open for him. He leans in, shuffling around for something. He reemerges with the MYSTERIOUS BAG and a spare utility belt, then starts tapping at a keyboard.

ALFRED

Sir, what are you doing? The
autopilot's already set to bring
you home...

BATMAN

Alfred...?

ALFRED(O.S.)

Yes, sir?

BATMAN

This is it. All or nothing. I'm going to save him. Goodbye.

As Alfred yelps his protest, Batman tears out his ear piece and throws it into the alley. He winces, buckling his utility belt. He looks to the end of the street, the familiar LexCorp building carving its place in the sky.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Diana sits on top a table in the big round laboratory, thinking. Lex approaches carefully.

LEX

I can see why you may have trouble with this... but sometimes the right thing is hard to do.

Diana barely mutters:

DIANA

When I was fighting him... I had him. He was finished... but I couldn't do it. I knew what I had to do, I knew a thousand ways to do it... but he looked at me, he begged... and I couldn't do it.

Lex looks worried.

DIANA

It was all there in my head: the Gods, my mother, my people... all screaming for me to do it. But for an entire moment, looking down at him... I couldn't believe it was the right thing.

Lex honestly aches for her.

DIANA

What sort of Princess, what sort of leader, what sort of savior can I be... when I can't even do what do what needs to be done... when I can't even do what's right?

Lex lifts her chin, trying to console her.

LEX

You are doing what's right. Those people down there... they're going to love you. They're going to think you their angel. Because that's just what you are.

Diana looks up at Bane as stands at the other end of the room, staring. Lex whispers to Diana:

LEX

Don't mind him. A necessary evil.

Teng interrupts reluctantly.

TENG

Mr Luthor... we're ready.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

Lex enters first, Diana, Bane, and Teng following behind him.

LEX

Let's skip the theatrics, shall we?

Teng nods, and steps over to a keyboard. He taps some keys, carefully watching the monitor. There's a WHIR as something descends from the pod above Clark: KRYPTONITE, encased in a thick, plastic dome.

The Kryptonite starts to glow, green electricity crackling around it. Emerald beams shoot down from the rock, bathing Clark in haunting green light.

Spider-leg needles extend out from under the steel table and stab into Clark. Machinery buzzes around him, shooting analytical lasers, probing.

Diana, unable to watch, looks ill and turns away. She exits the room. Lex, on the other hand, can't help but smile.

LEX

God fear us...

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LOBBY

A security guard sits at his desk inside a very posh lobby, comfortably reading a newspaper. He hears the distant ROAR of an engine, coming nearer, incredibly fast. He looks up from his newspaper.

The security guard dives out of the way as the Batmobile comes crashing through the front doors of the LexCorp building!

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

SIRENS blare as security monitors flicker to the scene exploding in the lobby. Lex quickly hits a switch, speaking into a microphone.

LEX

I want every single member of
security in the first floor lobby, now!

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - EMPTY FLOOR

Something small and fast shoots straight through a window with barely a whisper, hooking itself deep into the wall, a cord attached to the back of it. Something much larger follows.

Batman crashes through the window, rolling clumsily across the floor. He comes to a stop and retracts his Batgrapple, scanning the empty surroundings, mysterious bag in hand. He marches steadily along. He lifts his wrist to his lips, whispering:

BATMAN

Demolition mode. Zero casualties.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LOBBY

Dozens of security guards pour into the lobby from elevators or stairways, each and everyone of them opening fire on the stationary Batmobile.

The Batmobile whirs as canons emerge from its sides, following its orders. A pillar protrudes from the bottom, pushing it up off the floor.

The Batmobile turns in place atop the pillar, firing missiles and rubber bullets at its surroundings, shattering brick and marble. Guards either continue firing or dodge falling debris, remaining mostly unharmed.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

The vast majority of the monitors depict the warzone unfolding, but a flash of black on a far off screen goes unnoticed, except from Bane.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - ELEVATOR

Away from prying eyes, Batman nearly collapses, dropping his bag and using the wall to hold himself up. The elevator DINGS as it comes to a stop.

A colossal hand suddenly bursts through the steel doors of the elevator, grabbing hold of Batman and pulling him out.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Bane tosses Batman across the lab. Batman hits the floor hard, rolling, skidding to a stop, hurt.

BANE

You know, I was worried there for a moment that you wouldn't get this far, that I'd never get an opportunity to see you like this. I should have put as much faith in you as that butler of your's does. He's quite loyal. You must pay him well.

Bane approaches. Batman tenses.

BANE

You hate me quite entirely, don't you? I don't blame you. All it takes is a simple little potion for me to be beyond your wildest dreams.

Bane presses at a few keys on his wrist. The VENOM, his super-steroid, starts to PUMP through the tubes. Bane grows, his muscles inflating. He looks down at the Bat and smiles.

BANE

End of the line. You go no further. I'm going to beat you.

Bane swings, but Batman doesn't waste a moment. Within the blink of an eye:

Batman uses the scallops along his forearm to slice Bane's kneecap, proceeding instantly to break it with a merciless kick. Bane crumbles to his knees, and Batman punches him straight in the throat, then slices Bane's main pipe open and climbs onto his back, tearing wires from the overhanging probe. Batman jumps off the behemoth and dumps the crackling wires into Bane's severed tube.

Bane goes up in blinding electrical light, screaming out as the shock shoots through him. Batman watches for a moment, then tosses a batarang, slicing the wires, severing the circuit. Bane, saved, drops to his knees and falls to the floor, shrinking to almost frail proportions.

Batman grabs the pipe running into Bane's skull and pulls him up so as to look him in the eye.

BATMAN

You do not touch my family.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - STORAGE ROOM

Diana sits alone on a crate in a small, crowded room, sobbing quietly into her blood-stained hands. She sniffs, then wipes her nose and eyes with her wrist. She tries to be strong.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Diana arrives at a crossing of hallways. She stops dead, shocked as she slowly makes her way down a corridor and into the main room.

Batman stands in a pool of Bane's spilt Venom, a syringe dangling limply in his hand. Bane hangs from his severed pipes, tied around the rails of the elevated walkway.

Batman looks at Diana, face bloody and strangely blank. He pulls the syringe up to his eyes.

BATMAN

So this is all it takes? Just a few drops of ambrosia... this is what's going to make me more than what I am, make me what I've been dying to be every night of my life ever since this all started. This is going to make all that pain go numb. This will give me that strength, that sliver of perfection I need. With this I won't be helpless, with this I'll make a difference. TELL ME! THIS IS IT, ISN'T IT?! THIS'LL DO IT, WON'T IT?!

Diana just stares at him, her eyes still red, startled and a little bit troubled as Batman stands there in front of her. The syringe full of Venom shakes in his hand.

Batman throws the syringe aside. It shatters against the floor, the Venom spilling. He pulls the broken lasso over his head and tosses it at her feet. He nods his head to Bane.

BATMAN

Fine company you keep.

Diana nearly pleads, barely above a whisper.

DIANA

Please... just go away. I don't want to hurt you anymore.

BATMAN

What you're doing isn't justice, no matter how much you tell yourself it's what you have to do, no matter how much he promises they'll scream your name. This Kent kid... he's just a scared little boy. Break my bones, bleed me dry... but Clark goes free. I won't allow judgment to pass in spite of evidence.

Diana shakes her head.

DIANA

Stop. Please, stop. Don't stretch this mortal coil any further. He's not worth it.

BATMAN

Yes he is.

Diana balls her fists, boiling. Batman steels himself. Inhales. Exhales.

He tosses a batarang, she blocks, and he rushes her, so near perfection that we understand how much it must taunt him. He maneuvers out of her way before her attacks have even begun, an infinite number of steps ahead of her.

She blocks his strikes, but she can't keep up. He starts scoring more hits, counter-attacking and parrying beautifully, manipulating the environment, never so much as touched by her increasingly frustrated swipes.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

Lex catches sight of a monitor showing Diana and Batman.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Batman leapfrogs over Diana and catches the railing of the elevated walkway. He throws a batarang. She deflects it with a silver bracelet, and flies up after him. He dives over her, rolling on the landing. He throws another batarang at her. She blocks it without trouble, floating.

Diana swoops down at him, and he rolls out of the way, reaching behind his belt for some batarangs with white lights at their center.

As she swings at him, he backhand-springs out of her way. He throws a batarang with each hand. They crackle oddly. Diana blocks them with her bracelets, and lights up with white hot electricity! She screams, collapsing to her knees.

Batman watches coldly as Diana fights to her feet. He presses the attack, pushing as hard as he can, delivering blow after crushing blow.

Diana looks near a loss, but as Batman attempts a finishing blow, she catches hold of him and throws him across the room. He hits the wall hard and tries to fight her off, but again she throws him. He smashes into the opposite wall.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

TENG

Sir... there's a problem.

Lex stares intently at the monitor.

LEX

Fix it. Quick.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Batman fights to his knees, readying a batarang with a blue light. Diana practically begs.

DIANA

How do you do this? How do you push so hard when there are so many ifs, buts, and ors...

Batman steels himself.

DIANA

Stop this. You can't win. Stand down. Please.

Batman hurls the batarang. She deflects it easily, yet the batarang arcs back around, a mind of its own. It slices her across the face, and she stumbles a step.

Batman lifts his hand and the weapon loyally returns to him, nestling itself in his hand. Diana turns forward, shocked.

BATMAN

This... is a remarkable little toy. Once it's got a lock on something, it won't stop until I let it.

Something behind the steel doors of the elevator RUMBLES.

BATMAN

There are close to two hundred of these in that elevator behind me.

Batman presses a button on a remote. One by one, the lights of the lab begin to blink off. Diana barely mutters:

DIANA

Clark has to die. It's the only thing to do.

A swarm of batarangs violently tears from the bag inside the elevator, momentarily contained behind steel doors.

BATMAN

Then why couldn't you do it?

Batman stands, the batarangs RATTLING behind him.

BATMAN

Hope you're not afraid of the dark.

Batman presses two more buttons on his remote. Just as the elevator doors open and a black cloud of batarangs pours out straight past him, the last light blinks out and the room falls into darkness.

The only light in all the world is the gentle blue glow of the batarangs and the near constant flashes of dancing sparks whenever Diana blocks one. She takes many hits, backpedaling down a corridor, her wounds adding up.

Batman's silhouette appears every few flashes of light, holding a batarang readily in his hand, a hot red light at its center. He throws it into the corridor, and the explosion lights up the whole laboratory.

The lights finally return to reveal Diana laying on the floor, trembling, smoke billowing off of her, covered in cuts and burns. The corridor is completely charred black. She barely manages to lift her head, Batman looming over her.

BATMAN

Clark goes free.

Diana looks down to the floor as Batman passes by her, making his way to a huge steel door. He looks it over, preparing an explosive.

DIANA

Why... why can't I beat you...

BATMAN

Because you don't want to.

Diana strains to push herself off the floor.

DIANA

What if you're wrong? What if he ends up being everything I've been told he is?

BATMAN

Then he'll be stopped.

Batman completes the explosive. As he prepares to detonate it:

DIANA

Wait...

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

Lex watches Clark under the green light, anxious. There's a heavy BANG at the steel door.

LEX

START IT!

Teng is a frantic mess, terrified.

TENG

Sir, there's a malfunction... it's not ready!

LEX

DO IT!

TENG

Sir, I won't. This is going too far. We're risking all out--

Lex pulls a gun from his coat and fires at Teng, killing him instantly.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

The floor retracts, and the huge probe starts to spin, the wires Batman tore still crackling. The probe descends as a table spirals up from under the floor, a vaguely human form beneath a white sheet atop it.

The probe starts to emit a frightening, hazardous green, the machinery chattering. Violent green beams shoot down into the ambiguous shape.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

The door flies off its hinges, and Diana enters, floating just below the ceiling. Lex lifts his gun, firing at her. She deflects the bullet.

LEX

Don't you see what you're doing?!
Your country, your gods, your
glory... you're throwing it all
away!!! For what?! A worthless kid
who didn't have guts enough to save
himself!!!

Lex doesn't even get the chance to fire again before a batarang knocks the gun out of his hand.

Batman pounces on top of Lex, pinning him to the floor. He tosses another batarang, slicing into a computer. It explodes, and the entire room blinks on and off, short-circuited. The machine above Clark comes to a halt.

LEX

NO!!!

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

The huge beams of green light flicker to nothing, the probe slowing to a stop. We see a huge hand under the white tarp as it turns an ugly, chalk-white.

It twitches.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - WAR ROOM

Diana makes her way to the cell as Batman cuffs the defeated, broken Lex.

LEX

I had to... I had to... he had
everything we ever wanted, ever
needed to make things right... and
he was letting it go to waste...

Diana easily rips the door off of the cell. She looks down upon Clark, full of regret. She yanks out any contraptions he's attached to and destroys the machinery, cradling him in her arms.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

Diana walks down a corridor towards the main room, Clark in her arms. Batman follows behind her, dragging Lex by cuffed wrists.

Diana freezes as she comes to the mouth of the corridor. Batman raises his head and sees the table where the retractable floor used to be.

The shape floats up from the table to its vertical base, Orlok rising from his coffin, levitating above them. Red eyes scorch fervently behind the tarp. It sets alight, and burns out instantly. Diana gasps slightly.

The figure is the Frankenstein for the world of tomorrow, an aberration of Superman: BIZARRO. Icy mist spills with every breath he takes and fire flickers around his horrific red eyes.

Batman switches on a fiery green glove.

LEX

That's not going to work. We eliminated the issue.

Batman frowns, deeply annoyed.

BATMAN

Lex, you better hope we don't live through this...

Diana stares at Bizarro as Batman shuts off the Kryptonite. She gulps, thinking of all she's done, knowing for what she's responsible.

DIANA

Take him.

Diana pretty much drops Clark on Batman.

DIANA

No matter what... make sure he's safe.

Batman cradles Clark, and takes one last glance at Diana. He sees her determination, he sees there's no arguing.

BATMAN

Don't get stupid.

Batman disappears. Diana and Bizarro stand their ground, unflinching.

DIANA

For forgiveness.

EXT. GOTHAM

Diana hurtles out through the wall of the LexCorp building, flung back into a building. Bizarro follows after her, the fire in his eyes brightening and focusing, blasting hot red beams.

Diana blocks the beams with her bracelets, getting pounded further into the wall.

She endures it briefly, presses her feet against the wall, and springs herself forward, grabbing Bizarro by the face.

They tumble through the air, battling. Bizarro fights Diana off and she goes down to street level, annihilating a car. He flies down after her. She pushes both feet into his stomach and tosses him headlong. He smashes through a traffic light and finally comes to a stop a block or so down.

Diana rolls off the car, and in the distance Bizarro rises to his feet. A stand off.

INT. BATCAVE - INFIRMARY

Clark groans and sits up from a cold steel table, waking back into existence. He rubs at sore muscles. He touches all over his upper-body and face, confused. He looks healthier than ever before, his wounds healed. He notices a strange lamp hanging over him.

Clark looks around, surrounded by what vaguely resembles an infirmary. Outside of the warm light provided by the lamp, it's darkness in every direction. He looks to the side:

On a tray, a pair of minuscule earplugs.

Clark pushes himself off the table. He sees a staircase and climbs it, keeping a blind hand along the rocky wall to keep from slipping.

INT. BATCAVE

Bruce sits at the head console, Alfred beside him as they look over an analysis on the main monitor.

BRUCE

... according to the report I lifted from Luthor's lab, he's not chemically stable, not even organic or technically alive. There's a chance he may disassemble with the right counter-balances...

Bruce stops himself, leaning back in his chair, thinking, focused on the monitors.

BRUCE

You don't stay hurt long, do you Clark?

Clark stares, awestruck as Bruce stands to his feet.

CLARK

Bruce? Bruce Wayne?

BRUCE
No, not really...

Clark backs away cautiously.

CLARK
What do you want?

Bruce taps at some keys on his console, and various monitors depict Diana fighting with Bizarro in downtown Gotham. Clark stares, horrified.

BRUCE
Everything you've ever feared you
are in downtown Gotham City as
we speak... and there is absolutely
nothing we can do to stop it.

EXT. GOTHAM

Diana throws expert punches and kicks, sending Bizarro hurtling into the distance. He lands on top of an elevated train track. He shakes his head and climbs to his feet as a train thunders towards him. He just looks at it.

The train hits Bizarro, unable to budge him an inch. The train carts fold up like an accordion, SCREECHING to a stop.

Hundreds of passengers SCREAM desperately as a chain-reaction of crashing carts forces the lead cart over the side of the elevated track. Bizarro just watches with naive fascination.

Horrified, Diana rockets down the street towards the train. As the lead cart falls over the edge of the track, Diana comes down beneath it. She catches the lead cart and tries desperately to support it.

Bizarro looks down upon Diana, enjoying her struggle. He jets down and tackles Diana, stealing her away from the train cart. It drops to the street, relatively safe.

Bizarro carries Diana flying a foot above street level and dragging her through the road. Struggling, she finally manages to kick him off of her, straight into the air.

Diana shoots up after him, tackling him through a building and out the other side before shooting down into the ground. A quiet tremor echoes through the street, shaking buildings and cars.

INT. BATCAVE

Clark backs away, eyes to the floor and shaking his head.

CLARK

No... no, this isn't right. You can't ask this of me. I don't want this.

Clark walks away, heading for the stairway, terrified. Reluctantly, Bruce presses several buttons at the console. An enormous list of names and pictures appear, each different on every monitor, scrolling down dozens per second.

BRUCE

These are all the people I never saved.

Clark stops dead.

BRUCE

Sometimes I take a few and I just look at their pictures... imagine what sort of lives they led. I get to thinking what I could have done for them. What if I'd been better.

Bruce softens.

BRUCE

I can't fix this world. I'm not strong enough... I've known it since I started and I'm reminded everyday. It's just a matter of time: one bullet, and I'm done.

(gestures at the cave)

One bullet, and none of this matters. But there are people out there who can be helped, people with families, people with daughters and sons, mothers and fathers, hurting each other, killing and dying for no reason at all. I can't turn away from it because it's all around me, I can't so much as close my eyes without seeing it happening, AND I JUST DON'T GET HOW PEOPLE CAN LET IT!

Clark can't quite look at Bruce.

BRUCE

Doing good means taking risks.
Doing great means making sacrifices.

Bruce swallows, steadying himself.

BRUCE

The things people do to each other,
that monster tearing through the
streets... those are abominations.
But you... you could fix this world.
Make it what it's supposed to be.
And you know it.

Clark turns away.

BRUCE

She's going to die for you, you know...

Silence. Then, with a THUNDERCLAP, Clark's gone.

Bruce bows his head. He grabs two UNIQUE SILVER BATARANGS and a mysterious GREEN VIAL as it pops out of the console. He slips it into a syringe.

EXT. GOTHAM

Bizarro roars triumphantly as he shoots up from the familiar crater and into the sky, spiraling upwards through the air, vicious red beams ripping out from his eyes, bringing entire buildings down. It barely takes a second, and all of Gotham is set ablaze, the sky alight with fire.

Diana lays inside the crater, beaten, bloodied, and frightfully still.

INT. LEXCORP BUILDING - LUTHOR LABORATORY

A pair of feet side-step debris, utterly devoid of anything resembling equilibrium. A voice sings to itself, humming 'AULD LANG SYNE' sadly and quietly. A bottle of wine hangs in a hand.

Lex is drunk.

He sorts through some junk, then looks out the hole(s) in the laboratory left by Diana and Bizarro. He sneers at the burning Gotham, shaking his head. He turns and finds Batman standing at the other end of the room. Momentarily startled, Lex chuckles.

LEX

You... are really good at that, Bruce.

Batman doesn't move. Lex stops smiling, then frowns.

LEX

Can I just say something before you take me to hell or deal me whatever it is I've got coming? I didn't mean for *this*. I never tried to hurt anybody. I just wanted to give the world what it needed. You know what I'm talking about, right? The world needs saving, doesn't it? I wasn't looking for a Nobel prize or anything, just some acceptance... some recognition for something...

Lex chokes up, and sobs once. He recovers, then laughs. Batman watches him quietly.

BATMAN

Tell me how to fix this.

Lex shakes his head.

LEX

I'm sorry, Bruce. There's no stopping it.

Batman looks at Lex quietly for a second. He checks his watch and makes his exit. Lex just pulls a cell-phone from his pocket, and then opens it wearily, dialing a number.

LEX

This is Lex Luthor in Gotham City. Things have gotten a little out of hand. Do what you need to...

Lex weakens, dropping his phone, heading down a corridor. He takes one last glance at the laboratory, and collapses into the elevator, a broken man.

EXT. GOTHAM

Batman drops down from the sky into the middle of the street, standing strong as seemingly hundreds flee past him from the descending Bizarro. Batman simply checks his watch.

Batman marches steadily towards Bizarro, pressing a button on his forearm. Bizarro shoots down towards Batman, and Batman shoulder-rolls out of the way and onto the sidewalk. The Batmobile rockets past him, smashing into Bizarro! It carries him down the street and crashes into a building!

Bizarro tries to push away the Batmobile, its tires SQUEALING in protest. He lifts it over his head, grinning with childish satisfaction.

A batarang flies into the exposed belly of the Batmobile. Bizarro stops smiling, confused. A red light at the center of the batarang blinks.

An explosion demolishes the Batmobile and half a city block. Batman checks his watch, moving off-screen.

Bizarro tears up through the wreckage. He looks down an alley. An open door swings in the wind, and he catches the last bit of a cape just before it disappears.

INT. DILAPIDATED BUILDING -- SECONDS LATER

Bizarro jets into the building, knocking the door off its hinges. We may notice large, circular contraptions grafted to the support pillars as he floats into the room. On the clock nearest us, we make out a red digital clock count down from 00:02 to 00:01.

EXT. GOTHAM -- NIGHT

Batman looks down at his watch as it counts down from 00:01 to 00:00. He looks up, and from a rooftop he watches as a chain of explosions takes out the floor of a building across the street. The building implodes, collapsing on top of Bizarro. Batman turns away, moving on.

EXT. GOTHAM - PARK ROW - CRATER

A calm voice addresses the city over SPEAKERS as DOOMSDAY WHISTLES sound.

SPEAKERS

REPEAT: THE CITY IS BEING EVACUATED.
CITIZENS SHOULD REPORT TO ANY
HOSPITAL, DOCK, BRIDGE, OR BUS STATION.

Inside the crater, Diana stirs. Batman grabs hold of her, pulling her out. As she wakes back into existence, she shoves him aside.

DIANA

I told you to stay away!

Batman looks somewhat irritated. Diana's still hurt, tired.

DIANA

You did everything you could to prevent all this, but this is my fault and I won't let you suffer for it!

BATMAN
You're just going to get yourself
killed.

DIANA
It's the penance I owe.

BATMAN
More than your life is at stake here!

DIANA
I WON'T WATCH YOU DIE!

Batman takes pause. Diana trembles.

DIANA
Not for me. Not after all I've done.

Some COMMOTION gets Batman's attention.

Two groups of hundreds of citizens, youths and adults, march through the streets, rioting, approaching each other. A matter of moments pass, and a war explodes.

BATMAN
What we owe, what we need, what
we've done... none of it matters
now. Six million die by fire
tonight if we are weak.

Batman looks upon the crowds. He turns to Diana.

BATMAN
Your subjects grow restless, Princess.

Batman reluctantly fires off his Batgrapple, disappearing into the sky, leaving her alone with the riots. Stunned, she looks upon the crowds. Slowly, she grows utterly furious.

DIANA(O.S.)
ENOUGH!

The crowd freezes, in quiet awe as they look up into the sky to find a battered Diana floating above them.

DIANA
Are you animals?! You fight, you
kill each other when perhaps
thousands die by fire, when an
enemy greater than any of us wages
war?!

Much of the crowd shifts uneasily.

DIANA

I will not let you forfeit decency
and live by anarchy. If you've any
hope, any faith left in you...
unite. It's the only way we'll
survive this night.

In the distance, Diana notices the mountain of debris tremble.

Bizarro rises from the debris, tossing massive weights aside with ease. He sees a busy bridge in the distance. He jets towards it.

Diana sees Bizarro head towards the bridge. She follows after him.

EXT. GOTHAM - KANE MEMORIAL BRIDGE

Cars are packed like sardines onto a humongous bridge. Seemingly thousands try to cross on foot, abandoning their cars.

Batman surveys from the highest point of the bridge. Him and the throngs hear familiar ROLLING THUNDER, and the behemoth reveals itself.

Bizarro rockets over the skyline and towards the bridge's highest point, stopping a mere stone's throw away from Batman, who stands his ground, unshakable. Bizarro snarls, and rockets down towards the center of the bridge, delivering a powerful punch into the concrete.

A tremor tears apart the bridge, tossing empty cars like children's toys into the air, landing on top of each other. The road splinters and fractures, the supports quaking and crumbling.

The masses scream in collective terror as the bridge comes to pieces, the whole mid-section about ready to fall into the river, barely hanging on by pipes and cables.

Batman descends from his ledge, and immediately sets his sights on Bizarro.

Diana finally arrives, jetting in. She sees Batman heading towards Bizarro, but she also sees the bridge coming apart. She frowns and rockets down over the edge and under the bridge, trying to keep the middle piece from falling any further.

Bizarro watches as Batman makes his way upstream through the ocean of fleeing bodies. Batman swallows, flips open a batarang, and hurls it at Bizarro. It bounces off without effect.

The bridge shudders. Batman presses onward through the gridlock and flips open another batarang, a white light at its center. He hurls it, and it strikes Bizarro in the chest, CRACKLING to no effect.

The bridge cracks again, cars sliding down into the river. As Batman jumps from one splinter to another, he flips open a final batarang, a red light at its center. He tosses it, nailing Bizarro, exploding on impact.

When the fire settles, Bizarro still floats there, invincible. He charges down at Batman, who dives aside. Bizarro arcs around, heading over the river, away from the bridge. Batman returns to his feet, watching Bizarro hang in the air.

Bizarro roars and ascends, at least a mile straight up before he rockets back down deep, deep into the river. With an impossible strength, he smashes down into its floor.

The entire Earth seems to quake, the bridge rocking dangerously. Gargantuan tidal waves ripple out from the point of impact, tossing so much water that the floor and Bizarro are actually exposed.

Batman watches as an unstoppable tsunami rushes towards him. Beneath the bridge, Diana begins to crack beneath the pressure, the bridge coming apart. A SCREAM escapes her.

EXT. GOTHAM

The scream echoes. Gotham in flames spirals away from us. We start to move, speeding, blurring, going over the ocean until we stop on the ice of polar caps.

INT. FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

Harsh, frenetic STATIC buzzes as we maneuver through a labyrinth of ice. It starts to specify: radio signals, muttered prayers, terrified shrieks, desperate pleas. Thousands, millions of voices crying out all at once, more every second, all too loudly.

Clark sits in a clearing, hunched over, covering his ears, tears rolling down his cheeks. He tries not to hear it all, tries to fight it.

A SCREAM echoes out. Clark opens his eyes, shaking. Slowly, he lowers his hands from his ears.

EXT. GOTHAM - KANE MEMORIAL BRIDGE -- MORNING

A flash of red and a fog of cold air rushes along the side of the bridge, turning the tidal wave and the entire horizon into a valley of glimmering ice.

A strange wind starts to pick up around Gotham. It gains momentum, building into what looks like an enormous tornado all around the city. The wind starts to lift the fire off the buildings, a flaming cyclone, rising higher and higher, sucking the fire inwards, destroying it.

As the last of the citizens get off the bridge, Diana finally loses the battle, fading, stretched far too thin. A car slides down a splinter, hitting her by surprise, carrying her down with it.

Batman dives, the bridge giving way beneath him. He manages to grab hold of the tumbling Diana. Futilely, he fires his Batgrapple, but whatever it catches only breaks away.

A flash of blue and red snatches Diana and Batman out of the air.

EXT. GOTHAM - ROOFTOP

Before Batman and Diana have the chance to blink, they find themselves on a distant rooftop, overlooking the falling bridge. They glance around, confused. They look up, catching sight of someone.

Bizarro looks into the horizon, confused. There's something that looks somewhat unnatural in Gotham: the sun, rising, greeting the city.

There's a figure, obscured slightly, cape flapping in the wind. As the sun rises, the image becomes clearer and clearer: blue and red tights. A flapping cape. The famous S shield. It's not a bird. It's not a plane.

SUPERMAN levitates, overlooking the city. He turns to a stunned Diana. Batman watches the two of them stare at one another for a moment, then turns his attention to Bizarro. Diana and Superman follow his gaze.

DIANA

This fight is your's, Clark.

BATMAN

Try to keep the collateral damage short of ridiculous.

Superman ascends and dives down after Bizarro. Batman heads in the opposite direction. Diana lingers for a moment, but follows Batman.

Superman tackles Bizarro at an unfathomable speed, smashing him through mountain after mountain of ice all the way across the river, the frozen waves shattering around them.

Bizarro counter-attacks, grabbing hold of Superman and jetting back across the river and towards Gotham, the shattered ice still raining.

Bizarro smashes Superman into a building, nearly bringing the whole thing down. Superman knocks Bizarro away. Bizarro shoots his heat vision at Superman, who raises a hand, blocking the beams with his palm.

SUPERMAN
I AM NOT AFRAID OF YOU!

His eyes glow that vicious, violent red, and the beams shoot from his own eyes, hitting Bizarro, sending him flipping backwards.

EXT. PARK ROW

A hand grabs an arm poking out from a mountain of debris. The hand pulls out a person. The hand belongs to Diana.

Batman sorts through the rubble. Many bystanders approach the the mound of debris. They begin searching through it. Diana chucks aside immense pieces of concrete and brick.

EXT. GOTHAM

Superman jets forward, catching Bizarro with an uppercut. In the sky they battle, two titans, each landed blow a GRUMBLE OF THUNDER, the world cowering and trembling around them.

Superman and Bizarro dash towards each other at near light speed, a huge boom as they strike each other. The sheer raw force of it sends a shockwave through the city, shattering windows, cracking the street, bouncing cars, and shaking buildings.

Bizarro and Superman both rocket backwards in opposite directions and come to a skidding stop, each carving a trench through the street. They both rise to their feet unfazed, and then into the sky, spiraling upwards, circling each other, equals.

At the end of a street seemingly miles long, a trio of top-of-the-line military jets turn the corner, rocketing towards Superman and Bizarro. Superman doesn't understand.

INSIDE THE LEAD JET

The pilot controls his craft, dead-set on Bizarro.

PILOT
There's the target. Release side-winders and Patriot.

Six missiles shoot out from the three jets, and then a larger seventh (PATRIOT) from the lead. As the jets turn away, realization hits Superman. He dives down towards the street and out of the way.

PILOT

Let's send this monster back where
it came from.

The missiles all hit Bizarro, detonating, but the Patriot rockets past him.

EXT. PARK ROW

Batman, Diana, and a crowd of people work through the wreckage. They hear a faint ROCKETING. They look to the sky.

In the distance, ambulances and families pour into a hospital, desperate for help. A man with a child in his arms stops as he hears the WHISTLING. Slowly he looks to the sky, seeing the Patriot and the trail of smoke that follows it.

Batman glances far behind him at the hospital and the hundreds, and then at the dozens around him. He flips open a batarang, a blinking red light at its center.

DIANA

What are you doing?

Superman lifts himself off the street and catches sight of the Patriot.

Batman waits for the Patriot to come within range. Just as Batman swings his arm back to throw the batarang, he sees Superman. Almost reluctantly, Batman flips closed the batarang as Superman and the Patriot rocket past him.

The bystanders screech and panic as the Patriot nears the hospital. Superman rockets into frame, catching the missile in his arms just before it hits and shooting straight into the sky as fast as he can, clutching it to him.

Far above the highest of rooftops, the Patriot detonates in Superman's arms. The explosion could easily vaporize a city-block, nearly blinding pedestrians, looking like a supernova far above Gotham.

As the massive ball of fire retracts, Superman falls limply all the way back down towards the Earth. Batman and Diana watch in horror as he smashes into the LexCorp Building, crashing down through floor after floor until he hits street level, bringing the entire building down with him.

An immense cloud of dust rushes through the streets. Horrified, Diana jets towards the mountain of debris. Bizarro descends, cutting her off.

A batarang cuts through the air, hitting Bizarro square in the eye. Irritated, the beast turns its attention to Batman.

BATMAN
(to Diana)

Go!

Bizarro jets down after Batman. Diana takes off towards the mountain of debris, digging through it. Batman springs himself off a wall and over the beast, tossing a smoke bomb into its eyes, doing his best to stall.

Worried, Diana looks over her shoulder to see how Batman is faring:

Batman dodges the irate, blinded Bizarro to the best of his ability. Bizarro finally lands a lucky blow, smacking Batman to the street, wounding him. Bizarro ascends, staring down at Batman, taking a deep breath.

Diana abandons the wreckage and jets towards Batman and Bizarro.

As Bizarro exhales a vicious icy gale, Diana shoots in and makes herself a wall between Batman and Bizarro, arms held above her, blocking. She tries to withstand it, bits of her suit, skin, and hair gathering frost and ice. She starts turning pale, even blue, freezing to death.

Batman looks over his shoulder, seeing Diana. He pulls out the UNIQUE SILVER BATARANGS. He tosses them, immediately covering his ears and shutting his eyes.

The batarangs arc towards Bizarro. They each strike him in the face, exploding with a deafening SUPER-SONIC RING and an impossibly bright FLASH BOMB.

Bizarro shrieks as he falls to the street, covering his bleeding ears. Diana still hangs stubbornly in the air, nearly completely frozen. Her arms fall to her sides and she drops towards the street, Batman catching her.

Batman unhooks his cape and wraps it around Diana, breaking into a sprint towards the hospital. She clutches the makeshift blanket with a desperate, fickle hand. As they approach an intersection, she sees the remains of her golden lasso tied to the lamppost above her. She begs, her voice small:

DIANA
S-Stop...

Batman pauses. He finds himself across from that same theater, in front of that same alley, beneath that same lamp, the remains of his noose swaying in the wind.

DIANA

Just... just stay with me awhile... please?

Batman drops to his knees, rubbing Diana, trying to comfort her.

DIANA

I'm sorry... I'm so sorry for everything I did. To you, to your city. I'm sorry I can't fix it, that I'm not strong enough to make it up to you...

Batman grabs the back of her head, pressing it against him.

BATMAN

Don't you dare. I won't be the only one to walk away from this...

DIANA

I'm sorry...

She looks into the darkness. He shakes her once.

BATMAN

NO! Don't you dare!

Batman tears off his mask, his lip bloodied, his eyes black, his face covered with scrapes and bruises.

BATMAN

LOOK AT ME! I am nothing but bone and meat. I break, I bleed, I bruise... but you... do you have any idea how much we need someone like you?

Above Batman and Diana, Bizarro descends closer to them. Batman glances up at the beast. He whispers to Diana:

BATMAN

Think of how embarrassing it'd be if I made it through this and you didn't.

Batman swallows, setting down Diana and standing, flipping open a batarang. The beast only jets forward and grabs hold of him by the throat, pinning him against a wall.

Diana fights to her feet, her eyes cold as ice, untying what remains of her lariat from the lamppost.

Bizarro pulls back his fist, ready to finally make oblivion of Batman, his red eyes intensifying. Something golden wraps around his throat, pulling him away from the Bat.

Diana stands, her restored Golden Lasso holding Bizarro at bay.

DIANA

It ends.

Diana takes off, pulling Bizarro along by the throat as she jets at an impossible speed out of the city, over the river, making a break for the rural outskirts.

Batman rushes towards the remains of the LexCorp building, sifting through it. He comes upon a hand, grabbing hold of it. He pulls out an exhausted Superman, dumping him back down on top of the debris.

SUPERMAN

Where is that... that thing?

BATMAN

Diana grabbed it. She's heading over the river. We'll have to...

Superman takes off, going after her. Batman frowns, all by his lonesome.

EXT. GOTHAM - OUTSKIRTS

Diana rockets past the city, into farmland. Superman follows, gaining distance. He stops, floating in place as she ascends, spiraling higher and higher, faster and faster, past the clouds, almost out of the atmosphere.

Diana forces herself as high as she can go, then swings the Golden Lasso around her, over and over, gathering momentum. With all her strength, she hurls Bizarro back down to the Earth.

Bizarro falls, so fast he catches fire. He drops like a meteor into an empty field, a tidal wave of dirt and ground surging outwards, leaving a massive crater in an empty field. Superman ascends above it all, looking into the crater as the the dust cloud settles:

Bizarro lays in the center of the crater, bloody, broken, barely alive.

Superman scowls. He rockets straight down, deep, deep beneath the earth. He grabs hold of a rocky base, lifting, pushing, straining.

An immense chunk of earth cracks, breaking away as Superman forces it skywards, above Bizarro. He looks upon the monster one last time, and tosses the enormous chunk of earth down on top of Bizarro, burying him in dirt and rock.

Diana, utterly exhausted, takes deep, sagging breaths, looking down at the earth. She passes out, tumbling through the air and down towards the ground. A blue and red streak snatches her out of the air!

Superman cradles the unconscious Diana. He looks down on her with a minuscule smile. He flies above the beautifully colored clouds then into the giant sun. It's over.

Unbeknownst to anyone, Batman stands near Bizarro's tomb, watching Superman and Diana. Something in the pits of his eyes aches. He buries it.

There's a sudden shifting of rock. Batman's gaze darts to the huge chunk of earth.

Bizarro tears straight through the mountain, the rock and earth crumbling. Before Batman can move, a bloody, chalk hand is at his throat, lifting him into the air.

Bizarro snarls at the writhing Batman. Batman, the life being choked from him, reaches behind him for a GREEN SYRINGE. He rips it away and drives it into a gaping wound on Bizarro's head. He forces the injection in with his elbow.

Bizarro snarls, then pauses. He stumbles backwards, dropping Batman to the ground, staggering around like a deceased animal, bellowing, clutching his head.

Bizarro starts to crystallize, beginning at the wound, and growing to consume him all the way to the tips of his digits. He writhes and roars his dying gasps, a statue of glimmering crystal.

Batman takes a few quick breaths, and throws himself off the ground, hook kicking straight through the statue. He lands hard on the ground, exhausted, crystal and powder raining down on top of him.

Batman raises his heavy, weary head and drags a shaky hand through the dusty remains. The corner of his mouth twitches involuntarily. A genuine smile that's been locked away for ages finally escapes him. He laughs.

INT. NEWSROOM -- MUCH LATER

A news report on a television.

ANCHOR WOMAN

...in the wake of what will probably go down as Gotham's darkest hour, we find our city still standing strong thanks to the efforts of Wonder Woman, and a new ally citizens have dubbed 'Superman'.

INT. BATCAVE

Bruce, still brutalized, sits at his chair in front of his console. Alfred stitches up the Batsuit in a corner.

CLARK(O.S.)

Does it ever get lonely there, in the shadows? I bet it does.

Bruce grabs a cane, then pushes himself up off his chair.

BRUCE

Superman?

CLARK(O.S.)

It fits, don't you think?

Clark looks over some tools, practically unscathed.

BRUCE

Just don't let it get to your head.

Clark lifts up a strange contraption.

CLARK

So how do you use these?

Bruce grabs the device.

BRUCE

You don't need them.

CLARK

(smiles)

I can always call you if I do, right?

Bruce grins wearily, turning away, giving the tool back.

BRUCE

Yeah... just try not to waste my time.

Clark smiles, then looks around the cave.

CLARK

Where's Di?

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - CEMETERY

Diana sits on the grass, small scrapes and bruises still remaining, staring at a gravestone: THOMAS AND MARTHA WAYNE. She catches sight of a shadow next to her: Clark's, bag slung over his shoulder. He crouches down to look up at her.

CLARK

You okay?

Diana tries to smile reassuringly.

DIANA

Yeah...

Clark just looks at her. He brushes some hair aside so as to look her in the eye, bruises, busted lip and all.

CLARK

You know... I think you may be the most magnificent person I've ever met.

Diana smiles, barely.

DIANA

Still?

CLARK

Now more than ever.

Grass shifts. Clark and Diana turn to see Bruce standing next to them, supporting himself with a cane. He addresses Clark.

BRUCE

Your ride's here.

Clark grabs his bag, him and Diana standing each standing up. They hesitate, shaking hands awkwardly. Bruce smirks.

BRUCE

You know what this is, right? The two of you... ages from now they'll look back on this day and say "this is when it started."

Clark and Diana look slightly put upon.

BRUCE

I'm expecting a lot from you, Clark.

Clark shakes Bruce's hand, trying to find words.

CLARK

Thanks, Bruce. For all the little things.

Clark grins slyly, and turns to Diana. He swallows, and hugs her hard. It takes her a moment to reciprocate, touched. Clark breaks away, and Bruce and Diana watch him leave. Once he's at a distance, Diana glances down at the gravestone.

DIANA

They were your parents, weren't they? When I put the rope around you... I saw it. You were so young... you couldn't let the world exist as it was, could you?

For a long while, nothing but silence. Bruce finally speaks up:

BRUCE

Where you heading?

Diana swallows, letting the subject die.

DIANA

Home. Just for awhile.

Bruce nods.

BRUCE

I bet it's nice.

Bruce turns away, making for the mansion. Diana watches him.

DIANA

You know... I was wrong. In all the stories I've ever been told... I've never heard of anyone like you.

Bruce pauses.

DIANA

I know you don't do this for praise or gratitude, but... it's important. Even if you don't think so.

Bruce doesn't say a word, doesn't even look at her.

BRUCE

Oh, before I forget...

Bruce hands Diana a thin, long wooden box. Carefully, she opens it, finding her Golden Lasso.

BRUCE

You should take better care of that thing.

Diana, confused, watches Bruce walk away.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - CAB

Clark opens the trunk of a cab. He goes to stuff in his bag, then stops, lingering. He signals for the cab to leave.

Clark looks all around, taking in the beauty of the world, the heat of the sun, alone. He takes off into the sky with a THUNDERCLAP, straight up.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - CEMETERY

Diana and Bruce see and hear Clark, sonic boom blowing hard. She smiles.

BRUCE

I'm gonna get some sleep...

EXT. SKY

Clark rockets up, up, and away, spiraling past the clouds, past the sky, out of the atmosphere, past the Earth.

Clark floats in the emptiness of outer space, Venus, Mercury, and the Sun all ahead of him. He bathes in the yellow heat, looking out at all creation, the galaxy unfolding around him.

Clark turns back around, looking down at the Earth. It's gorgeous from up there, seemingly incorruptibly beautiful. He fires himself back down towards it.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR

A blue and red blur rounds the mansion. It jets past the treetops, towards Gotham, rocketing over the skyline.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Lex sits at the back of a long limousine, his head leaning against the window, Gotham racing past him. He looks to the sky with empty eyes.

Superman soars over the Gotham skyline, bystanders waving and screaming for attention.

Lex hardens, quietly furious. He fingers his green ring.

THE END