

# Veni, Vidi, Vici

By Deadly Chakram <dwelf82@yahoo.com>

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Summary: With Superman trapped in a deadly Kryptonite cage, Lex Luthor reflects before his impending marriage to Lois Lane.

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Veni, vidi, vici.

Famous words, from the great Julius Caesar himself, a sort of role model of mine.

Words never more true than right now.

I came. I saw. I conquered.

The motto of my life.

You see, I've never been your average man. Even as a child, I never cared much for the pointless games of my peers.

Domination was the name of *my* game. Could I get Gerald to give me his snack for little to nothing in return? Could I convince my teacher to overlook a missed homework assignment? How much lunch money could I gain from my fellow first graders, for promises I never once had to keep? Lucky for me, I was always very good at the game.

By the time I was in middle school, I'd started up my own snack and drink selling business and was making a lucrative living for myself. By high school, I was student council president and making all the decisions for my peers. The design of the class ring? Mine. The decision to exclude the teachers from the yearbook photos? Mine. And, best of all, I was *so good* at what I did, I was always able to make everyone believe that it was *their* ideas, not mine.

Before I could even legally rent a car, I'd taken over my first business. There were reports of extortion, sure, but nothing any of those fools could prove. That's when I really got my first good, intoxicating taste of power. And, like all intoxicating things, I was drawn to gathering as much as I could. One company turned into two. Two became ten. Ten became a vast empire. My power — and my wealth — grew.

LexCorp.

Emblazoned on everything from radio stations, to news outlets, to air conditioners, to hotels, my brand took over every aspect of people's lives. I took over every aspect of people's lives. And, as in the past, I reveled in the fact that no one noticed. People knew my name for sure, but they remained ignorant as to how much of their lives I owned. They blindly bought my products. They mindlessly built my fortune for me. Before anyone knew it, I was the third richest man alive.

Nothing could stand in my way.

Nothing.

Until one freak in an ugly Spandex suit flew onto the scene, wrecking some of my newest and most ambitious plans. Because of him, LexCorp's reach into the very heavens was thwarted. Years of subtle plotting and carefully planted sabotage were ruined in one miserable moment. The stars should be mine! The space station should be mine! All those scientific breakthroughs I'm sure the space station will make should belong to LexLabs!

My very name should be branded across the universe!

Little did that flying blue annoyance know, but when he saved the space shuttle, he made a powerful enemy. A *dangerous* enemy. How I hated him! My dreams were of killing him. My days were filled with testing him, figuring out his weaknesses, learning all I could about him.

Know thy enemy.

Sound advice passed down through the ages.

Know thy enemy.

And so I did.

Much to my chagrin, this "Superman" was living up to his name. He was fast, he was strong, he was invincible. No bullet or bomb or anything else was capable of penetrating his skin. He seemed undefeatable, to the normal man. But I am *not* a normal man. I am so much *more* than the average man — smarter, more resourceful, more focused, more dedicated to my goals. When all others declared him a God, I continued to bide my time and wait for his Achilles Heel to show.

So I watched and waited. I followed up on any and every rumor I heard about the Man of Steel. Most were false leads. Some held molecules of truth. And one held the answer I sought. The solution to my problem. The chink in Superman's supposed impenetrable armor. Suddenly, every underhanded, morally questionable thing I'd done in my quest to take down that false god was worth it. The payoffs. The murders. The kidnappings. *All* of it became completely justified.

A radioactive stone.

A green death.

Kryptonite.

My Excalibur.

If only people knew how high the going price of that rock was. A pittance to someone with my wealth of course — I've thrown more expensive dinner parties — but why should I have paid when I could just reach out and take it? Like the legendary Arthur, I had to grab hold of my destiny and pull Excalibur from the stone myself. Like Prometheus, I alone stole the sun's fire to illuminate the world of men.

The world may not know it yet, but I'm removing a blight on this planet by removing Superman from the world of the living. He's an alien. A freak. A caped pseudo-god who decides who lives and who dies, what rescues he chooses to make. Once he is gone, the world will look to *me*. LexCorp will continue to spread and grow, swallowing up any and all competition. Soon, even governments will depend on my products to survive. *I* will be mankind's savior. Not some outcast extraterrestrial.

With the stone safely in my possession and the only witness rotting in some out of the way, undisclosed location, I could finally use my superior intellect to plan my nemesis' end. How should I end things? A bullet? No, too easy to miss my target if he were to suspect something out of the ordinary and move to one side. A blade? No, melee battles, while noble, leave too much margin for the unpredictable. Simply pulling the Kryptonite from my pocket and watching him crumble to his knees? Poetic, yes, but lacking in irony for me. I wanted to see him feel completely helpless, trapped, completely at my mercy.

Then it hit me.

A cage.

Yes, a cage!

I could trap him in a cage with bars coated in Kryptonite. He would be trapped, forced to stay rooted to the spot, whilst I could take my time in watching him die. I wanted him to linger on, to suffer. I wanted to see the moment when all hope would flee from his eyes as his life bled out of him. I wanted to witness the moment when he'd finally accept that this was the end, that I had won the war, despite the battles he may have thought he'd won over the year. I wanted him to know that his life, his attempt to change the world, had utterly failed.

Planning my trap was simply enough. Executing it was even easier. You see, Superman thinks of himself as untouchable. Above the laws of life and death. A god. I knew it would never cross his mind that a “mere mortal” like myself could ever take him down. And I know that he and Clark Kent — the other thorn in my side — both have a soft spot for Lois Lane, my beautiful bride to be. It was a no-brainer to use her as the bait for my trap.

Simple.

Perfection.

The trap caught him without so much as a hitch. Oh how I wish I’d thought to videotape it — his smug expression as the cage lowered around him, his belief in his immortality secure, giving way to the pain from the Kryptonite and the realization that he is going to die in my wine cellar, alone and unmourned. Floors above him, I’ll be celebrating — dancing over his decaying body. Toasts will be made, and I will toast silently to myself that my nemesis has been vanquished.

Perhaps I’ll have his bones mounted as a trophy. I’ll certainly keep the iconic suit — a garish reminder of the obstacle I overcame. Of course, I’ll have to keep my trophies in an undisclosed location. Lois must never know that her flawed hero died at my hands.

Lois.

I look at her and know for certain that some higher power had a hand in creating her. She cannot exist merely from the random coupling of her parents’ genes. Perfection does not occur through happenstance. And she *is* perfect — smart, beautiful, full of passion. Ah, her passion! Appropriately funneled, it can be a powerful thing for me to utilize. That’s why I’ve been working so hard to bend her to my will.

Step one — buying that little rag of a newspaper she used to work for. To the outsider, I’m sure my move to purchase the Daily Planet looks like a love-sick puppy dog move at worst, an attempt to salvage a dying news source and be a hero at best. The truth is, I have no need for a withering technology. The days of printed journalism are numbered. Television news, like LNN, will soon kill the last of the newspapers. No. I bought the Planet to secure Lois’ faith and trust in me.

Step two — destroy the Daily Planet. Planting the bomb was easy. Giving the world a scapegoat was child’s play — no one will ever believe or mourn that street urchin I framed. Breaking the security of the ground Lois once walked on was, might I say, a stroke of genius. Of course, I was right there to give her a new sense of security — at LNN, in a situation I could control.

Out with the old. In with the new and better.

Step three — the most important step of all. To steal another quote from Caesar — divide and conquer. Severing the ties to those she once cared about. With no one else to turn to, she’s had no choice but to turn completely to me. Soon, she will think only as I think and do as I tell her to without question. Without this, my work will be in vain. I cannot have her normal inquisitive nature poking into my private affairs. She can never know of the real Lex Luthor. Oh, the irony! One of the world’s greatest reporters — married to the head of Intergang, and never the wiser!

Marriage.

In just a short time now, the music will begin and she will walk down that aisle. I will pledge my life to her and she will pledge hers to me. I do love her. Yes, even a man like me can love and appreciate the finer things in life. And Lois is *definitely* one of the finer things in life. Just two little words — “I do” — and she will be mine forever. And when that happens, I gain two more victories.

The first, of course, is against the dying alien in my wine cellar. I know Lois has always had a crush on Superman, and my guess is that he might have been taken with her as well. What else can explain the way he constantly used to materialize at her

side? Why else would he constantly give her exclusives for the paper? It stands to reason that the alien is capable of desire, and that he’s settled his sights on my Lois.

The other victory this afternoon will be against my other hated rival, Clark Kent. While I can’t see Lois ever being interested in such an unremarkable, banal man, it’s always been clear to anyone with eyes and half a functioning brain that he is completely smitten with her. Not that I can blame him much. Any normal, heterosexual human male would be. In a way, I understand why he isn’t attending our wedding. Why would he put himself through the torment of watching Lois bind herself to the superior — in every way — man?

Conquest.

Today I achieve the most important ones in my life. Corporate takeovers have become boring, run of the mill events. But today? Today I get to experience the thrill of well-earned victories in hard-fought battles. Today I have destroyed two of my enemies. Before the night is over, I will stand over the lifeless body of my greatest nemesis and laugh. Today I claim my well-deserved prize — my new wife, my Lois.

Oh yes. I came. I saw. And I conquered... everything.

THE END