THE GREAT AMERICAN ICON ... REIMAGINED AS A SOVIET HERO!

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SUPERMAN

RED

SOI
In Elseworlds, heroes are taken from their usual settings and put into strange times and places — some that have existed and others that can't, couldn't or shouldn't exist. The result is stories that make characters who are as familiar as yesterday seem as fresh as tomorrow.
Mom, apple pie, Chevrolet, and SUPERMAN.

INTRODUCTION BY TOM DESANTO

With all due respect to Mickey Mouse, there is perhaps no greater American icon than the Man of Steel. When Mark Millar first told me the premise of RED SON — of taking the American icon of Superman and putting him in the ultimate what-if scenario — I was shocked. Imagine Superman wasn’t red, white, and blue...imagine Superman was red...Communist red? Instead of baby Kal-El landing in the loving arms of Ma and Pa Kent in the good ol’ U.S. of A., he lands in the loving arms of Josef Stalin back in the U.S.S.R. No longer Superman American icon, but Superman Soviet comrade — needless to say, the premise is more than intriguing. In the hands of a lesser writer the story would have fallen into cookie cutter, black and white, America good, Soviets bad, feel-good propaganda. Thank God Mark Millar is not a lesser writer. And thank God his favorite color seems to be gray.

All that morally questionable gray is captured in what seems to be 1950s Technicolor glory. Fortunately the artistic palette of Dave Johnson’s
and Kilian Plunkett’s pencils, Andrew Robinson’s and Walden Wong’s inks, and Paul Mount’s colors combine to create a Kafkaesque, Max Fleischer cartoon that collides with the best of propaganda art. It is not like you are reading a graphic novel but watching a movie. This book is everything I love about comics — a great morality tale with art that leaps off the page and into your mind’s eye.

Even if you have never read a comic before, you can pick up RED SON and follow the story and enjoy a great ride. But don’t be fooled; it is much more than that. RED SON is a sharp social commentary on capitalism vs. communism and current American foreign policy. Not bad for a funny book.

If you are a comic fan, then you will notice the detail to the Superman mythology. Having read the book three times, I find such an attention to detail that I am still discovering something new in the words or art that I somehow had missed before. All the elements that make Superman great are there: Lex Luthor, Lois Lane (oops, I mean Lois Luthor), Jimmy Olsen, even Batman, Wonder Woman, and the greatest Green Lantern of them all, Hal Jordan. All of them the same, yet different — all reinvented. Even though the traditional “S” on his chest has been replaced by the hammer and sickle, one thing is still the same — Superman believes he is doing the right thing. He has the best of intentions, but we all know what the road to hell is paved with. Yet Superman still wants to
make the world safe, except this time he is willing to force us to see that his way is the best way.

Ben Franklin once wrote, “Those who would sacrifice their freedom for safety will find they inherit neither.” That line, written over two hundred years ago, may have more meaning now than ever before. Good writing challenges the way you think. Great writing changes the way you think. RED SON is great writing. Mark actually started writing RED SON around 1995, and we all know it is a much different world than those days. Millar was able to gaze into his Orwellian crystal ball and see Superman as the poster child for Big Brother. The all-X-ray vision seeing, all super-hearing listening, all-knowing, all-powerful Big Brother. All-encompassing security, like a baby in a super blanket — just one thing...don’t think for yourself and don’t challenge the system. Free will or freedom in exchange for absolute security — I don’t think Ben Franklin would have liked that idea. Just remember Superman is watching you. But who’s watching the watchmen? Mark Millar is, that’s who.

Be good,

Tom DeSanto
OCTOBER 9, 2003

A self-described pop culture junkie and longtime comic book fan, Tom DeSanto is a writer/producer who has worked on various films such as Apt Pupil, X-Men and X2: X-Men United, among other projects. He currently lives in Los Angeles.
SUPERMAN RED SON RED SON RISING
In the middle of the twentieth century, the telephones started ringing all across America as rumors of my existence started circulating.

Even in those dim and distant days, I could hear the insect buzz of a million conversations from California to Metropolis and back again.

An entire continent was waking up to realize that their lives were soon to change forever.

BRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

BRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

KLKLLLKLLLK

Lois Lane, I mean, Luthor. Lois Luthor.

Oh, don’t be such a jerk, Chief. It’s six a.m. and some of us have social lives. Now, we haven’t heard the radio. What’s happened?

Who knows, sweetheart?

Either the Russians just invaded Idaho or J. Edgar Hoover likes to dress in Lady Lingerie, because Washington just called and promised us the story of the century.

Ike’s making a broadcast live from the Oval Office at lunch time on a matter of grave national importance. What’s the inside scoop? Well, between you and me, kid, rumor has it the Soviets just developed a brand-new kind of super-weapon.
WASHINGTON D.C.

My fellow Americans, it has long been the duty of this great office to make public those developments which may affect our standing as a free and democratic nation.

I regret to inform you that such a development took place this morning.

An alien Superman committed to communist ideals whose very existence threatens to alter our position as a world superpower forever...

The Soviet authorities today released to the world secret government pictures of a costumed individual more effective than our hydrogen bomb...

In the meantime, I would like to issue a request for calm and a hope that you might join me in a prayer that our predicament is not as terrible as it seems.

This afternoon, I shall fly to Helsinki to discuss this crisis with my fellow NATO leaders and decide upon a measured response to the situation.

Our sources say his rocket ship crashed there thirty years ago and that he was raised by the same, simple farming folk who dug him out of the ground.

Just think, Agent Olsen: if that rocket had landed twelve hours earlier, this Superman they're talking about would have been an American citizen.

Super-hearing, impenetrable skin, eyes that can see through walls and fire laser beams: where did the Russians find this guy, boys?

Believe it or not, they say he grew up on a collective farm somewhere in the Ukraine, Mr. President.
GREAT CAESAR’S GHOST! SUPERMAN SPOTTED IN DENVER! SUPERMAN SIGHTED IN NEBRASKA! SUPERMAN SEEN HOVERING OVER A FIELD IN ARKANSAS!

PENTAGON JUST CONFIRMED THREE MORE SUPER-POWERS, CHIEF! STRENGTH, SPEED AND FLIGHT. RECEPTIONIST ALSO ADDED SUPER-BREATHE WHEN I OFFERED HER TWENTY BUCKS.

WHAT THE HELL’S GOING ON HERE, LOUST? IT’S LIKE THE WHOLE DAMN COUNTRY’S SEEING RED CAPES UNDER THEIR BEDS.

SUPER-BREATHE? WHAT IN GOD’S NAME IS SUPER-BREATHE? IS EVERYBODY ON THIS PLANET GOING NUTS?

THAT’S ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, SIR. I WAS JUST COMING OFF-DUTY WHEN I SAW A HUMAN-SHAPED FIGURE ZIP PAST ME AND THEN I HEARD LAUGHING UP THERE IN THE CLOUDS.

THEY SAY HE CAN SEE US FROM SPACE WITH THOSE SUPER-EYES OF HIS AND THAT HE’S WATCHING OUR EVERY MOVE, JUST BIDING HIS TIME FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT TO STRIKE.

RUMOR HAS IT HIS BOSSES BACK IN MOSCOW ARE PUSHING FOR A FULL-BLOWN INVASION IN A MATTER OF WEEKS NOW.

HECK, THE WHOLE COUNTRY’S LIVING THEIR WALLS WITH LEAP, MARTHA. WE CAN’T HAVE SUPERMAN WATCHING US ON THE TOILET WITH THAT HORRIBLE X-RAY VISION OF HIS. NOW CAN WE?

THE GOOD PEOPLE OF SMALLVILLE HAVE THEIR DIGNITY TO THINK OF.

OH MY LORD. AIN’T IT ENOUGH THEY GOT THEIR SATELLITES AND ENOUGH NUCLEAR BOMBS TO BLOW US ALL UP TEN TIMES OVER WITHOUT STALIN’S SUPER-SPACEMAN TOOT?

I JUST THANK MY LUCKY STARS DEAR SWEET JONATHAN NEVER LIVED TO SEE THE DAY THIS COUNTRY WOULD BE BROUGHT TO ITS KNEES LIKE THIS.
LOOK! UP IN THE SKY! IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! IT'S SUPERMAN!

SUPERMAN: STRANGE VISITOR FROM ANOTHER WORLD! WHO CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF MIGHTY RIVERS, BEND STEEL IN HIS BARE HANDS...


SUPERMAN: PRIDE OF THE SOVIET STATE, SYMBOL OF OUR MILITARY MIGHT...

AW, GIMME A BREAK, WHO WRITES THIS STUFF?

LET OUR ENEMIES BEWARE: THERE IS ONLY ONE SUPER-POWER NOW.


THE COLD WAR JUST EVOLVED INTO A WHOLE NEW ANIMAL.
S.T.A.R. LABS, METROPOLIS:

BOARD ELEVEN: KNIGHT TO FT. CHECKMATE.
BOARD TWELVE: ROOK TO B3. CHECKMATE. BOARD FORTY-FOUR: QUEEN TO P4. CHECKMATE.

THANK YOU FOR A HIGHLY STIMULATING COFFEE BREAK, GENTLEMEN...

BOARD SEVEN PLAYED PARTICULARLY WELL THIS AFTERNOON. I WAS SO DISTRACTED FROM MACHIAVELLI'S IL PRINCIPE FOR A MOMENT THAT I ALMOST TURNED TWO PAGES AT ONCE BY MISTAKE.

ONE MOMENT, YOUNG MAN. JUST LET ME SWITCH OFF THIS PORTABLE TAPE RECORDER I DESIGNED IN THE WASHROOM THIS MORNING.

I'M TEACHING MYSELF URDU TO KEEP MY MIND BUSY WHILE I'M READING AND PLAYING CHESS WITH THE MONKEYS. I ASSUME YOU'RE AGENT JAMES OLSEN, OF COURSE?

HECK. I HEARD YOU WERE THE SMARTEST MAN ALIVE. DOCTOR LUTHOR. BUT YOU'VE GOTTA TELL ME, SR.: HOW THE BLAZES DID YOU FIGURE THAT ONE OUT?

YOU HAD AN APPOINTMENT. AGENT OLSEN.

NOW PLEASE: STEP INTO MY LAB AND LET ME SHOW YOU WHERE I AM WITH THIS ANTI-SUPERMAN DETERRENT YOU'RE PAYING SUCH LUDICROUS AMOUNTS OF MONEY FOR.
HOLY SMOKES! THIS IS EVEN WORSE THAN I THOUGHT!

THE GREATEST MINDS IN AMERICA AND YOU WON'T EVEN LET THEM IN THE BUILDING? AND ALL THIS GARbage YOU KEEP ORDERING: ALL THESE PUZZLES AND GAMES?

WHEN ARE YOU ACTUALLY GOING TO START WORKING ON THIS THING, DOCTOR, BECAUSE IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'VE DONE A THING HERE IN THREE DAMN MONTHS!

MY SUBCONSCIOUS IS WORKING. AGENT OLSEN, IT'S NOT ENOUGH! THE PUZZLES LUBRICATE THE COGS OF MY BRAIN.

GENIUS DOESN'T WORK TO SOME TIMETABLE. YOU KNOW, SCIENCE AND NECESSITY, THEY DON'T WORK TO MY EVERY ACTION. NOT SOME DREARY LITTLE WASHINGTON ACCOUNTANT.

THE PRESIDENT ISN'T GOING TO BE HAPPY ABOUT THIS, DOCTOR LUTHOR. I'VE TOLD YOU THE TRUTH. I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I'M GOING TO BREAK IT TO HIM WITHOUT LOSING MY JOB.

JUST TELL HIM HE CAN USE THIS FORMULA I SCRIBBLED TOGETHER TO BALANCE THE FEDERAL BUDGET. IF HE LEAVES ME ALONE, I'LL GIVE HIM A PERMANENT CURE FOR INFLATION TOO.

YOU BALANCED THE BUDGET? JUST LIKE THAT? YOU BALANCED THE BUDGET JUST LIKE THAT?

WHAT?

SOLVING PROBLEMS IS JUST LIKE EATING OR BREATHING FOR ME, AND THIS SUPERMAN YOU'RE ALL SO WORRIED ABOUT IS JUST ANOTHER PROBLEM.

REST ASSURED, I'LL BE IN TOUCH WHEN I'VE CRACKED IT.

NO, I GAVE HIM THE FORMULA TO BALANCE THE BUDGET, YOUNG MAN. THE TREASURY WILL HAVE TO PUNCH IN THE NUMBERS.
WHAT BOTHERS ME IS TALKING TO SOMEONE BETWEEN CHESS MOVES. DON'T TELL ME: ANOTHER COMPUTER SYSTEM YOU DESIGNED ON THE WAY HOME FROM WORK?

I CAN'T HELP IT, DARLING. PEOPLE ARE JUST TOO EASY TO BEAT. IS THAT THE FIRST EDITION OF THE MORNING PAPER?

ONLY TECHNICALLY:

RUSSIA WINNING THE COLD WAR. RUSSIA WINNING THE SPACE RACE. STALIN'S RUSSIAN SUPERMAN IS WATCHING YOUR EVERY MOVE FROM THE SKIES.

I FEEL LIKE WE'VE BEEN PRINTING THE SAME DEPRESSING STORY FOR MONTHS NOW.

WELL NOT FOR MUCH LONGER, SWEETIE. ANY DAY NOW YOU'LL HAVE YOUR LOVELY DEATH OF SUPERMAN HEADLINE.

AN AWARD-WINNING STORY BY THE GORGEOUS LOIS LUTHOR AND AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE HANDSOME DOCTOR LEX.
Angry clashes between police at Metropolis...

**GOOD GRIEF! HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SUCH AN IDIOT?**

**WHAT IS IT, LEX? WHAT'S WRONG?**

**THIS ISLEX LUTHOR, S.T.A.R. LABS**

**CLEARANCE CODE ONE-THREE-FIVE-ZERO-BRAVO. I WANT TO SPEAK TO THE PRESIDENT AND I DON'T CARE IF HE'S IN A MEETING.**

**THIS IS INDESCRIBABLY IMPORTANT, YOUNG LADY.**

**WHAT'S GOING ON, LEX? WHAT'S HAPPENED? HAVE YOU FIGURED OUT A WAY TO BEAT SUPERMAN OR SOMETHING?**

**I'M SORRY, DARLING, BUT I'M AFRAID THAT IS OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ON A NEED-TO-KNOW CAPACITY NOW.**

**IKE? LEX HERE. SIR, I NEED A HUNDRED TECHNICIANS, TEN MILLION DOLLARS AND PERMISSION TO CRASH A SOVIET SATELLITE IN A HIGHLY POPULATED AREA.**

**OF COURSE YOU CAN THINK FOR A MINUTE...**
I had made quite an impression in the fourteen weeks since I'd made my journey from the farm lands to Moscow.

Some still thought it a trick of the light or an urban myth, but each new day saw another super feat or some death-defying rescue.

In my more introspective moments, I've wondered if people were behaving more carelessly in the hope that they might catch a glimpse of their gaudy circus clown.

Comrade Secretary, this is a priority alert! We have lost control of Sputnik Two and the satellite is plummeting towards Earth's atmosphere!

The Americans! They must have sabotaged us! How else could a satellite just change course like that?

Flight trajectory looks like it's heading for a populated area somewhere in the upper hemisphere, sir. North of Peru, north of Cuba...

Oh my God! It's coming down in America!
They called me a soldier, but that just wasn’t true.

I was never a soldier.

A soldier always follows orders. A soldier knows and hates his enemy. A soldier only fights and dies for his own people...

I just fought for what was right.
Sputnik Two weighed five thousand pounds.

His mass multiplied by an acceleration factor of a hundred meters per second would have delivered a force powerful enough to level the entire city.

In hindsight there are so many ways this predicament might have been solved.

I could have vaporized it with my heat vision, slowed its descent with my super-breath or even atomized the craft with a calculated blow.

Instead I chose the most exciting action.

The powers were still new to me then. You understand.
EXACTLY THREE SECONDS AFTER HITTING THE ROOF OF THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE, I REALIZED THE DAMAGE DONE TO THE BUILDING'S SUSPENSION.

METROPOLIS WAS ALIVE WITH NOISE AGAIN, BUT I COULD STILL HEAR LOOSE BRICKS START TO FALL TWO MILES WEST.

A CLUSTER OF SUPPORT CABLES GROANED AND SNAPPEP. PEOPLE BELOW SCREAMED FOR SOMEONE TO SAVE THEM.

NOT MY PEOPLE...

BUT I NEVER REPELSE A CRY FOR HELP.

ALL THE LIES THEY SPREAD ABOUT ME, THE PROPAGANDA THEY ENGINEERED AT THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR, NONE OF IT MATTERED FOR A WHILE ON THAT BRIGHT AFTERNOON.

SKRRRRR!
They realized I was here to save them.
Six million lives spared, and an incident that might have sparked a war averted, and my most potent memory of that day was five and a half feet tall and wearing Chanel No. 5.

She felt it too. I know she did: from the increase in her pulse rate to the micron of extra perspiration on her skin. But neither of us could act on this impulse.

Not while she had a gold ring on her third finger and a creased photograph of a sombre, red-headed scientist in her purse.

Centuries later, after a thousand interpretations of this meeting, a famous poet would write an alternate history of the world where Lois Luthor and I became lovers.

His story would go on to win the Pulitzer Prize and become the biggest-selling fictional book of all time.

Even now, I still don’t know what appeals to people about this notion. What chord it struck with the public imagination...
MAGNIFICENT. I KNEW THESE RANDOM ACTS OF HEROISM WOULDN'T BE CONFINED TO THE PARAMETERS OF MOTHER RUSSIA.

It's such a shame he works for the other side. I honestly believe that Superman and I would have been the best of friends if he'd popped up in America.

Mathematics, Olsen. Pure mathematics.

Now make sure they raise that satellite from the water precisely as I described. The information he left on that hull is essential...

Especially if our dear friend in the White House expects me to build him a Superman of our own.
WEEKS PASS AND A THOUSAND RESCUES LATER, THEY DECIDED TO THROW A WELCOME PARADE FOR ME.

I CAN REMEMBER EVERY SINGLE SILLY DETAIL OF THAT DAY IN RED SQUARE. EVERY FACE IN THE CROWD. EVERY PIMPLE ON EVERY FACE OF EVERY CHEERING Worker.

THEIR POOR CONFUSED EXPRESSIONS AT THIS CHAMPION FROM THE FARM LANDS WHO COULDN'T STAND STILL FOR MORE THAN TEN SECONDS AT A TIME.

DON'T TELL ME THERE'S ANOTHER EMERGENCY, SUPERMAN...

A CHEMICAL PLANT ON FIRE THREE THOUSAND MILES WEST OF VLADIVOSTOK, COMRADE STALIN. JUST GIVE ME TEN OR FIFTEEN MINUTES.
OKAY BUT DON'T BE ANY LONGER!

THIS SUPERMAN DAY THING IS SUPPOSED TO BE FOR YOU, YOU KNOW.

He's got the Attention Span of a Spastic Two-Year-Old. I Can't Imagine Not Even Being Able to Sit Through Your Own Damn Parade.

Well, What He's Supposed to Do, Captain. Stand There and Gruin Like An idiot When He Can Hear People Screaming For Their Lives!

NO, BUT HE COULD SHOW YOU A LITTLE MORE RESPECT, CORRIDGE! STALIN. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE REALLY CLAUSED HIM TO YOUR CHEST LIKE THIS!

How Could You Bring This Alien from the Ukraine into Our Inner Circle to This Degree?

No, But The One You've Been Jerking For The Top, I've Been Preparing For This Since I Was Eight Years Old.

But I'm The One You've Been Jerking For The Top, I've Been Preparing For This Since I Was Eight Years Old.

If Superman Succeeds, You Could Be There For A Million Years For All We Know.

BUT I'M THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN JERKING FOR THE TOP, I'VE BEEN PREPARING FOR THIS SINCE I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD.

Who Cares If He Succeeds? If You Were Chief Of The NKVD In Twenty-Five, I'd Have Described That As An Underachievement.

BECAUSE THEY LOVE Him, MY BOY. HE WAS RAISED TO BELIEVE IN EVERYTHING I STAND FOR AND HE WANTS RUSSIA FEEL AS INDESTRUCTIBLE AS HE IS.
AN EARTHQUAKE IN STALINGRAD AND A TIDAL WAVE NEAR THE PORT OF ODESSA! MY GOD, NO WONDER SUPERMAN MISSED THE FIRST TWO COURSES.

OF COURSE HUNGARY WANTS TO JOIN US NOW. HIPPOLYTA, THE WARSAW PACT IS ATTRACTIVE BEYOND WORDS NOW THAT WE BOAST SUPERMAN AS OUR ALTERNATIVE TO A NUCLEAR STRATEGY.

BELIEVE ME, PARADISE ISLAND WOULD BE FAR MORE SUITABLE TO AN ALLIANCE WITH US THAN THOSE DESPERATE AND GREEDY LITTLE MEN IN THOSE HORRIBLE NATO BACKWATERS.

...YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, HOWEVER, IS ANOTHER MATTER ENTIRELY. I THINK IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT FOR THEMYSCTRA TO REMAIN NEUTRAL FOR A LITTLE WHILE AT LEAST.

NOT TOO NEUTRAL, I HOPE. THAT BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER OF YOURS SEEMS TO BE GETTING ALONG SPLENDIDLY WITH SUPERMAN.

I THOUGHT, PERHAPS, THAT YOU AND I MIGHT GET SIMILARLY ACQUAINTED UPSTAIRS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE?

PLEASE DON'T EMBARRASS YOURSELF, JOSEPH.

MAYBE IF YOU WERE FIVE THOUSAND YEARS OLDER...
WHAT'S WRONG, SUPERMAN? YOU LOOK SO SAD. I HOPE THIS ISN'T ANYTHING TO DO WITH MY TERRIBLE RUSSIAN.

NO, NOT AT ALL. DIANA, YOU'RE ACTUALLY WORD PERFECT. IT'S JUST THIS WHOLE SUPERMAN DAY FLUFF. PARTIES AND PARADES JUST AREN'T REALLY ME.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING BEING HELD IN MY HONOR BACK ON PARADISE ISLAND TOO. SO I KNOW HOW TIRESOME THESE THINGS ARE.

WELL, I HOPE TONIGHT ISN'T TOO BORING FOR YOU.

GREAT HERA, NO! NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST. I'M ACTUALLY HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME. I MEAN, THINK ABOUT IT: HOW OFTEN DO I GET TO MEET SOMEONE LIKE ME?

I SEE SOMEONE'S ENJOYING HERSELF, EH? BUILDING BRIDGES WITH THE FUTURE LEADER, ARE YOU?

OH, SUPERMAN'S REALLY NICE. MOTHER. YOU SHOULD TALK TO HIM. HE'S REALLY NOT LIKE OTHER MEN AT ALL. YOU KNOW, HE SEEMS A FEW INCHES TALLER.
THAT DIANA WOULD MAKE A FINE WIFE WHEN SHE MAKES HER VOYAGE TO THE MAN’S WORLD, SUPERMAN. JUST IMAGINE WHAT KIND OF CHILDREN YOU COULD RAISE, EH?

BUT THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE, MY BOY. THE DYNASTY OF SUPERMEN THAT COULD PRESERVE OUR IDEALS FOREVER.

HAVEN'T WE BEEN HERE ALREADY, COMRADE STALIN? I DIDN'T COME HERE TO BREED!

BESIDES, IS THERE ANOTHER WOMAN IN ALL THE WORLD WHO COULD... AH... KEEP UP WITH OUR WONDERFUL MAN OF STEEL?

I'D PREFER TO CHOOSE MY OWN WIFE, COMRADE STALIN. besides, this notion you have that i'd ever want to lead the party is really quite a misconception.

POLITICS BORES ME RIGHT. I ONLY CAME TO THE BIG CITY SO THAT I COULD USE MY POWERS TO HELP PEOPLE.

UH, WHY ARE YOU STARING AT THE WALL, SUPERMAN?

OH, FOR GOD’S SAKE. WHO CARES ABOUT PYOTR ROSLOV?

I CARE ABOUT EVERYBODY, SIR.

AH, THERE HE IS. TWO HUNDRED MILES AWAY ON THE PEASANT LAND WHERE HE GREW UP. YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT, COMRADE...

I'M SCANNING MOSCOW FOR YOUR CHIEF OF POLICE, SIR. I NOTICED HE ISN'T AT THE PARTY AND I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE HE'S OKAY. THERE'S NO SIGN OF HIM ANYWHERE.

CATCH.
YOU WEREN'T AT THE PARTY AND I JUST WONDERED WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, PYOTR. YOU'VE BEEN ACTING QUITE IRRATIONAL LATELY AND I'M GENUINELY CONCERNED.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, YOU IDIOT? YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME, AND WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP FIXING THINGS? YOU'RE DRIVING ME OUT OF MY MIND!

I ONLY FIX THINGS THAT ARE BROKEN, PYOTR. NOW PLEASE; TAKE A SEAT. LET'S JUST SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT WHATEVER'S GETTING YOU SO UPSET HERE.

YOU MEAN BESIDES THE TOTAL STRANGER MEDDLING IN MY AFFAIRS? BELIEVE ME, SUPERMAN, YOU'RE THE LAST GUY I CAN TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEMS WITH...
YOU REALLY DON'T LIKE ME VERY MUCH, DO YOU, PYOTR?

NO, AND I REALLY DON'T LIKE THE FACT THAT YOU NEED TO BE LIKED SO MUCH EITHER, COMRADE.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE FLYING AROUND AND WEARING OUR FLAG! HOW CAN THEY CALL YOU A SYMBOL OF EVERYTHING WE BELIEVE IN WHEN YOU AREN'T EVEN FROM THIS PLANET?

YOU'RE THE OPPOSITE OF MARXIST DOCTRINE. SUPERMAN, LIVING PROOF THAT ALL MEN AREN'T CREATED EQUAL.

HE DIDN'T ACTUALLY INVITE YOU TO THE PARTY, DID HE?

NO, AND YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE ALL COMRADE STALIN WANTS TO DO NOW IS SHOW OFF HIS INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN OF STEEL. MY FRIEND, THE REST OF US CAN GO TO HELL.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW FAST YOU ARE, HOW STRONG YOU ARE OR HOW GOOD YOU ARE WITH A RIFLE SINCE THE MAGNIFICENT SUPERMAN APPEARED AND STARTED RESCUING CATS FROM TREES.

WHY BOTHER WITH PYOTR ROSLOV AS YOUR BODYGUARD WHEN YOU'RE BEING WATCHED OVER BY AN ALIEN WHO COULD CATCH BULLETS SINCE HE WAS A TODDLER.
Actually, the powers didn’t start until a few weeks after my twelfth birthday, Captain Roslov.

My super-hearing was the first to develop. I heard what I thought were voices in my head. I realized I was just listening to children in the next collective.

Up until that point, I was just an ordinary little boy with bruised knees and a wheezy cough. I had a crush on my cute, red-headed neighbor just like anyone else.

If I’d had the powers I’d have left the farm years before now, but I didn’t. You know why?

Because my parents wanted me to be ready when I went to the big city. I believe in this just as much as you do, Pyotr. This doesn’t have to be a competition.

That’s easy to say when you’re streaking through the skies. Superman! Not so much fun when you’re down here working in the slumbers like the rest of us.
"DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE PURGE LAST WEEK, SUPERMAN? TWO DISSIDENTS PRINTING ANTI-SUPERMAN DAY LEAFLETS OR SOMETHING, I FORGET THE DETAILS.

"ALL I REMEMBER IS THE BOY."

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT, BOY? DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO STARE AT THE CHIEF OF POLICE? BULLETS KILL LITTLE BOYS TOO, YOU KNOW.

SO ON! GET OUT OF MY SIGHT! YOUR PARENTS ARE DEAD!
DON'T WALK. RUN!

THE KID COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN NINE YEARS OLD, BUT HIS GLARE WOULD HAVE STOPPED A CLOCK TICKING. THOSE WEREN'T A CHILD'S EYES, THEY LOOKED TOO PATIENT.

WEIRD LITTLE RUNT. PROBABLY GROW UP JUST LIKE HIS IDIOT FATHER.

I WILL NEVER EVER FORGET THE WAY THAT BOY STARED AT ME.

SOMEbody SAID HE THREW HIMSELF IN THE MOSCOW RIVER. OTHERS SAID HE DISAPPEARED INTO THE SEWERS TO LICK HIS WOUNDS AND SNEAR REVENGE.

WHAT DOES THAT DO TO A BOY? SUPERMAN? IS THERE ANYBODY WHO CAN ANSWER THAT ONE?
IT WASN'T UNTIL YOU APPEARED THAT I REALIZED JUST HOW HORRIBLE AND VILE MY JOB REALLY IS AND I'M SICK OF IT, SUPERMAN.

SICK OF WORKING IN A SYSTEM WHERE NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I'M NEVER GOING TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP OF THE PARTY NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE.

SICK OF GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY FOR A MAN WHO WON'T EVEN ADMIT HE'S HIS OWN FLESH AND BLOOD.

CLICK

CHUNT

NO!
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO HURT YOURSELF SOON IF YOU DON'T CUT OUT ALL THIS HEAVY DRINKING, PYOTR.

DAMN YOU!

THEM ALL MIGHT THINK YOU'RE WONDERFUL NOW, BUT I KNOW WHERE THIS IS GOING. ALIEN YOUR INTERFERENCE IS GOING TO BE THE WORST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO US.

YOU MARK MY WORDS!

OH, JESUS. I'VE DONE SUCH A TERRIBLE THING. SUPERMAN, FATHER MADE ME SO ANGRY THIS MORNING AND I ARRANGED...

WHAT?

I SAID...

NO, NOT YOU. TWO MILES AWAY, THERE'S SOMEONE SHOUTING FOR HELP IN MOSCOW.

WAIT HERE.
SUPERMAN! HELP US!

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME! JUST GET A DOCTOR! WHAT THE HELL DOES SUPERMAN KNOW ABOUT MEDICINE?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HE'S SUPERMAN, YOU IDIOT! HE CAN DO ANYTHING!

GENTLEMEN, I BELIEVE COMRADE STALIN'S RESPIRATORY AND ENZYME SYSTEMS ARE UNDER ATTACK FROM ACUTE CYANIDE POISONING.

I'VE ALREADY TOLD THE MEDICAL TEAM TO PLACE HIM ON TOTAL BODY-MONITORING WHILE I WORK IN THE LABS ON AN EFFECTIVE ANTITOXIN.
I'm sorry, Captain. You can't go in there.

Who the hell do you think you are telling me where I can go, you little snot? Get out of my way before I have you counting snowflakes in Siberia!

FATHER?

Oh my god...

You know... I've only ever seen him standing up before, Superman. It's so horrible seeing him look this small and vulnerable...

He looks just like a little rag doll.

Captain Roslov was devastated by the old man's death. We all were.

He didn't rest until he found the man who poisoned him and had him shot in broad daylight in full public view.
I was so distracted by the whole thing I was barely paying attention to events abroad...

This is unbelievable. I feel like I'm on the set of a science fiction movie or something.

How is this stuff you've been building here even possible? For God's sake?

Because the world as we know it becomes a little more impossible every day, Agent Olsen.

Technology curves stipulated that none of this equipment would even be invented for another five decades and yet here we are with science straight out of Ray Bradbury himself.

What is it about this Man of Steel that makes my head work so much faster, eh?

I don't know, sir, but we're not complaining.

Norman Rockwell, apple pie, stars and stripes and the Fourth of July, Agent Olsen.

The President asked me to design a figure who might encapsulate all these things and give America back our much-needed swagger.

Holy smokes!

Young man, I'd like you to meet Superman Two...
The days and weeks that followed saw America ruthlessly exploit our political confusion.

I listened to them as they plotted in their bunkers and recognized to my horror that the Cold War had just dipped below freezing point.

Their first act was a promise to contain the communist threat by increasing their nuclear stockpiles in the United Kingdom and our various satellite countries.

This promise was later endorsed by official confirmation that the United States of America had developed a duplicate Superman of their own.

Stalin’s death had left an enormous void in our great nation that the party hierarchy begged me to fill. However, this was a request I was reluctant to undertake...

Why should the fact that I was born with privileges qualify me as leader of a socialist republic?

I’m sorry comrades, but the very idea of this is in complete contradiction to everything we were ever raised to believe in.
Dealing with the duplicate, of course, was completely different. This had become something of a personal matter...

DID YOU HEAR WHY WE'RE BEHIND SCHEDULE?

APPARENTLY, SOME SCIENTIST NOBODY'S EVER HEARD OF WAS PLAYING CHESS ALL NIGHT WITH THAT STUPID BIZARRO THING UP THERE. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?

HECK, NO WONDER IKE WON'T LET THE CAMERAS WITHIN A HUNDRED YARDS OF THE FREAK. OUR SUPERMAN LOOKS JUST LIKE I FEEL.

HEY! YOU WANT TO KEEP IT DOWN A LITTLE, GUYS? HE MIGHT BE A FREAK, BUT HE ALSO HAPPENS TO BE JUST ABOUT THE LAST GUY IN THE WORLD I'D WANT TO TICK OFF. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?

BUDDY, OUR GUY COULD HEAR A GNAT TAKE A LEAK IN INDOCHINA, MY FRIEND. BELIEVE ME. HE'S LISTENING TO EVERY DAMN WORD.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MORON? WE'RE ONE MILE BELOW THE THING.
PARDON ME IF MY ENGLISH ISN'T PERFECT. I'M AFRAID I ONLY LEARNED THE LANGUAGE TEN MINUTES AGO AND I'M STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE GRAMMAR.

...BUT THESE SHORES ARE OFF-LIMITS, COMRADE.

NO! IF YOU UNDERSTAND

UNGH!
The duplicate was imperfect, a crude effort compared to Lex's later work with abilities little more than a warped aggregate of my own repertoire.

Like telescopic x-ray vision.

Noses bled, heads pounded, birds became irradiated and dropped from the skies for fifty miles around. The effects were devastating.

Absolutely devastating.

The submarine was a Grayback class SSG 574 carrying four Regulus One missiles.

Three of them stayed where they should have.

Good God!
England, London. Oxford Street and two hundred and fifty-eight innocent bystanders are dead before I even hit the ground.

Even now, even after all these years, I can still hear the sound of them snap.

A second later.

One single second...

And the body count tripled.
Perhaps you misunderstand...

Your presence here is an aggressive act. This country doesn't need American protection. The Soviet Union poses no threat to the future of great Britain.

You are the monster here.

You are the one who needs to be contained.

It's getting up! Kill it, Superman! For God's sake, finish it off!

Go home and tell your president to mind his own affairs. Nobody wants you or your weapons here.
Suddenly, the clock stopped.

The duplicate and I exchanged glances, two moving objects on a static, frozen background.

The ground to a halt as it always does for our kind when a decision must be made.

We both knew that one of us would have to make a choice.

To this day, his true intentions remain a mystery to me.
I often wonder if he really knew what he was doing when he kicked back into the sky.

...or if he understood perfectly and sacrificed himself, inserting my promise to preserve every form of life.

Hello, everybody. I'm very pleased to meet you.

Perhaps he looked into my eyes and glimpsed a future that he couldn't bear to see, choosing instead to spare himself the suffering.

I'm afraid we'll never know for sure.
THE MAN OF STEEL IS DEAD.

ALL RISE FOR THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

JERSEY STALIN'S FUNERAL TOOK PLACE ON THE THIRD TUESDAY IN NOVEMBER, NINETEEN FIFTY THREE.

FIVE MILLION MOURNERS HAD COME FROM ALL OVER RUSSIA TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS AS THE MOST FAMOUS MAN I HAD EVER KNOWN WAS LAID TO REST IN LENIN'S TOMB.

FIVE MILLION VOICES BOomed OUR GLORIOUS NATIONAL ANTHEM BUT BETWEEN THE COUGHS AND THE PRAYERS AND THE SHUFFLING, I COULD still hear her...

A UNIQUE, SOLITARY VOICE PATTERN FROM THE RURAL COLLECTIVE WHERE I WAS RAISED.

THE CORNFIELDS IN THE UKRAINE AND MY DEAR SWEET PARENTS SEEMED SO FAR AWAY EVEN THEN, I REMEMBER.

THE SWEET RED-HEADED GIRL FROM MY PAST.

RING-MAKERS IN THE PARTY WERE ALREADY CIRCLING, EAGER TO ANOINT THIS RELUCTANT SUCCESSOR...
YOU KNOW, IT’S HARD TO IMAGINE WHICH OF OUR TWO MEN OF STEEL WOULD HAVE ENJOYED THE BIGGEST STATE FUNERAL, SUPERMAN.

IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT YOURS MIGHT HAVE PUT EVEN COMRADE STALIN’S IN THE SHADE.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU? I’M NOT INTERESTED IN POLITICS OR LEADING THE PARTY OR ANY OF THAT BEHIND-THE-SCENES STUFF!

I CAME TO MOSCOW TO HELP THE COMMON MAN. I’M A WORKER, NOT A PUBLIC SPEAKER.

I’M GLAD TO HEAR IT, BUT TELL THAT TO A PARTY MACHINE WHO’S SERVED A LIVING LEGEND FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS.

THEM THINK COMMUNISM IS GOING TO DIE WITHOUT THE OLD MAN NOW, ESPECIALLY IN THE FACE OF A UNITED STATES WHO HAVE JOINED THE SUPERHUMAN ARMS RACE.

THOSE POOR, DELUDED FOOLS SEEM TO THINK THAT YOU’RE THE ONLY ONE BIG ENOUGH TO CARRY THE TORCH NOW, SUPERMAN. CAN YOU BELIEVE THE IDIOCY OF THAT?
METROPOLIS:

YOU KNOW SOMETHING WEIRD? I’VE HAD THE SAME DREAM ALMOST EVERY NIGHT EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL.

I DREAM I’M FALLING THROUGH THE CLOUDS AND THE EARTH’S GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER, BUT I’M NEVER AFRAID BECAUSE I KNOW THAT YOU’RE THERE TO CATCH ME.

CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? YOU CATCH ME ALMOST EVERY NIGHT, ALWAYS IN THE NICK OF TIME...

AND NOW, YOU’RE REAL, SUPERMAN. AS REAL AS ANY OF THIS.

LOIS?

YOUR HUSBAND’S ON THE TELEPHONE, SWEETHEART.
DON'T INTERRUPT, LOIS. THIS CONVERSATION HAS ONLY BEEN CALCULATED TO LAST THIRTY-EIGHT SECONDS: OUR MARRIAGE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN AN INDEFINITE SABBATICAL EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

THIS TIME WILL BE SPENT DEVISING A PLAN TO HUMILIATE AND DEFEAT SUPERMAN JUST AS HE HAS HUMILIATED AND DEFEATED ME.

I HAVE RESIGNED FROM S.T.A.R. LABS. DESTROYED MY NOTES AND TERMINATED THE CONTRACTS OF ANYONE WHO UNDERSTOOD MY PROCEDURES. THE SUPERMAN DUPLICATE IS A MISTAKE THAT MUST NOT BE REPEATED. SAY YOU UNDERSTAND, DARLING. SAY YOU DON'T TAKE THIS AS A PERSONAL INSULT.

ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT OUR MARRIAGE IS OVER BECAUSE SUPERMAN BEAT YOUR MONSTER IN A FIGHT?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FIGHT. I'M DEVOTING MY LIFE TO SUPERMAN FOR ANOTHER REASON ENTIRELY, LOIS.

THE DUPLICATE OF THAT ALIEN FARMBOY HAD THE TENACITY TO BEAT ME AT CHESS LAST NIGHT.
CIRCLED THE WORLD AS I OFTEN DO WHEN TROUBLED. THE LAND, THE SEA, AND THE MOUNTAINS BLURRING INTO A SINGLE STRETCH OF ENDLESS GREY BENEATH ME.

I ALWAYS FOUND IT EASIEST TO THINK WHEN APPROACHING TRANS-LIGHT VELOCITIES.

MY HEART TOLD ME TO LEAD THEM, BUT MY HEAD TOLD ME THAT THIS COMPLETELY CONTRADICTED EVERYTHING MY PARENTS HAD EVER RAISED ME TO BELIEVE IN.

IT'S STRANGE HOW DIFFERENT THINGS COULD HAVE BEEN. THE PATH HISTORY MIGHT HAVE TAKEN IF I'D ONLY ENTERED MOSCOW FROM THE NORTH SIDE OF THE CITY.

SUPERMAN

RUSSIA WILL PROV

LANA? LANA LAZARENKO?

I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU IN THE CROWDS EARLIER, BUT I COULDN'T BE SURE WITH ALL THE CHATTERING GOING ON.

MY GOD, LOOK AT YOU. YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT SINCE WE USED TO CAUSE ALL THAT TROUBLE ON THE FARM.

ME? WHAT ABOUT YOU? I NARLY DIED WHEN THE CHILDREN SHOWED ME YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPER. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW HARD IT'S BEEN NOT TO TELL EVERYONE WHO YOU REALLY ARE.

CHILDREN?

YES, JORDAN AND MEHRI. WE SPENT ALL OUR MONEY TRAVELING FROM SAINT PETERSBURG FOR THE FUNERAL AND NOW WE HAVE TO QUEUE HERE FOR SCRAPPS WITH EVERYONE ELSE.
This isn't right, Lana. These children shouldn't have to stand in line and beg for food like they're some kind of animals.

GIVE THIS WOMAN SOMETHING TO EAT, CONRAD. HER BOY AND GIRL HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE THEY GOT HERE. FOR GOD'S SAKE.

BUT WHAT ABOUT US, SUPERMAN? WE'RE ALL HUNGRY AND MY OWN CHILDREN HERE HAVEN'T EATEN ALL DAY EITHER.

SOME OF US HAVEN'T EATEN IN WEEKS.

THINGS ARE ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE NOW THAT STALIN'S DEAD TOO. I'VE GOT A FRIEND IN SUPPLIES WHO SAYS WE AREN'T GETTING GRAINS FOR THE REST OF THE MONTH.

IT'S OKAY, SUPERMAN. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. IT'S JUST THE WAY THE SYSTEM WORKS. YOU KNOW, YOU CAN'T TAKE CARE OF EVERYONE'S PROBLEMS.

ACTUALLY I CAN. Lana. I COULD TAKE CARE OF EVERYONE'S PROBLEMS IF I RAN THIS PLACE AND, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, THERE'S NO GOOD REASON WHY I SHOULDN'T.
TELL YOUR FRIENDS THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE SCARED OR HUNGRY ANYMORE, COMRADES.

SUPERMAN IS HERE TO RESCUE THEM.