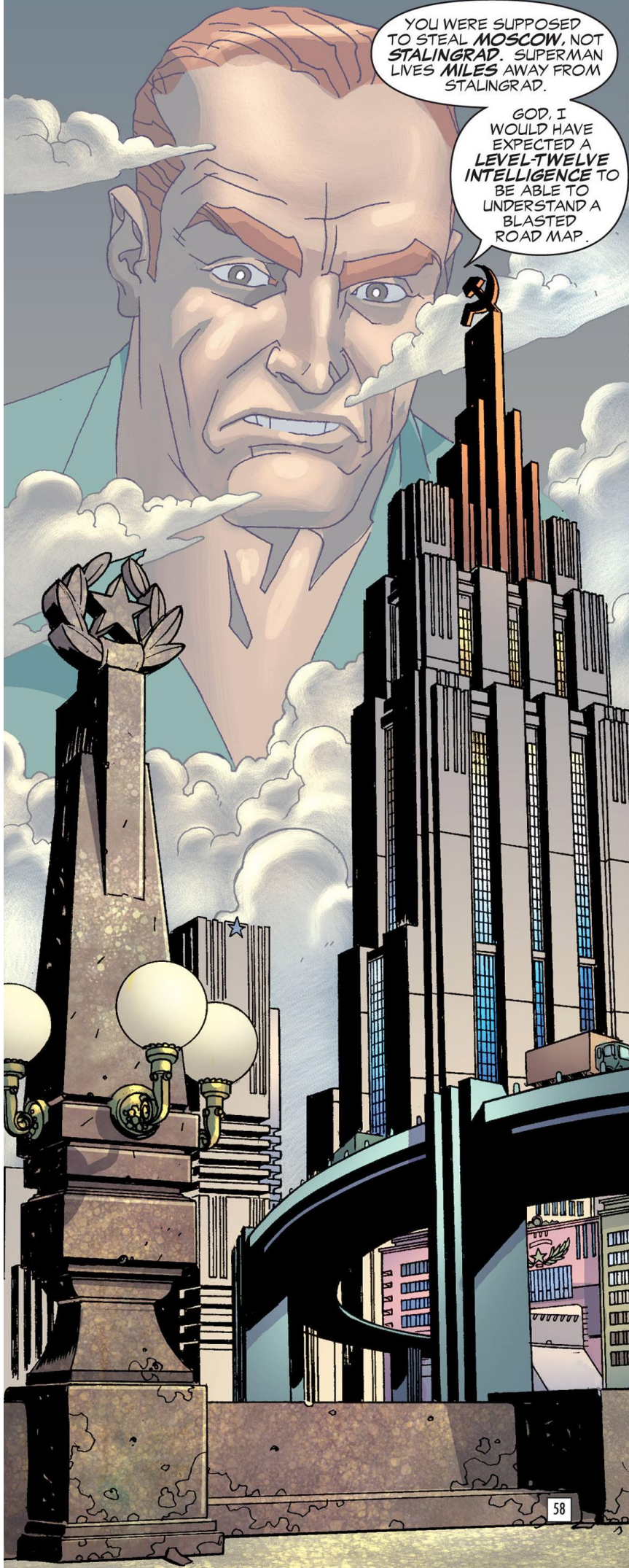


SUPERMAN
RED
SON
RED SON ASCENDANT





YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO STEAL **MOSCOW**, NOT **STALINGRAD**. SUPERMAN LIVES MILES AWAY FROM STALINGRAD.

GOD, I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED A **LEVEL-TWELVE INTELLIGENCE** TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND A **BLASTED ROAD MAP**.



WHERE IS HE, LUTHOR? WHERE'S **BRAINIAC**?

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT MACY'S, SUPERMAN. WHERE DO YOU THINK?



EIGHT MILLION SOVIET CITIZENS CONDEMNED TO SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES NO BIGGER THAN A FULL STOP; UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU MANAGE TO CATCH HIM IN TIME, MAN OF STEEL.

THAT VERY IMPRESSIVE **SHIP** OF HIS LEFT EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE **TWO HOURS AGO...**

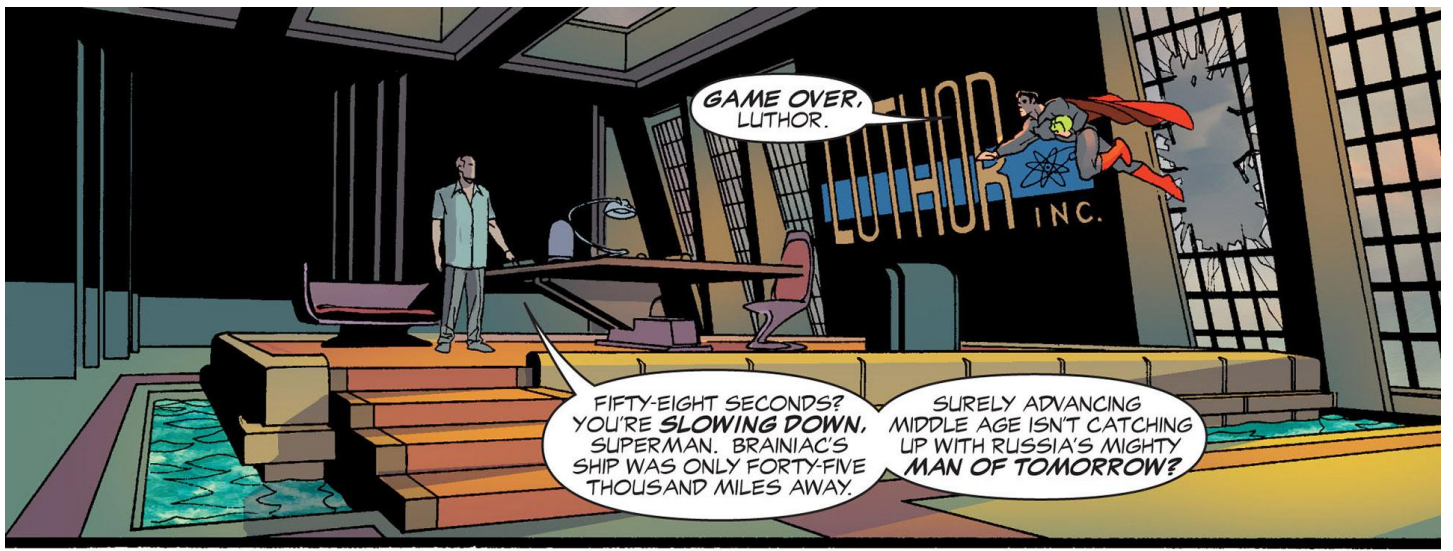
WHAT WAS THE POINT OF LEX LUTHOR?

A HUMAN BEING WHO DARED TO CHALLENGE A GOD, HE WAS SURELY THE GREATEST OF HIS KIND.

I OFTEN LOOK BACK UPON THOSE DAYS AND WONDER WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT ME. THE TRIUMPHS HE MIGHT HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE NAME OF HIS SPECIES.

PERHAPS HE EXISTED TO KEEP ME IN CHECK OR, AS SOMEONE ONCE HYPOTHESIZED, PERHAPS IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

THIS IS WHY HE DESPISED ME SO.



GAME OVER, LUTHOR.

FIFTY-EIGHT SECONDS? YOU'RE **SLOWING DOWN**, SUPERMAN. BRAINIAC'S SHIP WAS ONLY FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND MILES AWAY.

SURELY ADVANCING MIDDLE AGE ISN'T CATCHING UP WITH RUSSIA'S MIGHTY **MAN OF TOMORROW?**



BRAINIAC'S **CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT**, LEX. I USED IT TO ACCESS EVERY FILE IN THE SHIP'S DATABASE, BUT THERE ISN'T A **SHRED OF USEFUL INFORMATION**.

I CAN'T FIND ANY MEANS OF RETURNING **STALINGRAD** TO ITS NATURAL SIZE.



HARDLY SURPRISING WHEN BRAINIAC'S PRIME DIRECTIVE WAS **STORING** INFORMATION ON ALIEN CULTURES. I DON'T THINK HE EVER INTENDED GIVING ANY OF THESE CITIES **BACK**, YOU KNOW.



TELL YOU **WHAT**. I'M ALWAYS READING HOW **SMART** YOU ARE. HOW NOTHING WE **MORTALS** CAN IMAGINE IS BEYOND **PRESIDENT SUPERMAN'S** LIMITATIONS, CORRECT?



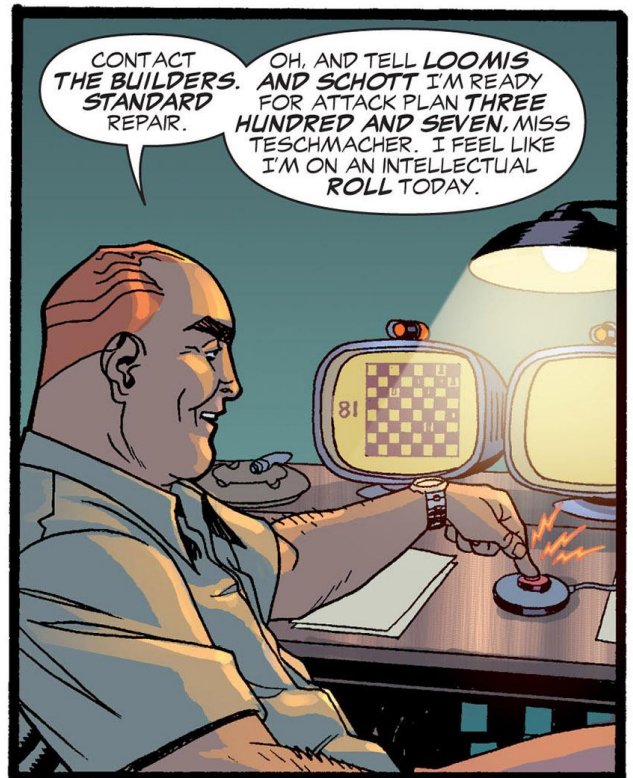
WELL, NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE THEM **RIGHT**, ALIEN.

BEST OF LUCK.



TEMPER, TEMPER, SUPERMAN.

HARDLY THE BEHAVIOR ONE WOULD EXPECT WHEN A FOREIGN HEAD OF STATE PAYS A VISIT TO AMERICA'S MOST ENTERPRISING CORPORATION.



CONTACT THE BUILDERS. STANDARD REPAIR.

OH, AND TELL LOOMIS AND SCHOTT I'M READY FOR ATTACK PLAN THREE HUNDRED AND SEVEN, MISS TESCHMACHER. I FEEL LIKE I'M ON AN INTELLECTUAL ROLL TODAY.



KNIGHT TO B3, INCIDENTALLY. THAT'S A CHECKMATE, TABLE EIGHTY-ONE.

MOSCOW:

--AND SO THIS MARKED THE END OF THE SHORT-LIVED LUTHOR-BRAINIAC PARTNERSHIP, BUT ONLY THE BEGINNING FOR THE TRAGIC PEOPLE OF STALINGRAD.

TO THIS DAY, OUR GREAT LEADER HAS BEEN UNABLE TO SOLVE THEIR PREDICAMENT, AND THEIR NAMES ARE ETCHED HERE FOREVER IN THE SUPERMAN MUSEUM SO THAT WE MIGHT NEVER FORGET.

OVER THE YEARS, THE AMERICAN C.I.A. HAS FUNDED THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ENTIRE ROGUES GALLERY OF SUPER-CRIMINALS BUILT BY THE PROLIFIC DOCTOR LEX LUTHOR...

THE PARASITE, METALLO, THE ATOMIC SKULL, BIZARRO: ALL DESIGNED TO ASSASSINATE SUPERMAN AND RESTORE THE FADING FORTUNES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

ALL THANKFULLY QUITE UNSUCCESSFUL.



ONLY NINETY SECONDS AT EACH EXHIBIT, COMRADE. KEEP IN STEP WITH THE OTHER TOURISTS OR FACE RIGOROUS PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION.

I'M SORRY, MY FRIEND. I WAS IN A WORLD OF MY OWN.

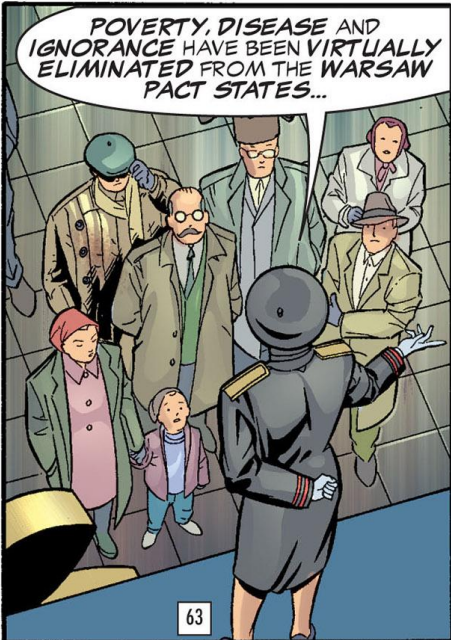


THE SOVIET UNION WAS JUST A FRAGILE ASSEMBLY WHEN SUPERMAN FIRST CAME TO POWER. TWO DECADES LATER AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS OUR ALLY.

ONLY THE UNITED STATES AND CHILE CHOOSE TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT; THE LAST TWO CAPITALIST ECONOMIES ON EARTH AND BOTH ON THE BRINK OF FISCAL AND SOCIAL COLLAPSE.



THE REST OF THE WORLD WAS GLAD TO VOLUNTEER TOTAL CONTROL TO SUPERMAN AND WATCHED IN AWE AS HE REBUILT THEIR SOCIETIES, RUNNING THEIR AFFAIRS MORE EFFICIENTLY THAN ANY HUMAN COULD.



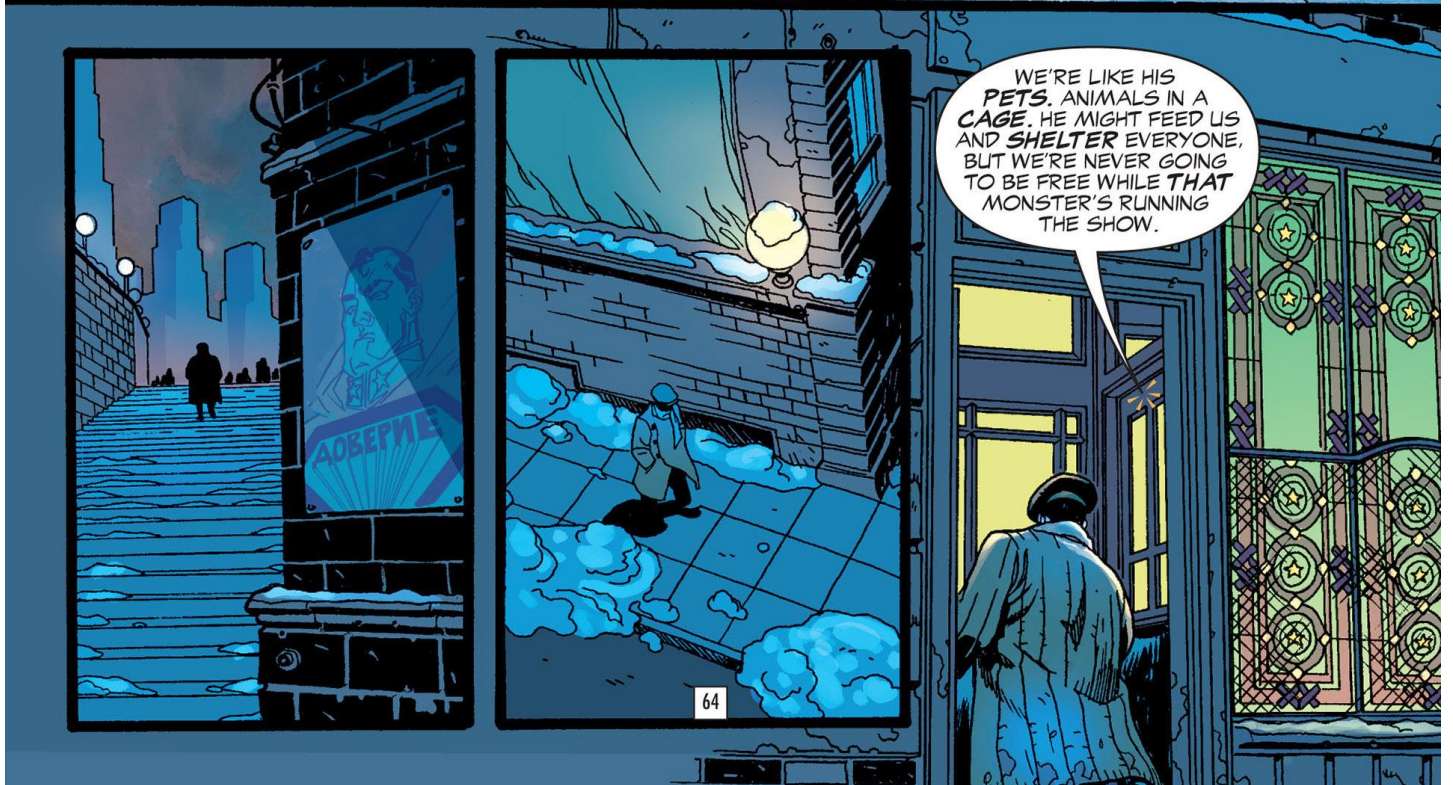
POVERTY, DISEASE AND IGNORANCE HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED FROM THE WARSAW PACT STATES...



...DISOBEDIENCE TO THE PARTY HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED.



WHATEVER HELPS YOU **SLEEP AT NIGHT, COMRADE.**



WE'RE LIKE HIS **PETS**. ANIMALS IN A **CAGE**. HE MIGHT FEED US AND **SHELTER** EVERYONE, BUT WE'RE NEVER GOING TO BE FREE WHILE **THAT MONSTER'S** RUNNING THE SHOW.



I MEAN, NOBODY WANTS PROBLEMS LIKE WE HAD IN THE PAST, BUT SOMETIMES I JUST WISH THIS **BATMAN** CHARACTER WOULD BLOW THE WHOLE **SYSTEM** APART OUT THERE.

JUST TO SEE WHAT THINGS MIGHT BE LIKE WITHOUT SOME ALL-SEEING **BIG BROTHER** WATCHING OVER US AGAIN. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING HERE, **COMRADE**?



DANGEROUS TALK, MY FRIEND. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE CRITICIZING A MAN WITH **SUPER-HEARING**.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THERE'S NO LAW AGAINST **CONVERSATION**. IS THERE? NOT EVEN **SUPERMAN'S** GOING TO PUNISH ME JUST FOR VOICING AN **OPINION**.



INCITEMENT TO DISOBEY IS ALL IT TAKES TO BE TURNED INTO A **SUPERMAN ROBOT** THESE DAYS, **YOUNG MAN**. KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS TO YOURSELF WHILE YOU STILL HAVE A COLLECTION OF YOUR **OWN**.



FIREWORKS DISPLAYS ALMOST READY. JUST REMEMBER I WAS IN HERE DRINKING WHEN **SOMEONE ELSE** LIT THE FUSE, RIGHT?

THE **USUAL ARRANGEMENT**, **COMRADE**. I UNDERSTAND.



BUY THIS **YOUNG MAN** HERE ANOTHER DRINK AND MAYBE WE CAN INTRODUCE HIM TO SOME **LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE** A LITTLE LATER.

PUT THE **BILL** ON MY **TAB**, EH?



WAIT A MINUTE. YOU DON'T HAVE A **TAB**.



MY APOLOGIES FOR INTERRUPTING A PERFECT EVENING OF TOTALITARIAN OPPRESSION, BUT I'VE GOT A MESSAGE HERE FOR ANYONE WHO VALUES BREATHING.

IN PRECISELY FOUR MINUTES' TIME, MOSCOW'S SUPERMAN MUSEUM WILL ERUPT INTO A BEAUTIFUL, FLICKERING FIREBALL...



...PLEASE STAY WHERE YOU ARE IF YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE A STAND AGAINST THE TACTICS OF MY TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. OTHERWISE, I'D RECOMMEND YOU RUN LIKE HELL.

BATMAN OUT.



BATMAN? I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD AND BURIED?

IT DOESN'T MATTER! JUST EVACUATE THE BUILDING! THEY'RE SAYING HE'S TARGETED FIVE OFFICIAL PREMISES THIS TIME!

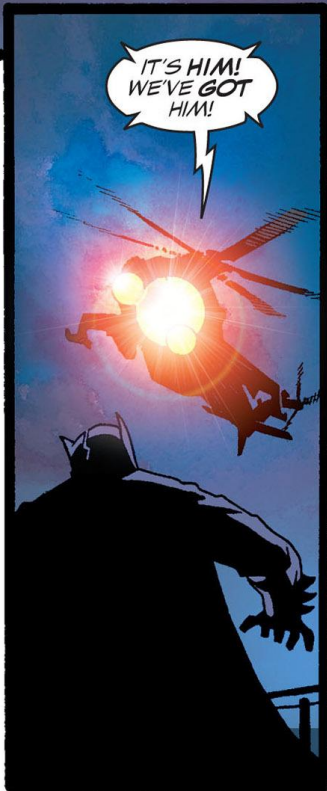


BOOM



SQUADRON LEADER, THIS IS RED FOUR! WE'VE PICKED UP MOVEMENT ON A ROOFTOP EAST OF PUSHKIN SQUARE! MOVING IN TO INVESTIGATE!

ROGER THAT, RED FOUR! KEEP US POSTED!



IT'S HIM! WE'VE GOT HIM!



RED FOUR TO SQUADRON LEADER: WE'VE GOT HIM TRAPPED ON THE CORNER OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK! HE'S NOT GETTING AWAY THIS TIME, COMRADE!



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? A CONFESSION? BRING HIM DOWN HARD, YOU IDIOTS!



CHAKA CHAKA CHAKA CHAKA CHAKA CHAKA



IN PURSUIT, SQUADRON LEADER! I REPEAT, ALL UNITS ARE IN PURSUIT!

BATMAN: A FORCE OF CHAOS IN MY WORLD OF PERFECT ORDER. THE DARK SIDE OF THE SOVIET DREAM.

RSYMBOL OF REBELLION THAT WOULD NEVER FADE AS LONG AS THE SYSTEM SURVIVED.

RUMORED TO BE A THOUSAND MURDERED DISSIDENTS. THEY SAID HE WAS A GHOST. A WALKING DEAD MAN.

ANARCHY IN BLACK.

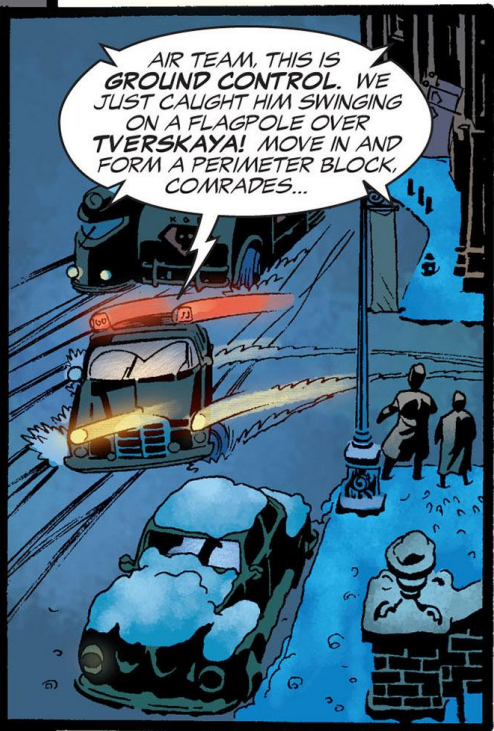


WE'VE LOST VISUAL! I REPEAT; WE'VE LOST VISUAL, SQUADRON LEADER! TARGET IS...

...MOBILE AND HEADING SOUTH TO GARDEN RING, RED FIVE. YOU GOT A TRACE ON HIM YET?



ROGER THAT, RED FOUR. TARGET JUST LANDED ON THE TEN TWENTY AND IS SKIPPING ACROSS THE CARRIAGES! ALL GROUND UNITS PLEASE CONVERGE!



AIR TEAM, THIS IS GROUND CONTROL. WE JUST CAUGHT HIM SWINGING ON A FLAGPOLE OVER TVERSKAYA! MOVE IN AND FORM A PERIMETER BLOCK, COMRADES...

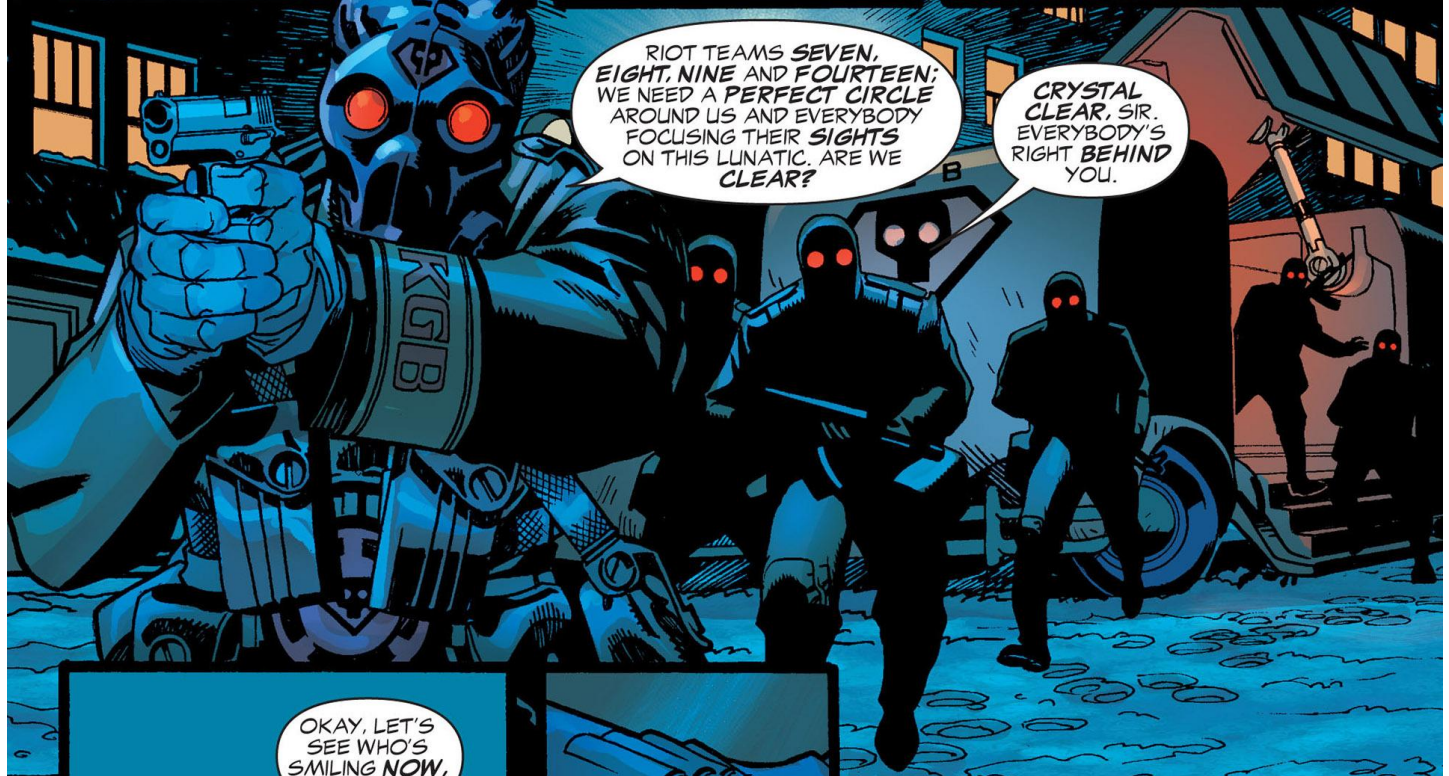
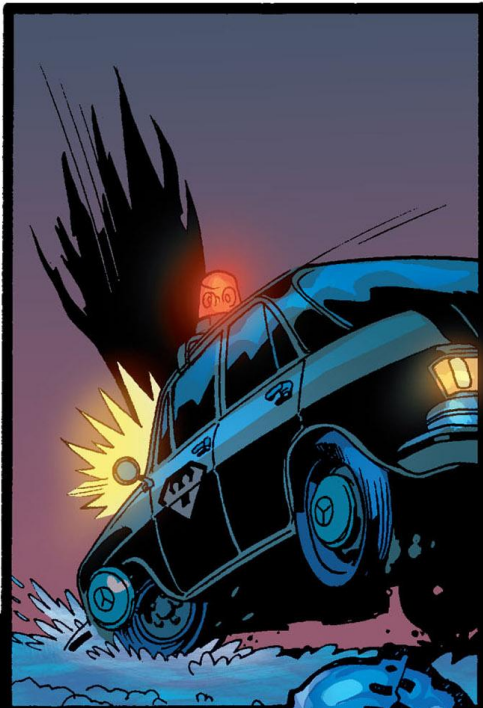


I THINK HE'S INJURED.

WHAT?



BATMAN JUST TOOK HALF A DOZEN BULLETS! MOVE IN AND LET'S FINISH THIS OFF!



WHERE WERE YOU, SUPERMAN? WHERE WERE YOU WHEN WE ACTUALLY NEEDED YOU FOR ONCE?

PYOTR! WHAT'S WRONG?

WE HAD BATMAN EXACTLY WHERE WE WANTED HIM, BUT HE STILL MANAGED TO GET AWAY AND LEAVE MY MEN LOOKING LIKE DROOLING IDIOTS!

WHY CAN'T WE KILL HIM, SUPERMAN? GOD, MY FATHER MUST BE SPINNING IN HIS GRAVE OUT THERE!

DO YOU REALIZE THAT HIS NETWORK JUST DETONATED FIVE BOMBS TONIGHT AND MY MEN CAN'T FIND A FINGERPRINT?

I SAY IT'S TIME WE GOT TOUGH AND CRACKED A FEW SKULLS JUST LIKE WE DID IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS!



NO, THERE MUST BE NO KILLING, PYOTR. YOU MIGHT RUIN THE K.G.B., BUT I'M THE ONE WHO RUNS THE COUNTRY.

THIS UTOPIA WILL NOT BE BUILT ON THE BONES OF MY OPPONENTS. THAT WAS COMRADE STALIN'S WAY. NOT MINE.

WHAT? HOW DARE YOU RIDICULE THE LEGACY OF MY FATHER! HE WAS TEN TIMES THE MAN YOU'LL EVER...

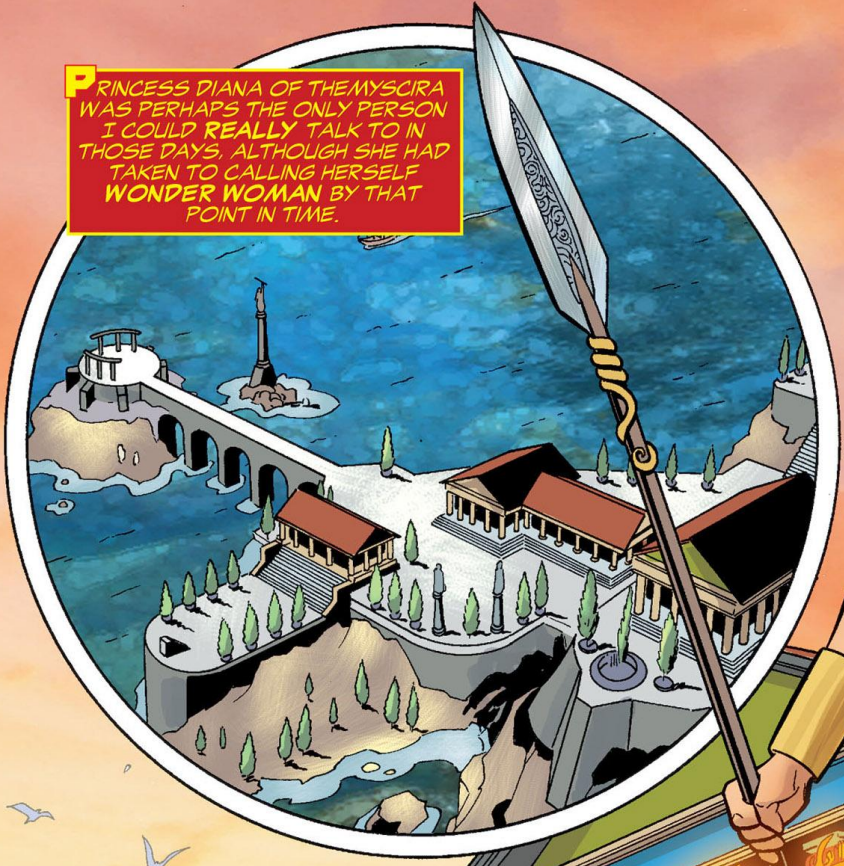
EXCUSE ME, PYOTR. THERE'S BEEN A SIGNAL MALFUNCTION EIGHT HUNDRED MILES AWAY. TWO TRAINS ARE ABOUT TO COLLIDE...



BY THE TIME THE WORDS HAD REACHED HIS EARS, I WAS ALREADY IN MINSK AND HAD SPOTTED THREE OTHER EMERGENCIES WHICH MERITED MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

IF I WAS BEING HONEST WITH MYSELF, I WOULD ADMIT THAT I WAS GROWING BORED WITH HUMAN CONVERSATION.

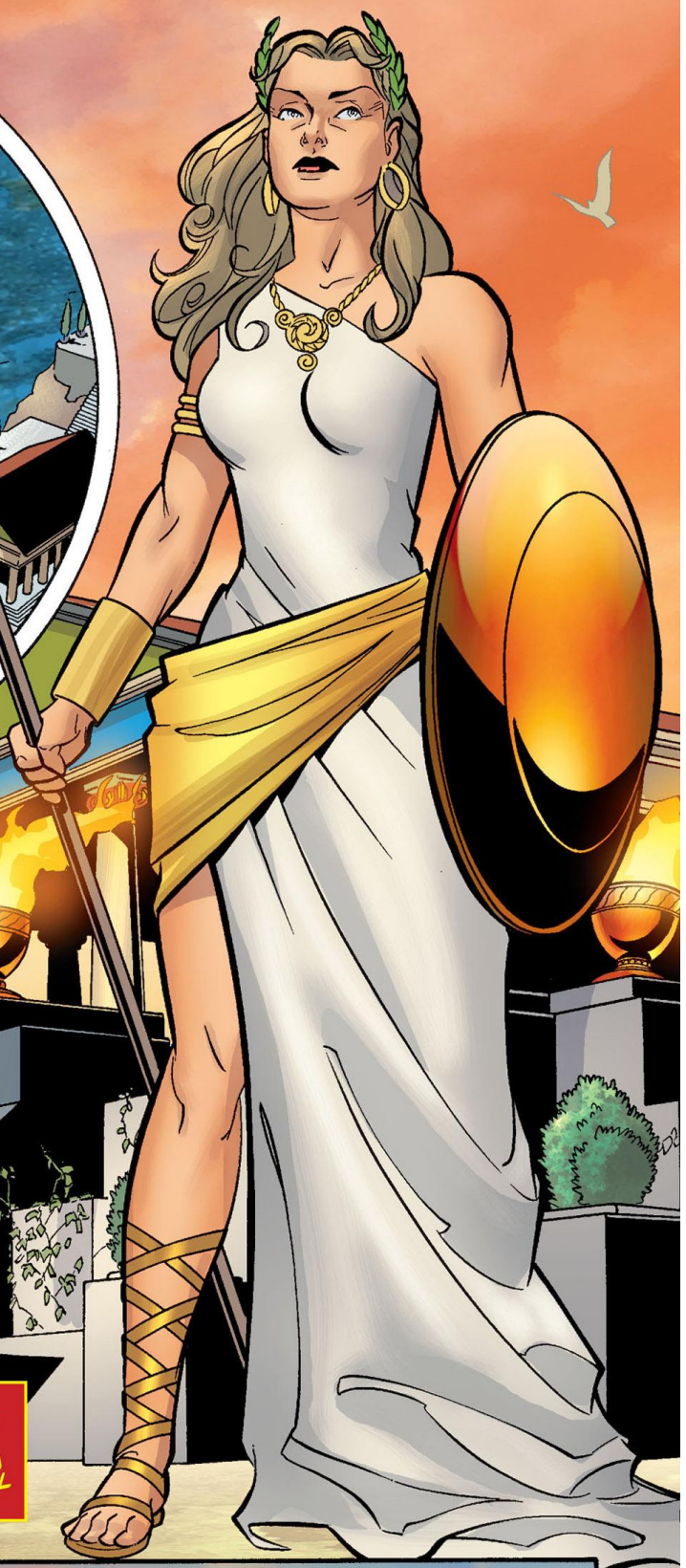
P RINCESS DIANA OF THEMYSIRA WAS PERHAPS THE ONLY PERSON I COULD REALLY TALK TO IN THOSE DAYS, ALTHOUGH SHE HAD TAKEN TO CALLING HERSELF **WONDER WOMAN** BY THAT POINT IN TIME.



A N OUTSTANDING CONVERT TO COMMUNISM, DIANA HAD OPTED TO LEAVE HER AMAZONIAN PARADISE AND FIGHT WITH ME FOR EQUALITY IN MAN'S WORLD.



A RMED ONLY WITH A PAIR OF MAGIC BRACELETS AND A LASSO ALLOWING HER TO DOMINATE HER FOES, DIANA BECAME MY INTERNATIONAL PEACE AMBASSADOR.



T HE GREATEST CHAMPION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE THE WORLD HAD EVER KNOWN.



SO, HOW WAS AMERICA?



DISGUSTING, SUPERMAN. ABSOLUTELY DISGUSTING. IT'S NINETEEN SEVENTY EIGHT AND CHILDREN ARE STILL SLEEPING IN THE STREETS OVER THERE.

WHY DOES KENNEDY STILL CLING TO THIS CAPITALIST DOGMA WHEN IT'S QUITE CLEARLY TEARING HIS COUNTRY APART?



PRIDE, I SUPPOSE. HE'LL COME AROUND EVENTUALLY.

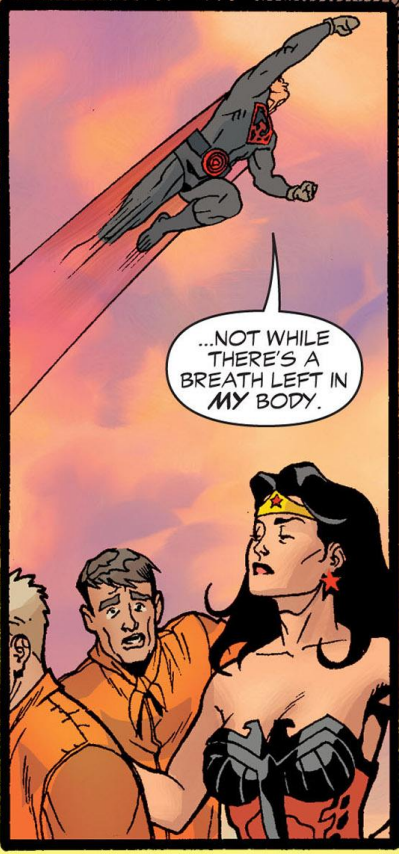
I TOLD HIM HE SHOULD DEVOTE MORE TIME TO HIS CRUMBLING ECONOMY AND LESS TO THOSE PAINTED MOVIE STARS HE SEEMS TO PURSUE WITH SUCH VIGOR.

THAT COUNTRY HAS NEVER BEEN THE SAME SINCE NIXON WAS ASSASSINATED IN NINETEEN SIXTY-THREE. I STILL MAINTAIN THAT REALLY WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR THEM.

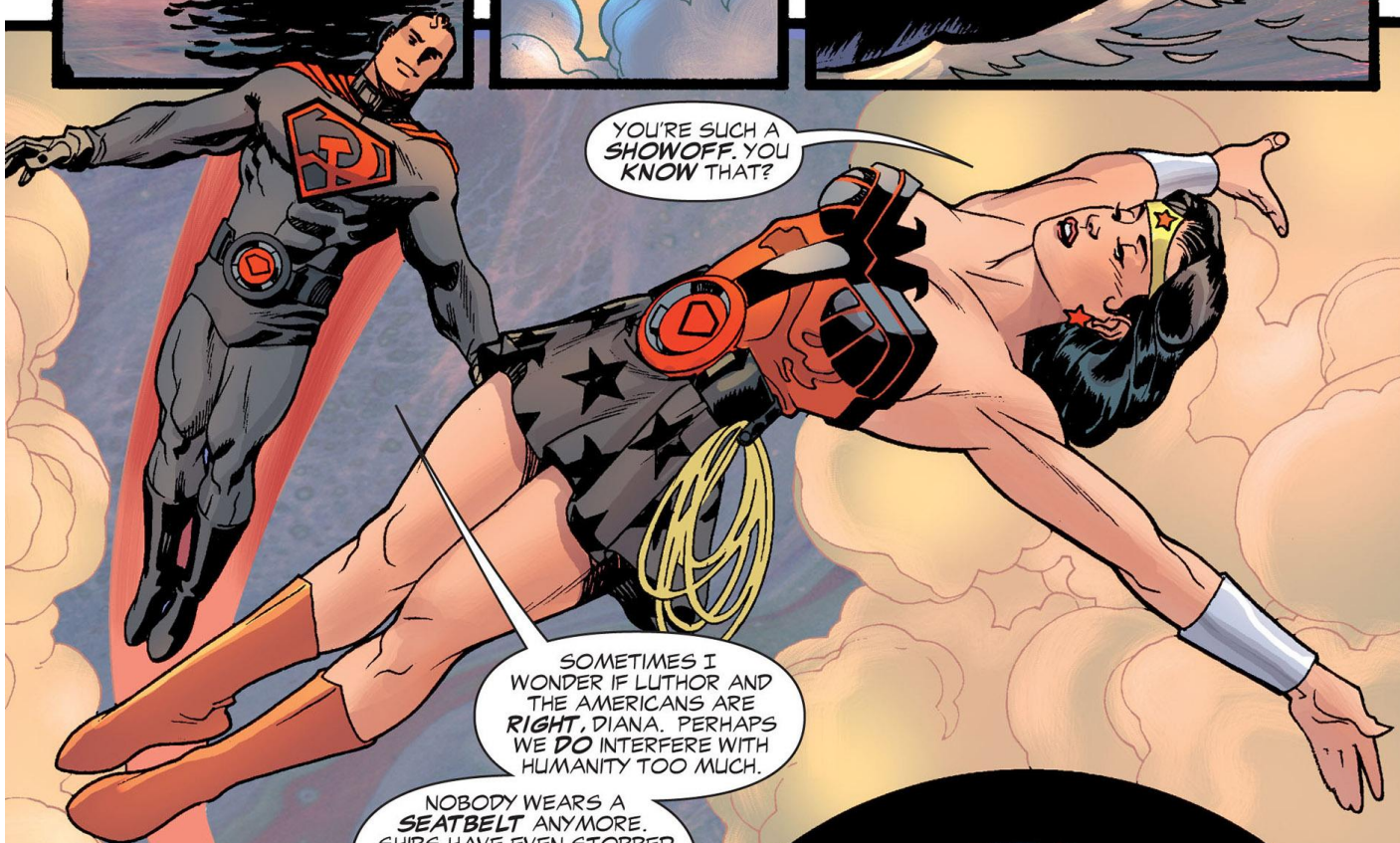
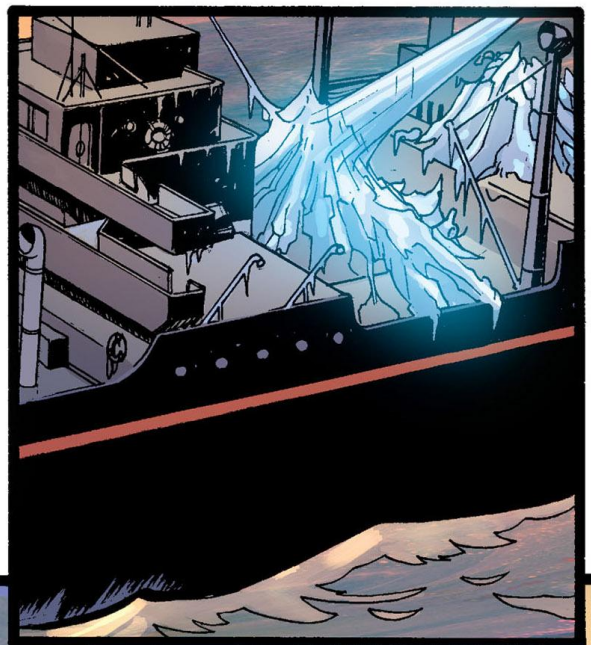


THE TANKER, SUPERMAN! THE TANKER'S GOING TO BLOW!

TAKE IT EASY, COMRADE...



...NOT WHILE THERE'S A BREATH LEFT IN MY BODY.



YOU'RE SUCH A SHOWOFF. YOU KNOW THAT?

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF LUTHOR AND THE AMERICANS ARE RIGHT, DIANA. PERHAPS WE DO INTERFERE WITH HUMANITY TOO MUCH.

NOBODY WEARS A SEATBELT ANYMORE. SHIPS HAVE EVEN STOPPED CARRYING LIFEJACKETS. I DON'T LIKE THIS UNHEALTHY NEW WAY THAT PEOPLE ARE BEHAVING.

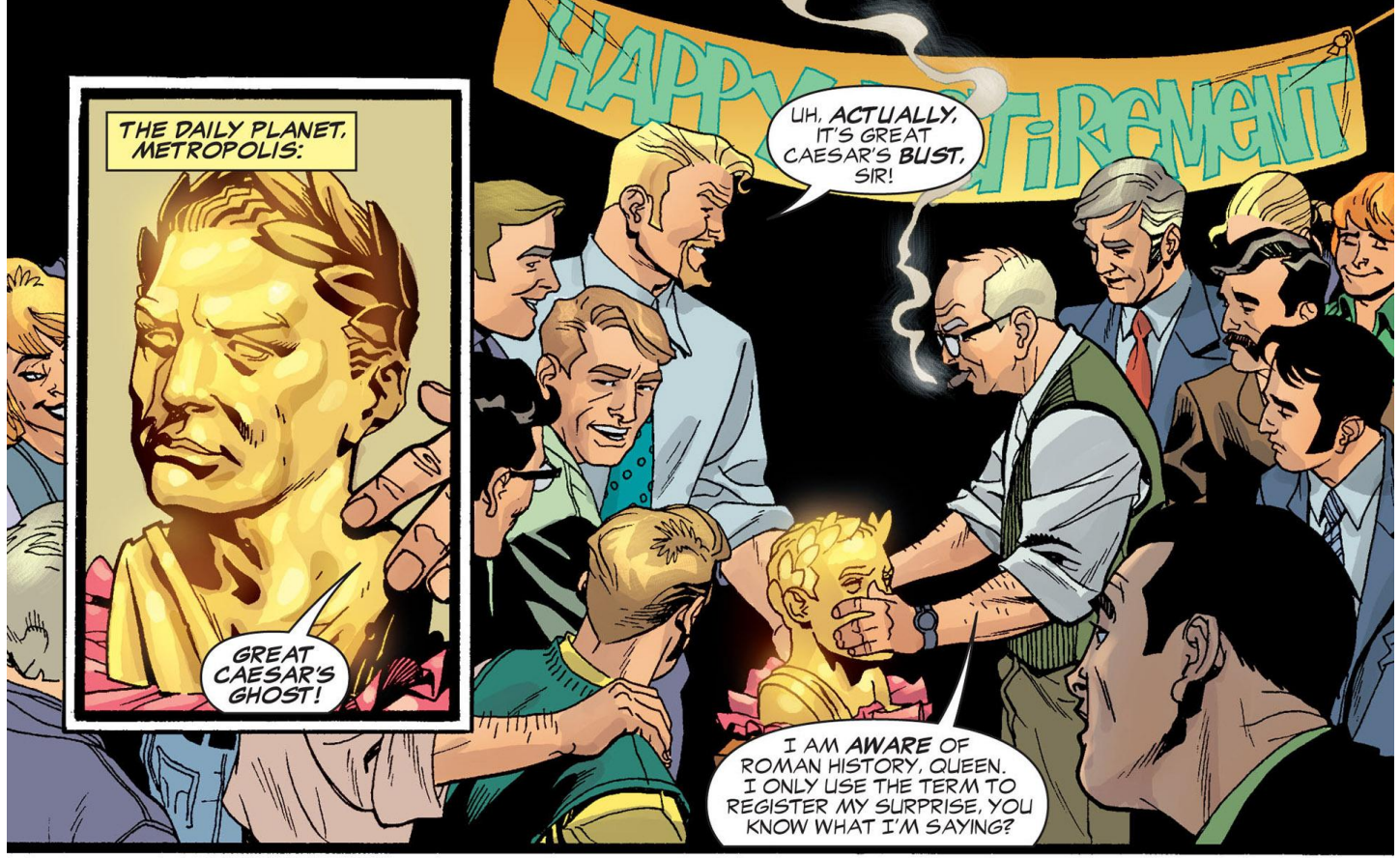
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH HELPING PEOPLE, SUPERMAN. YOU CAN'T JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH THEM DIE WITH YOUR TELESCOPIC VISION. YOU'RE BEING IRRATIONAL.

THE K.G.B. ARE ALWAYS PUSHING ME TO TAKE MORE AND MORE CONTROL, BUT I ALREADY FEEL LIKE I'M HOLDING ON TOO TIGHT. SOMETIMES I WORRY THE PEOPLE DON'T EVEN LIKE ME.



OH, THE PEOPLE LOVE YOU, SUPERMAN.

SOME MORE THAN YOU'D EVER BELIEVE.



THE DAILY PLANET, METROPOLIS:

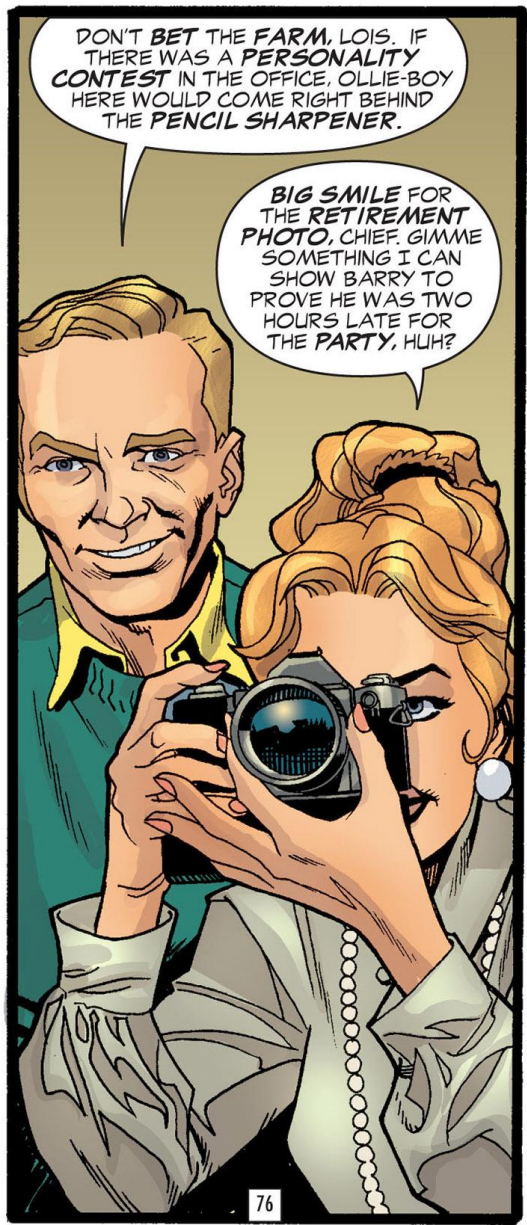
GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST!

UH, ACTUALLY, IT'S GREAT CAESAR'S BUST, SIR!

I AM AWARE OF ROMAN HISTORY, QUEEN. I ONLY USE THE TERM TO REGISTER MY SURPRISE. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?



OH, DON'T LET OLIVER KID YOU, PERRY. NO PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING WRITER COULD BE HALF AS DIMWITTED AS HE PRETENDS TO BE.



DON'T BET THE FARM, LOIS. IF THERE WAS A PERSONALITY CONTEST IN THE OFFICE, OLLIE-BOY HERE WOULD COME RIGHT BEHIND THE PENCIL SHARPENER.

BIG SMILE FOR THE RETIREMENT PHOTO, CHIEF. GIMME SOMETHING I CAN SHOW BARRY TO PROVE HE WAS TWO HOURS LATE FOR THE PARTY, HUH?



LAST TIME, IRIS: DON'T CALL ME CHIEF!

NOW YOU GUYS AND GALS ARE GONNA HAVE TO EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE WHILE I GIVE YOUR BEAUTIFUL NEW EDITOR HERE THE TEN-CENT OFFICE TOUR!

HECK, DON'T BE SO HARD ON BARRY, IRIS. HE'S PROBABLY SOLVING A VERY GRUESOME MURDER.



SO HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE SITTING IN THE **BIG CHAIR**, HONEY?

LIKE I'M **TRESPASSING**, CHIEF. I GUESS I'M JUST ALWAYS GOING TO THINK OF THIS AS **YOUR LITTLE CORNER** OF THE WORLD.



EXACTLY WHAT I SAID TO GEORGE TAYLOR WHEN HE RETIRED, SWEETHEART. IT FELT LIKE I WAS WEARING THE OLD MAN'S **UNDERWEAR** FOR MONTHS.

LISTEN. CAN I GIVE YOU SOME **ADVICE**?



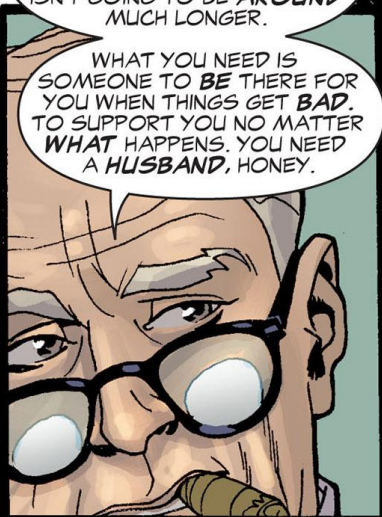
ONLY IF I'M NOT ABOUT TO BE **PATRONIZED**, OLD-TIMER. THEY DIDN'T MAKE ME **PLANET EDITOR** JUST BECAUSE I'VE GOT A PASSION FOR **TIGHT SWEATERS**.

I KNOW, LOIS. YOUR **JOB'S YOUR LIFE**. IN FACT, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT HERE.

THE COUNTRY'S ON ITS **KNEES**. THE SYSTEM'S **FALLING APART**. EVERYBODY KNOWS THE **DAILY PLANET** ISN'T GOING TO BE **AROUND** MUCH LONGER.

I'VE GOT A **HUSBAND**.

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! I MEAN SOMEONE WHO THINKS ABOUT YOU MORE THAN HE THINKS ABOUT **DESTROYING SUPERMAN!** SOMEONE **SANE**, FOR GOD'S SAKE!



WHAT YOU NEED IS SOMEONE TO **BE THERE** FOR YOU WHEN THINGS GET **BAD**. TO SUPPORT YOU NO MATTER **WHAT HAPPENS**. YOU NEED A **HUSBAND**, HONEY.



LEX IS KIND OF **SANE**.

OCCASIONALLY...

LEXCORP INDUSTRIES:

IS THE LADY'S IDENTIFICATION VALID?

PAPERS ARE IN **ORDER**, FACE MATCHES THE **PHOTO** IN THE **BOOK** AND THE **FINGERPRINTS** LOOK AUTHENTIC ENOUGH...

I GUESS THIS MUST MEAN TODAY'S ANOTHER **WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**, HUH, MISS LANE?

THAT'S **MRS. LUTHOR**, GENTLEMEN.

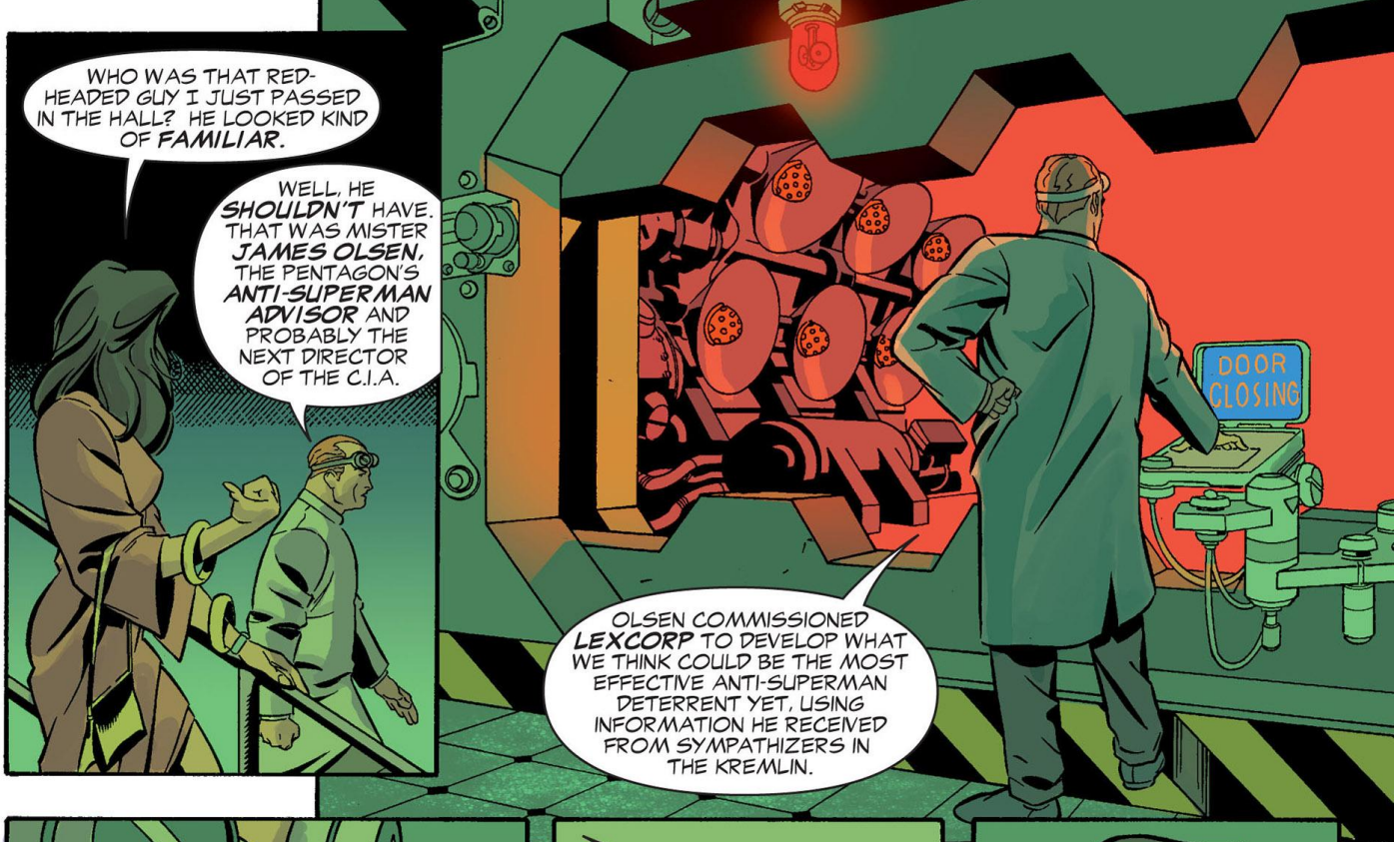
LOIS LANE'S JUST FOR THE **BY-LINE**, REMEMBER?

MA'AM.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, LEX. HERE'S TO ANOTHER TWENTY-THREE GLORIOUS YEARS, DARLING.

LOIS! WHAT A **WONDERFUL SURPRISE!** APOLOGIES IN ADVANCE FOR NOT BUYING YOU ANYTHING, BUT I'VE BEEN READING THIRTEEN **FASCINATING BOOKS** THIS MORNING.

LEAVE THE USUAL PRESENT ON MY **DESK** AND YOU HAVE MY WORD THAT ONE OF MY ASSISTANTS CAN OPEN IT **LATER, SWEETHEART.**



WHO WAS THAT RED-HEADED GUY I JUST PASSED IN THE HALL? HE LOOKED KIND OF FAMILIAR.

WELL, HE SHOULDN'T HAVE. THAT WAS MISTER JAMES OLSEN, THE PENTAGON'S ANTI-SUPERMAN ADVISOR AND PROBABLY THE NEXT DIRECTOR OF THE C.I.A.

OLSEN COMMISSIONED LEXCORP TO DEVELOP WHAT WE THINK COULD BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE ANTI-SUPERMAN DETERRENT YET, USING INFORMATION HE RECEIVED FROM SYMPATHIZERS IN THE KREMLIN.



IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE WORKING ON NOW?

I'M SORRY, DARLING, BUT I'M AFRAID THAT'S CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.



SPEAKING OF WHICH, J.F.K. AND NORMA JEAN ARE JOINING US FOR DINNER TONIGHT. APPARENTLY, JACK'S GOT SOME U.F.O. BUSINESS HE SAID I'D BE INTERESTED IN.



OH, LEX. DON'T YOU EVER STOP? THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONE NIGHT OF THE YEAR WE ALWAYS GUARANTEE WE'RE GOING TO SPEND SOME TIME TOGETHER.



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, LOIS. JACK TELLS ME BRAINIAC AND SUPERMAN AREN'T THE ONLY ALIENS WHO'VE VISITED EARTH.

IT SEEMS ANOTHER ALIEN CRASHED IN ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO, BACK IN 1947 AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAVE AN EXTRA TERRESTRIAL OF OUR VERY OWN.

THEY SAY THE PASSENGER SUSTAINED TERRIBLE INJURIES WHEN THE SHIP CRASHED AND DIED A LITTLE LATER, BUT AN OBJECT WAS RECOVERED FROM HIS FINGER WHICH INTERESTS ME ENORMOUSLY.

HOOVER COVERED UP THE INCIDENT, HID THE BODY INSIDE SOME DESOLATE AIR BASE AND THEN ERASED SAID AIR BASE FROM THE MAP. ALL FAIRLY STANDARD PROCEDURE.

HOWEVER, JACK TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT HE WANTS THIS HANGAR REOPENED JUST IN CASE THERE'RE ANY OTHER LITTLE TRINKETS INSIDE THAT MIGHT BE WORTH STEALING.

CHECKMATE, INCIDENTALLY.

LISTEN, BRING NORMA JEAN AND JACK TO DINNER IF YOU WANT, LEX. I'M NOT SURE I EVEN CARE ANYMORE.

OH, OF COURSE YOU STILL CARE, LOIS LUTHOR. WHY ELSE WOULD YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO LIVE ALONE ALL THESE YEARS, EH?

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, LEX. MAYBE I AM JUST A ONE-MAN WOMAN.

LIFE WAS SO SIMPLE IN THOSE DAYS: DEFLECTING METEORITES, WELDING TECTONIC PLATES, MANAGING A GLOBAL ECONOMY SINGLE-HANDED.

EVERY PROBLEM HAD A SOLUTION.

SOMETIMES EVEN TWO SOLUTIONS.

OF COURSE, A ROMANCE WAS SUSPECTED, BUT WE BOTH JUST LAUGHED AT THE IDEA. DIANA WAS MORE LIKE ONE OF THE BOYS AND SHE HAD NO USE FOR MEN ON HER ANTISEPTIC ISLAND...

...OR SO IT SEEMED IN THOSE FARAWAY DAYS.

POOR DIANA.

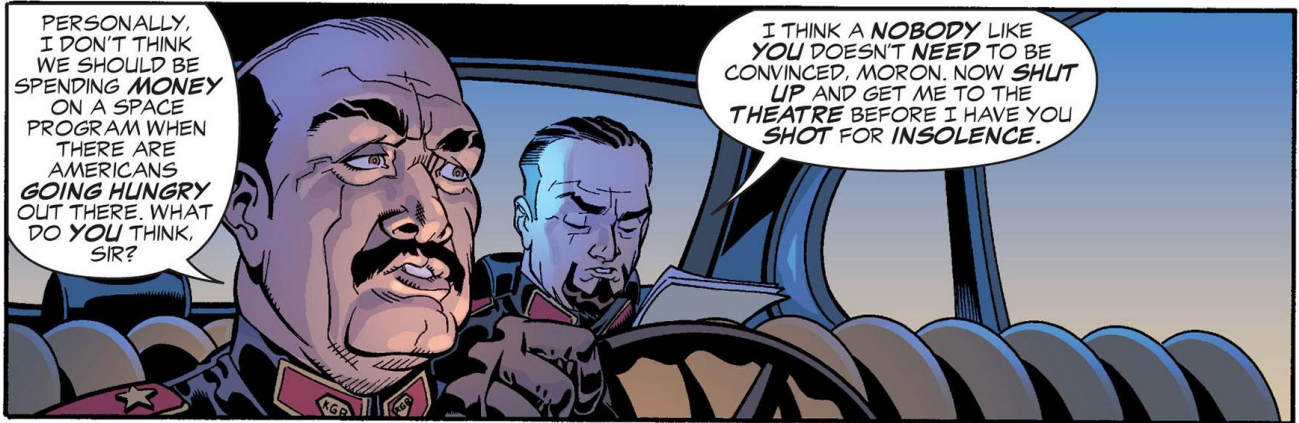
I COULD MONITOR LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS AND WATCH ELECTRONS IN THEIR ETERNAL ORBIT, BUT SOMETIMES I WAS SO BLIND.



MOSCOW:

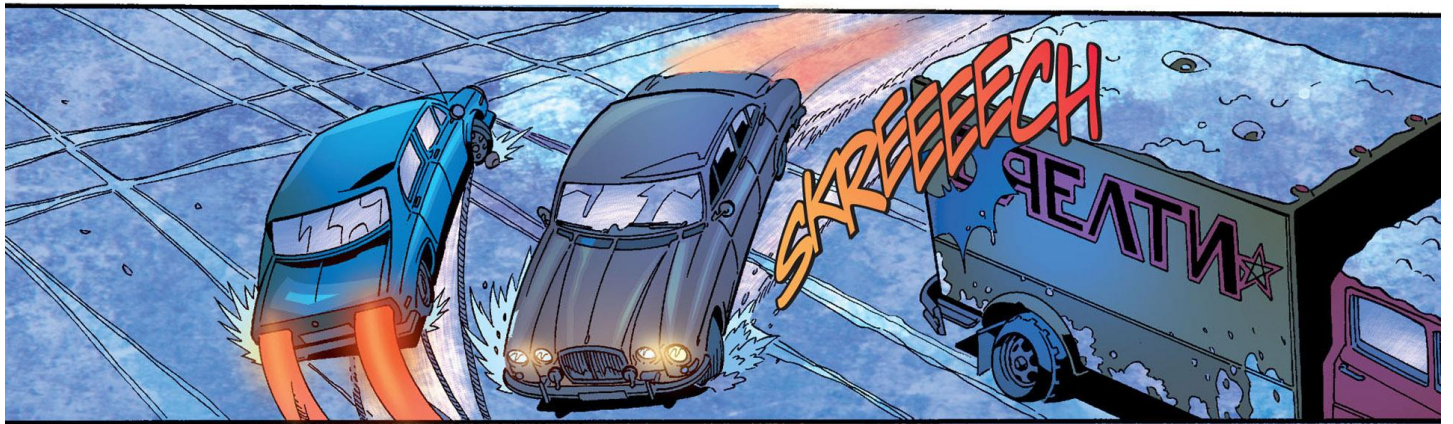
PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT THE EXPLOSION TORE THE SPACE STATION IN HALF, COMMANDER ROSLOV.

THEY SAY THOSE COSMONAUTS WOULD HAVE DIED IF SUPERMAN HADN'T SPOTTED THAT FLASH ON THE SURFACE WHEN THE OXYGEN RESERVES CAUGHT FIRE.



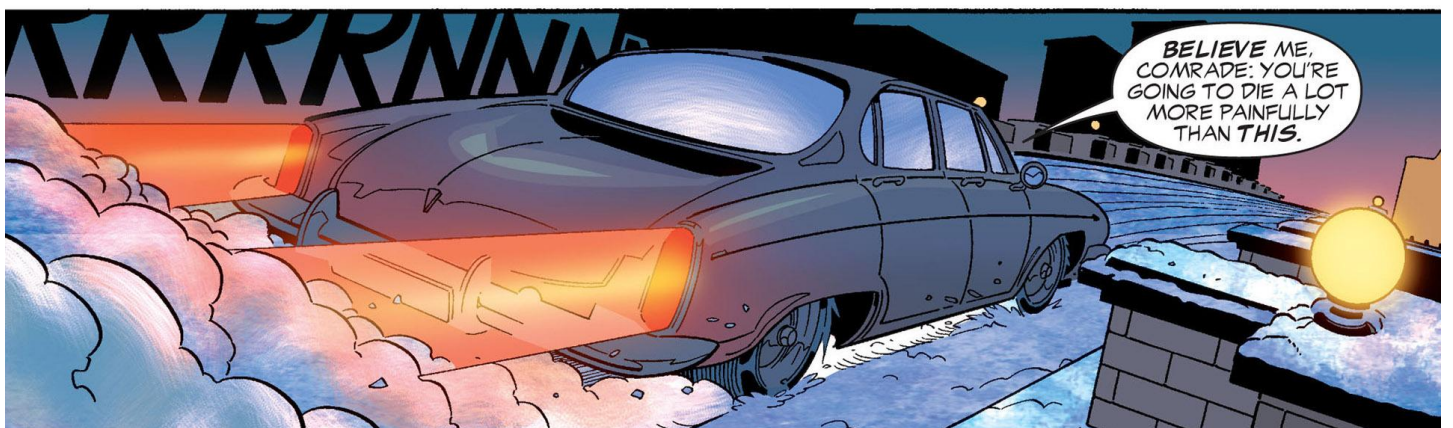
PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE SPENDING MONEY ON A SPACE PROGRAM WHEN THERE ARE AMERICANS GOING HUNGRY OUT THERE. WHAT DO YOU THINK, SIR?

I THINK A NOBODY LIKE YOU DOESN'T NEED TO BE CONVINCED, MORON. NOW SHUT UP AND GET ME TO THE THEATRE BEFORE I HAVE YOU SHOT FOR INSOLENCE.

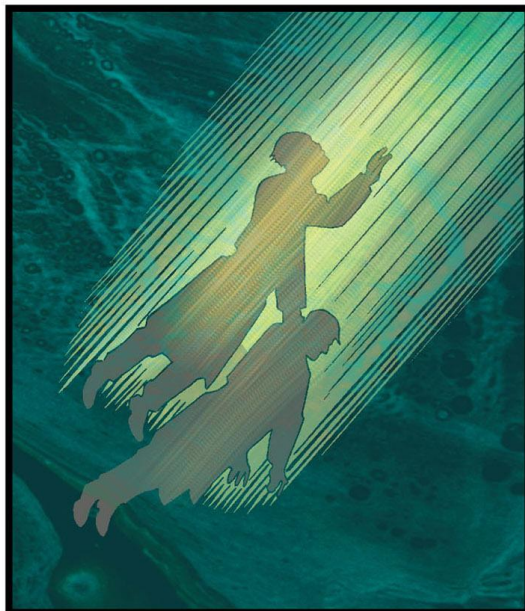
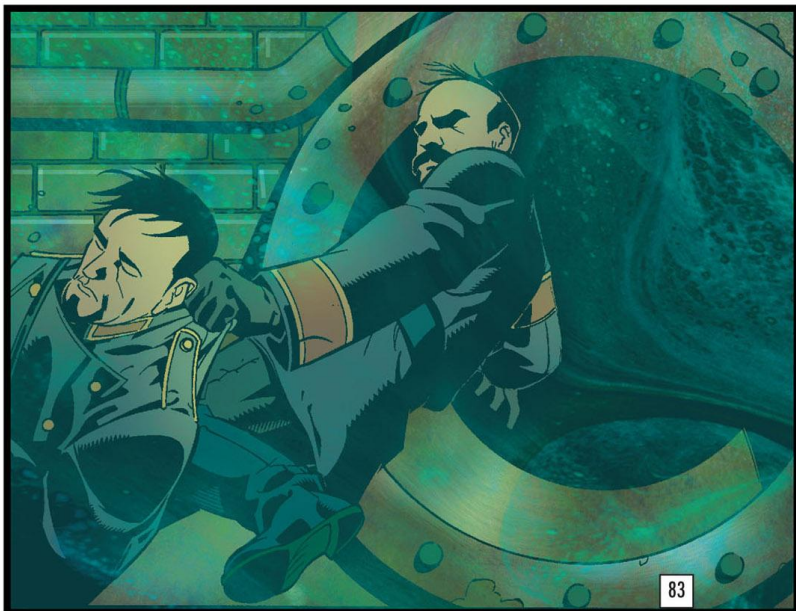


FOR GOD'S SAKE, MAN!

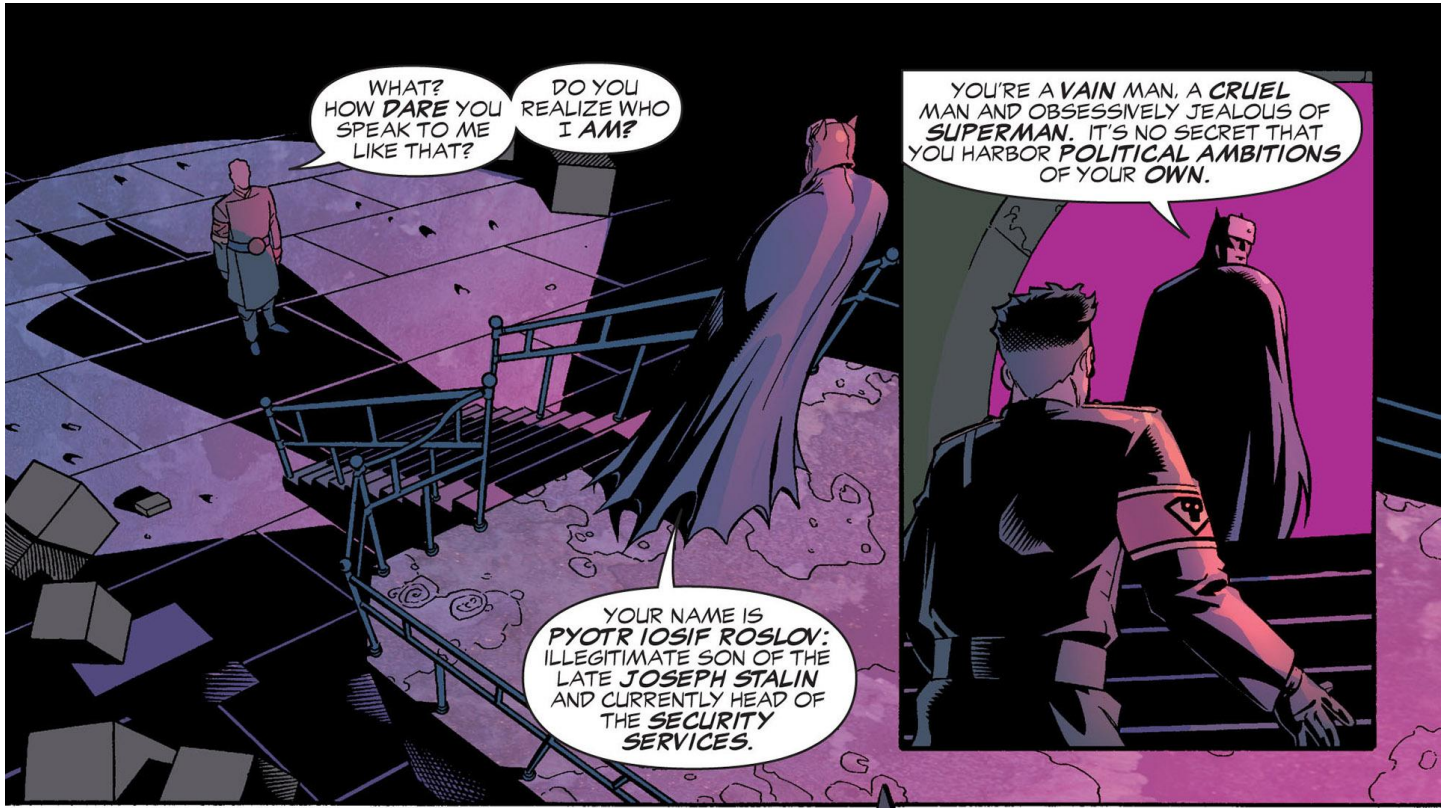
ARE YOU TRYING TO GET US KILLED?



BELIEVE ME, COMRADE: YOU'RE GOING TO DIE A LOT MORE PAINFULLY THAN THIS.





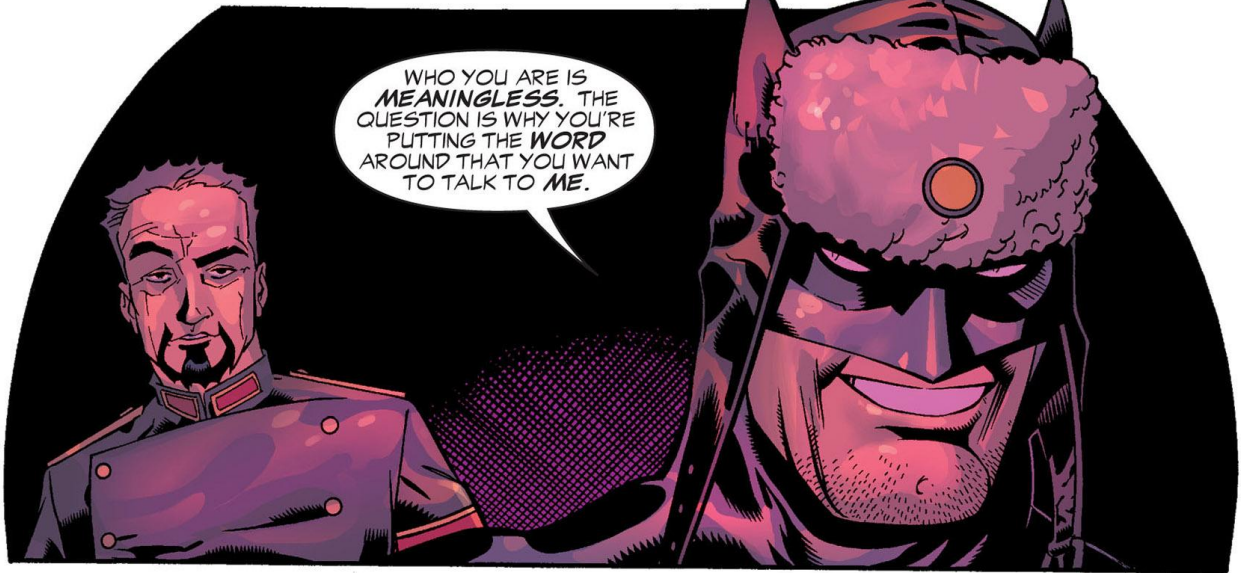


WHAT? HOW **DARE** YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT?

DO YOU REALIZE WHO I AM?

YOU'RE A **VAIN** MAN, A **CRUEL** MAN AND **OBSESSIVELY JEALOUS** OF **SUPERMAN**. IT'S NO SECRET THAT YOU **HARBOR POLITICAL AMBITIONS** OF YOUR OWN.

YOUR NAME IS **PYOTR IOSIF ROSLOV**: ILLEGITIMATE SON OF THE LATE **JOSEPH STALIN** AND CURRENTLY HEAD OF THE **SECURITY SERVICES**.



WHO YOU ARE IS **MEANINGLESS**. THE QUESTION IS WHY YOU'RE PUTTING THE **WORD** AROUND THAT YOU WANT TO TALK TO **ME**.



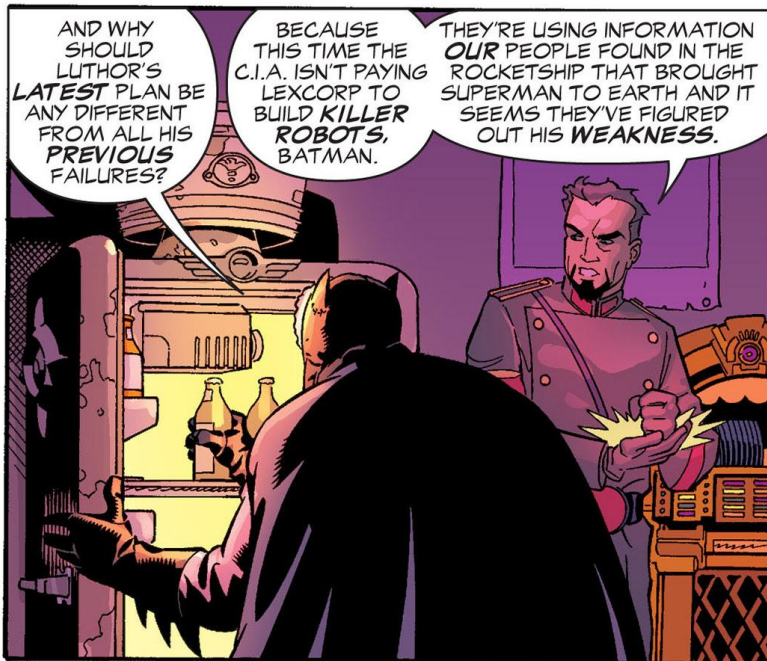
I TAKE IT, AH...THAT IT'S SAFE TO **SPEAK** DOWN HERE?

NATURALLY, COMMANDER. ALL MY **CAVES** ARE **SOUNDPROOFED** AND **CLOAKED** USING THE **CUTTING EDGE** OF **MILITARY TECHNOLOGY**; ALL **STOLEN** FROM YOUR **BASES**, OF COURSE.



THEN I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT: **LEX LUTHOR** AND HIS FRIENDS IN THE **C.I.A.** HAVE AN **INTERESTING PROPOSITION** FOR YOU, **BATMAN**.

THEY WANT YOU TO **KILL SUPERMAN**, AND **GUARANTEE** THEY NOW HAVE THE **MEANS** TO **FINISH HIM OFF PROPERLY**.



AND WHY SHOULD LUTHOR'S LATEST PLAN BE ANY DIFFERENT FROM ALL HIS PREVIOUS FAILURES?

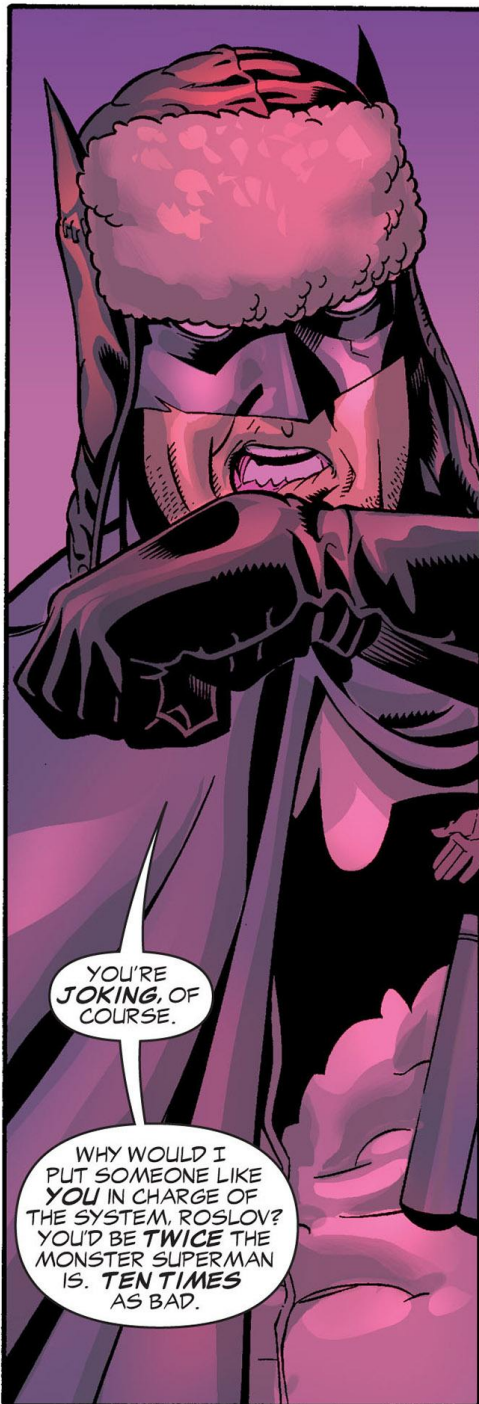
BECAUSE THIS TIME THE C.I.A. ISN'T PAYING LEXCORP TO BUILD KILLER ROBOTS, BATMAN.

THEY'RE USING INFORMATION OUR PEOPLE FOUND IN THE ROCKETSHIP THAT BROUGHT SUPERMAN TO EARTH AND IT SEEMS THEY'VE FIGURED OUT HIS WEAKNESS.



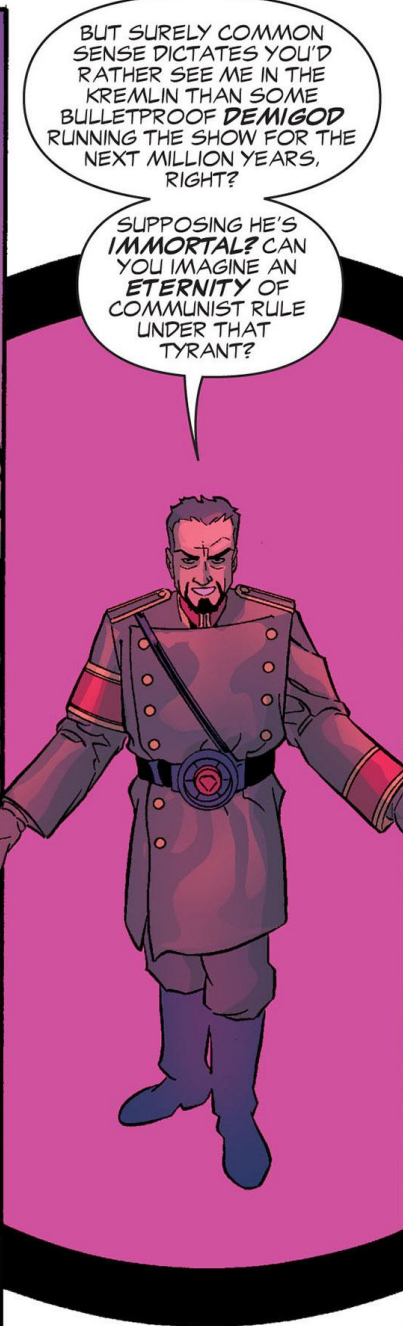
NOW, WE'RE ONLY GOING TO GET ONE SHOT AT THIS, AND YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN SO FAR EVEN SUPERMAN HAS BEEN UNABLE TO BEAT...

OUR ONLY HOPE OF FINALLY REPLACING THAT ALIEN WITH A QUALIFIED HUMAN FIGUREHEAD!



YOU'RE JOKING, OF COURSE.

WHY WOULD I PUT SOMEONE LIKE YOU IN CHARGE OF THE SYSTEM, ROSLOV? YOU'D BE TWICE THE MONSTER SUPERMAN IS. TEN TIMES AS BAD.



BUT SURELY COMMON SENSE DICTATES YOU'D RATHER SEE ME IN THE KREMLIN THAN SOME BULLETPROOF DEMIGOD RUNNING THE SHOW FOR THE NEXT MILLION YEARS, RIGHT?

SUPPOSING HE'S IMMORTAL? CAN YOU IMAGINE AN ETERNITY OF COMMUNIST RULE UNDER THAT TYRANT?



WHOSE REGIME DOES THE MASTER STRATEGIST THINK HE'D STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF TOPPLING, EH?

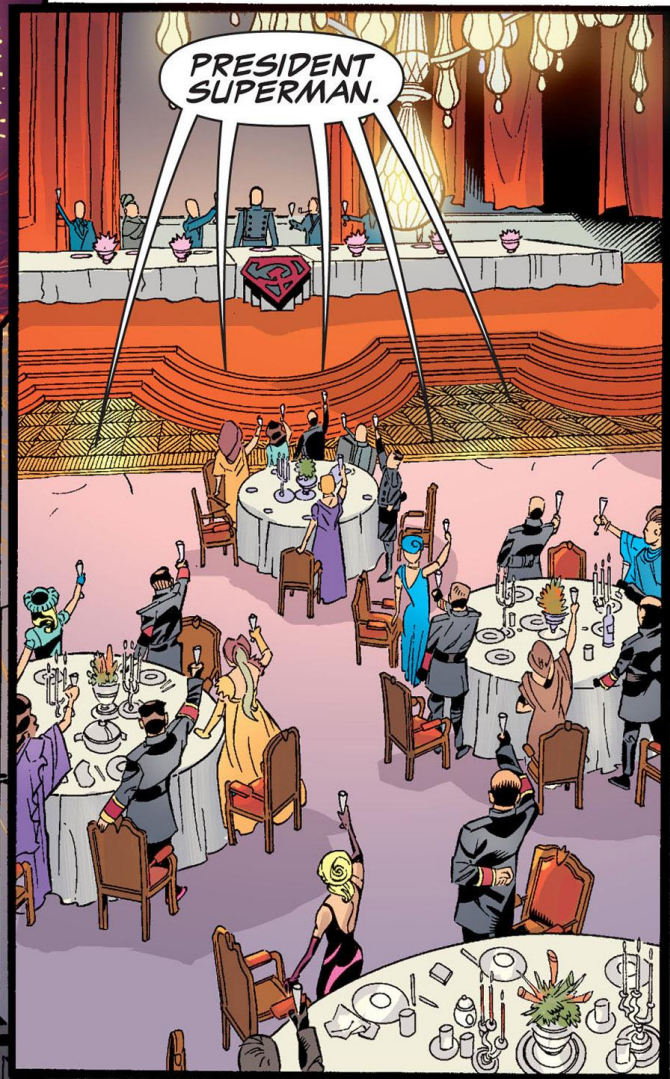
USE YOUR HEAD, BATMAN!





LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, COMRADES FROM EVERY QUARTER OF THE SOVIET UNION; PLEASE RAISE YOUR GLASSES AND JOIN ME IN A TOAST TO **SUPERMAN** IN THIS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: TO **PRESIDENT SUPERMAN**.

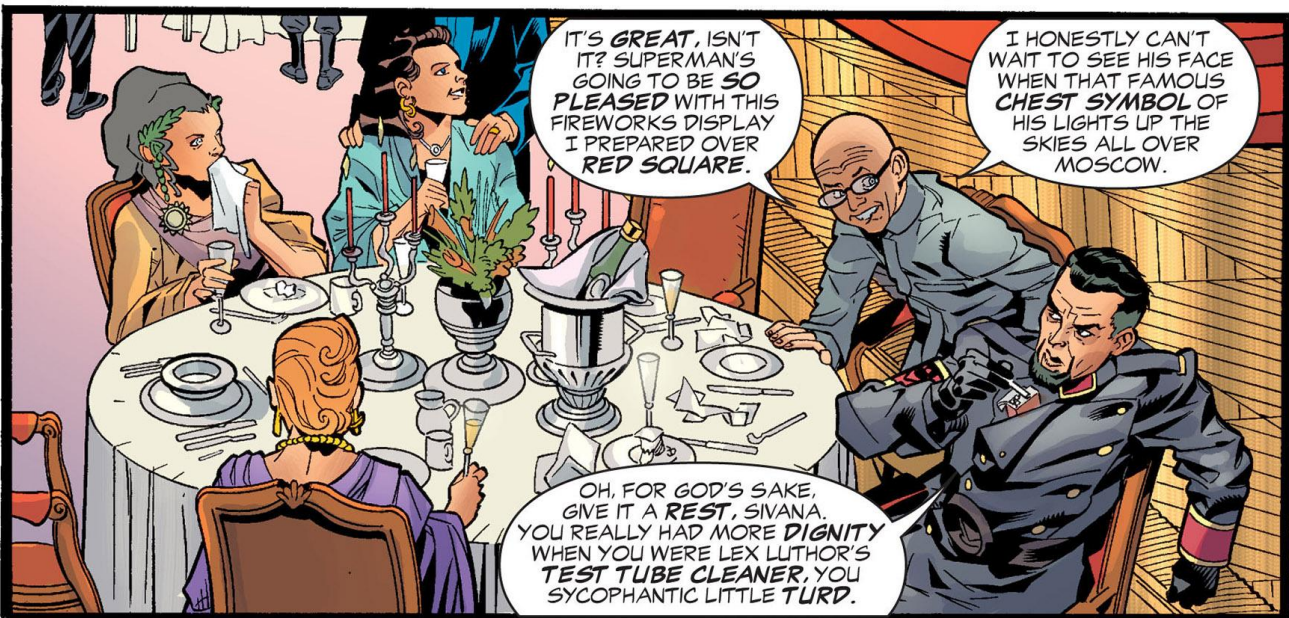


PRESIDENT SUPERMAN.



YOU HAVEN'T SEEN **DIANA**, HAVE YOU, TONY? SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME BACK AT THE PRESIDIUM HOURS AGO.

OH, I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT **HER**, SUPERMAN. AS FAR AS I RECALL, WONDER WOMAN'S MORE THAN CAPABLE OF LOOKING AFTER **HERSELF**.



IT'S GREAT, ISN'T IT? SUPERMAN'S GOING TO BE SO PLEASED WITH THIS FIREWORKS DISPLAY I PREPARED OVER **RED SQUARE**.

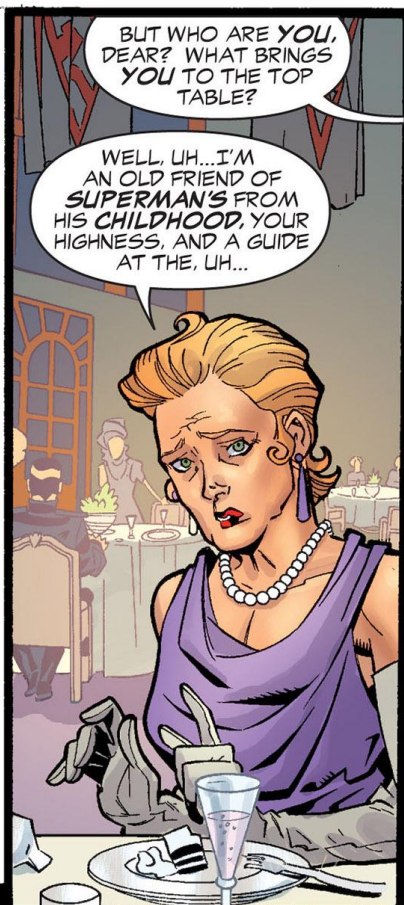
I HONESTLY CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HIS FACE WHEN THAT FAMOUS **CHEST SYMBOL** OF HIS LIGHTS UP THE SKIES ALL OVER **MOSCOW**.

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE, GIVE IT A **REST**, SIVANA. YOU REALLY HAD MORE **DIGNITY** WHEN YOU WERE **LEX LUTHOR'S TEST TUBE CLEANER**. YOU SYCOPHANTIC LITTLE **TURD**.



PARDON ME, DARLING. I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK YOU...

... I MEAN, I'M THE QUEEN OF **THEMYSCIRA**, LORI AND RONAL REPRESENT **ATLANTIS**, PYOTR RUNS THE MILITARY POLICE AND **THADDEUS** IS A HIGH-PROFILE **AMERICAN DEFECTOR**...



BUT WHO ARE YOU, DEAR? WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE TOP TABLE?

WELL, UH... I'M AN OLD FRIEND OF **SUPERMAN'S** FROM HIS **CHILDHOOD**, YOUR HIGHNESS, AND A GUIDE AT THE, UH...



I THINK WHAT LANA'S TRYING TO SAY, HIPPOLYTA, IS THAT SHE KNEW WHO THE BIG MAN **REALLY WAS** AND NOW HE HAS TO KEEP HER SWEET WITH CHAMPAGNE AND A WELL-PAID LITTLE JOB.

GOOD GOD!



THIS IS **OUTRAGEOUS!**

SUPERMAN, YOU REALLY **MUST BELIEVE** THAT I ARRANGED THOSE FIREWORKS TO CELEBRATE YOUR **CHEST EMBLEM!** THIS **CHARADE** HAS ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** TO DO WITH--

SHUT UP, **SIVANNA**.



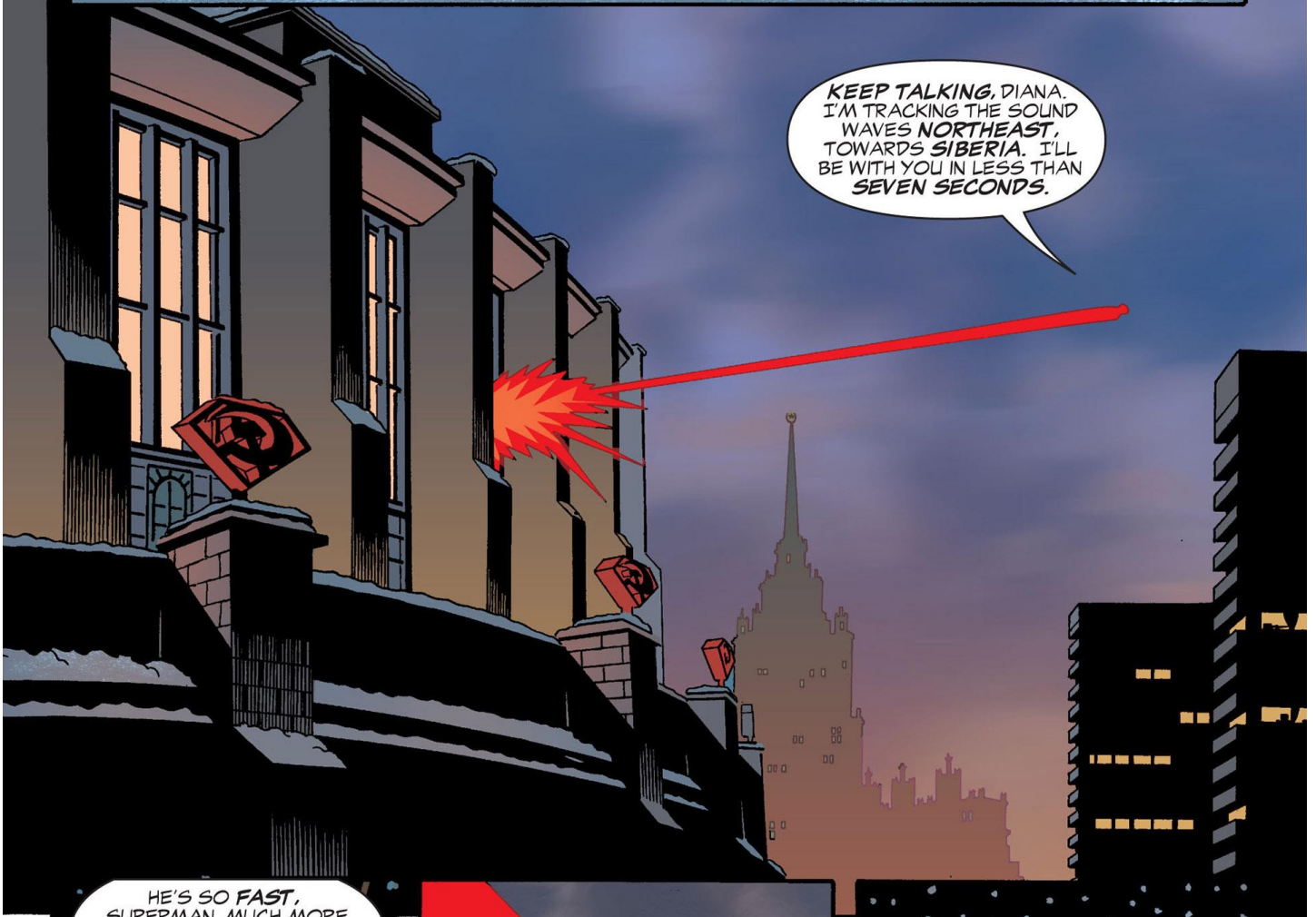
I THINK IT'S PRETTY **CLEAR** WHO'S BEHIND THIS.

TEN SECONDS, SUPERMAN. BATMAN SAID YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS TO FIND ME.

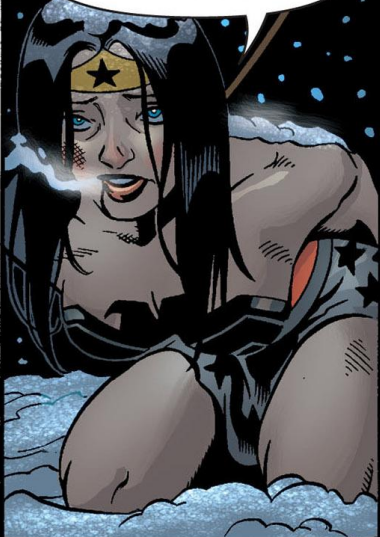
THE BAT SIGNAL WAS JUST A MEANS OF ATTRACTING YOUR ATTENTION. IT SEEMS THAT **THIS** IS WHERE THINGS GET REALLY SERIOUS.



KEEP TALKING, DIANA. I'M TRACKING THE SOUND WAVES **NORTHEAST**, TOWARDS **SIBERIA**. I'LL BE WITH YOU IN LESS THAN **SEVEN SECONDS**.

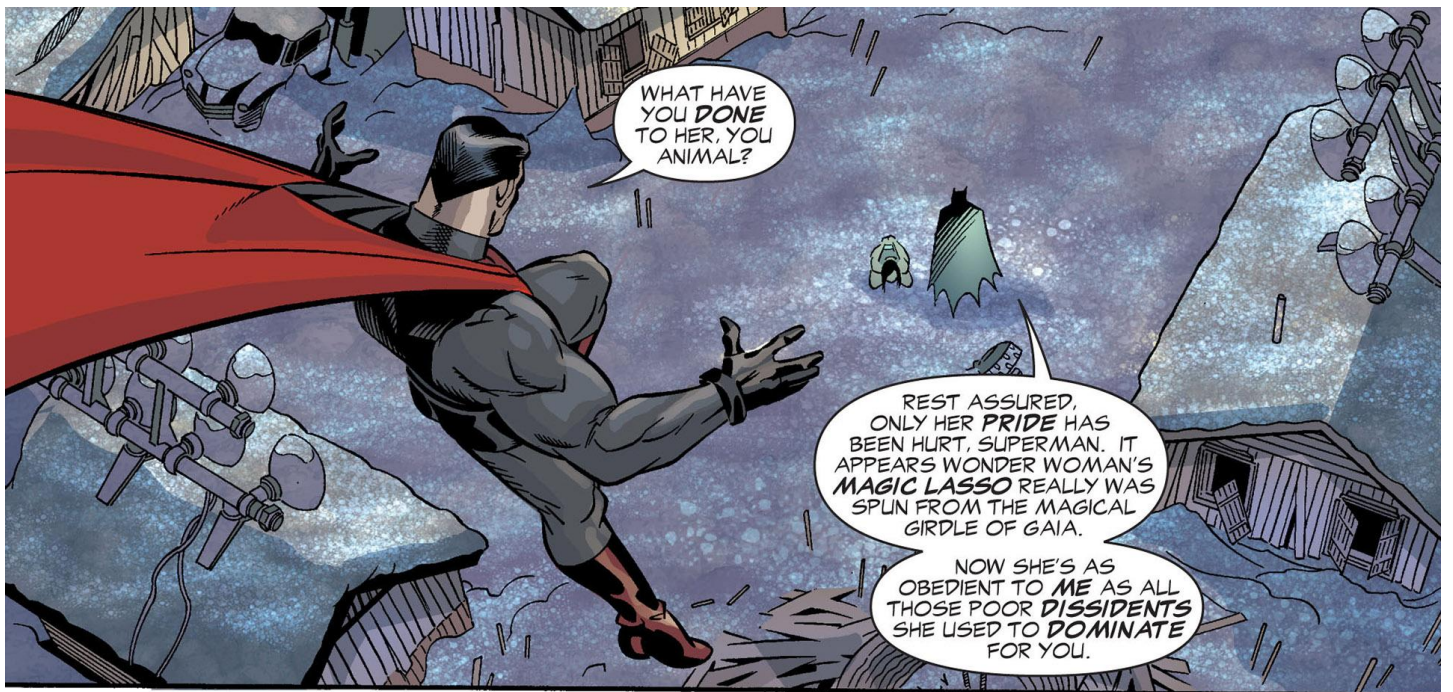


HE'S SO FAST, SUPERMAN. MUCH MORE RESOURCEFUL THAN ANY OF THE **OTHER** HUMAN BEINGS. HE'S **DANGEROUS**. PLEASE BE **CAREFUL**...



FLATTERY WILL GET YOU **NOWHERE**, WONDER WOMAN.

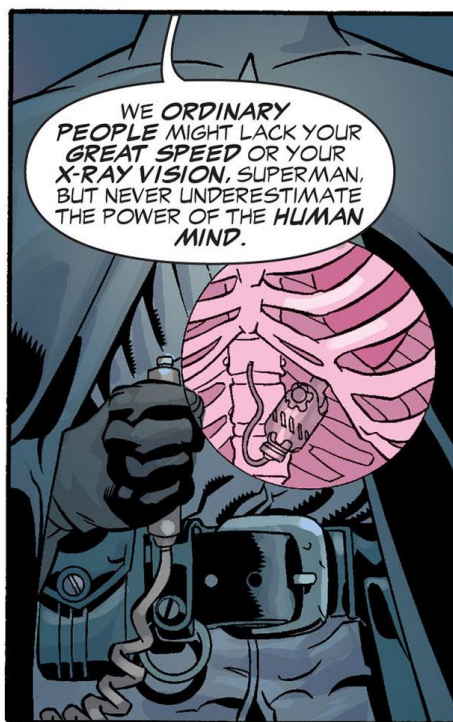
COMPUTER: INITIATE THE **LEXCORP** PROGRAM ON **FULL POWER** STARTING IN **THIRTY SECONDS** TIME...



WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* TO HER, YOU ANIMAL?

REST ASSURED, ONLY HER *PRIDE* HAS BEEN HURT, SUPERMAN. IT APPEARS WONDER WOMAN'S *MAGIC LASSO* REALLY WAS SPLIN FROM THE MAGICAL GIRLDE OF GAIA.

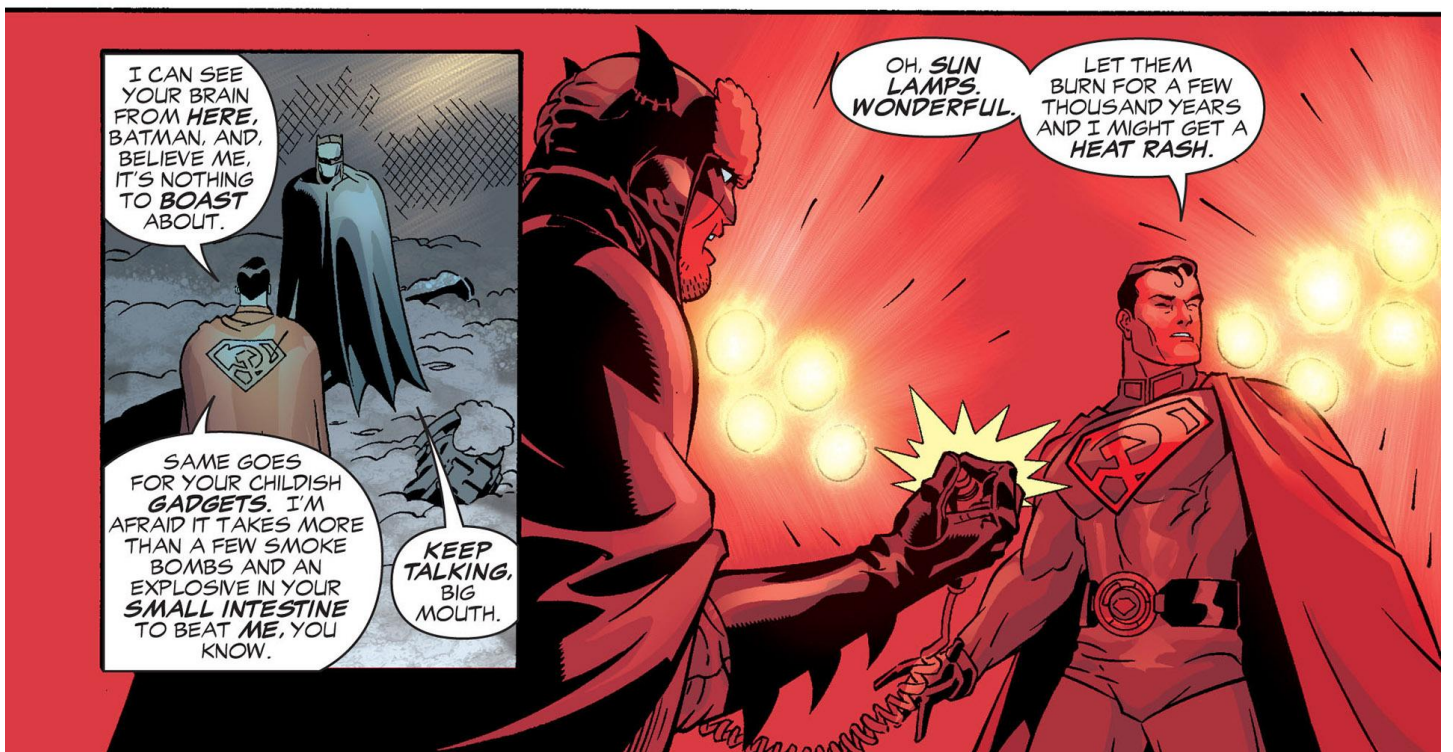
NOW SHE'S AS OBEДИENT TO ME AS ALL THOSE POOR *DISSIDENTS* SHE USED TO *DOMINATE* FOR YOU.



WE *ORDINARY* PEOPLE MIGHT LACK YOUR *GREAT SPEED* OR YOUR *X-RAY VISION*, SUPERMAN, BUT NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE *HUMAN MIND*.



WE CARRY THE *MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON* ON *EARTH* INSIDE THESE THICK LITTLE *SKULLS* OF OURS.



I CAN SEE YOUR BRAIN FROM *HERE*, BATMAN, AND, BELIEVE ME, IT'S NOTHING TO *BOAST* ABOUT.

SAME GOES FOR YOUR CHILDISH *GADGETS*. I'M AFRAID IT TAKES MORE THAN A FEW SMOKE BOMBS AND AN EXPLOSIVE IN YOUR *SMALL INTESTINE* TO BEAT ME, YOU KNOW.

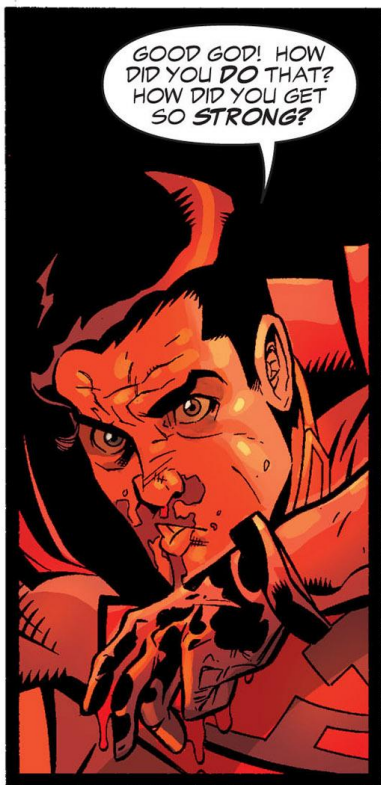
KEEP TALKING, BIG MOUTH.

OH, *SUN LAMPS*. WONDERFUL.

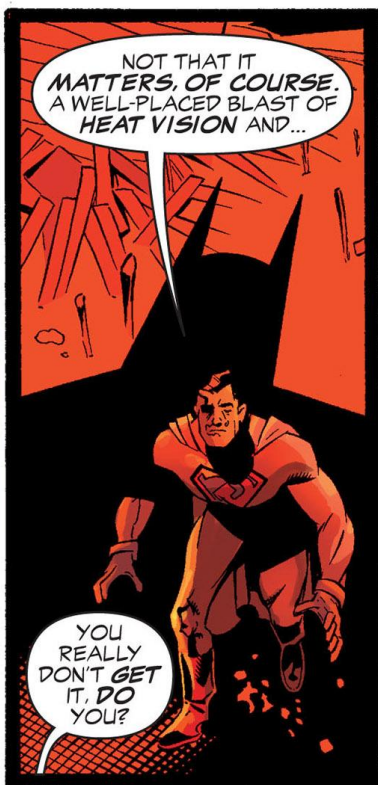
LET THEM BURN FOR A FEW THOUSAND YEARS AND I MIGHT GET A *HEAT RASH*.



AARGH!

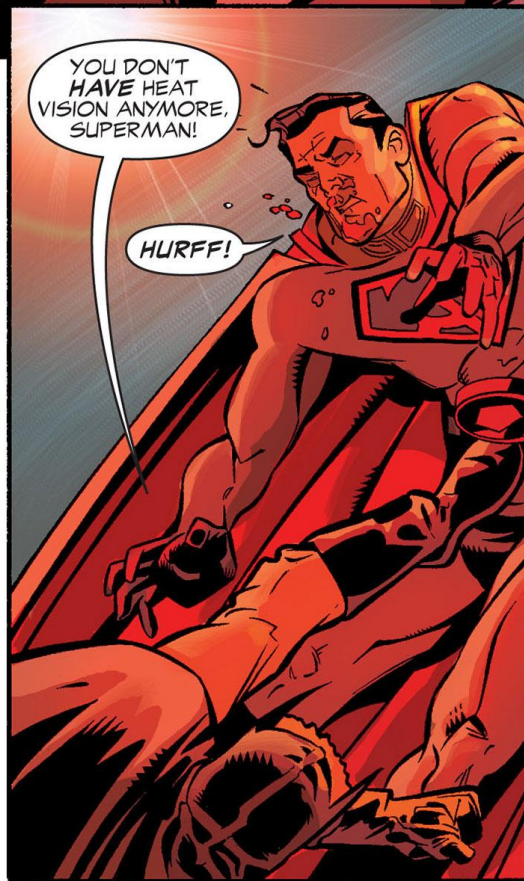


GOOD GOD! HOW DID YOU DO THAT? HOW DID YOU GET SO STRONG?



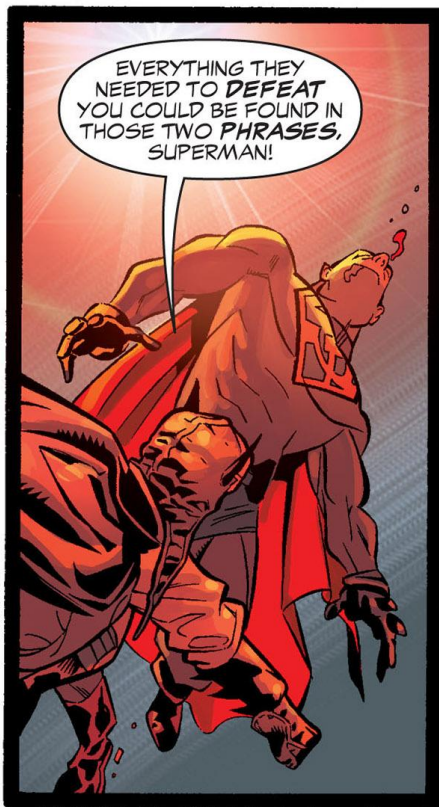
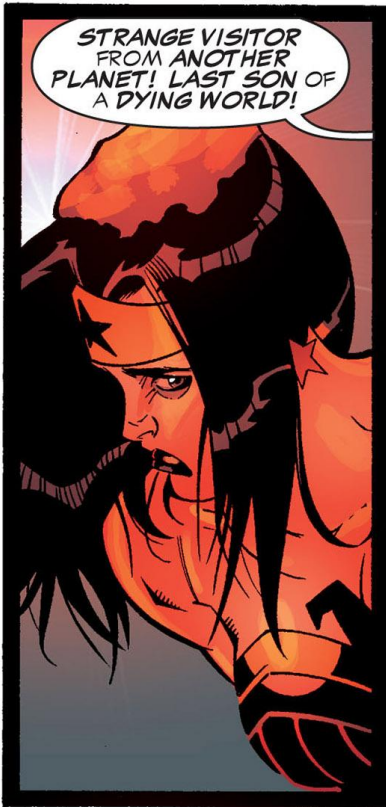
NOT THAT IT MATTERS, OF COURSE. A WELL-PLACED BLAST OF HEAT VISION AND...

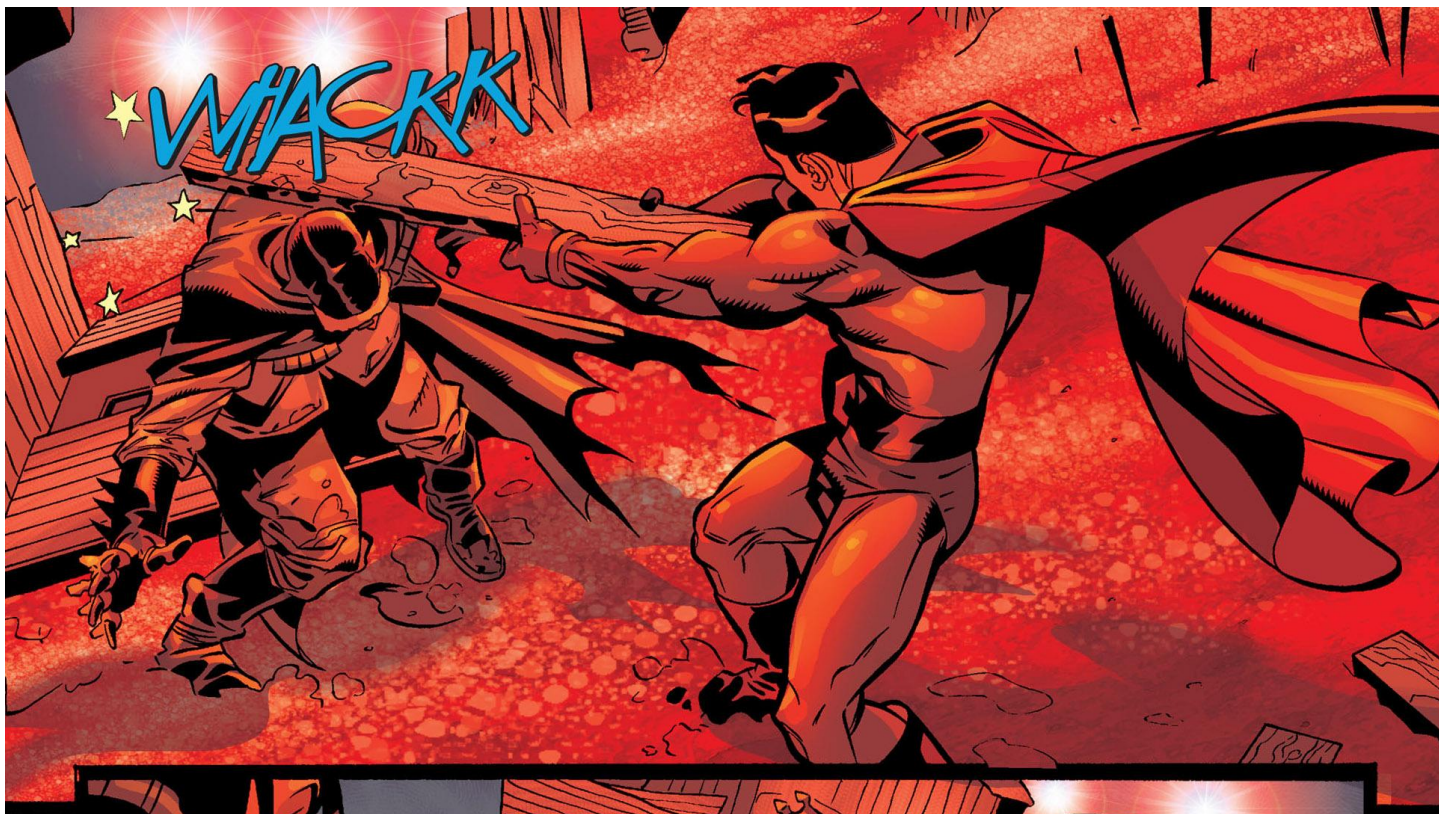
YOU REALLY DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?



YOU DON'T HAVE HEAT VISION ANYMORE, SUPERMAN!

HURFFF!





WHACKK



RUN, SUPERMAN!
GET OUT OF THE LIGHT
AND YOUR POWERS
COME BACK!



KLONK

LINGH!

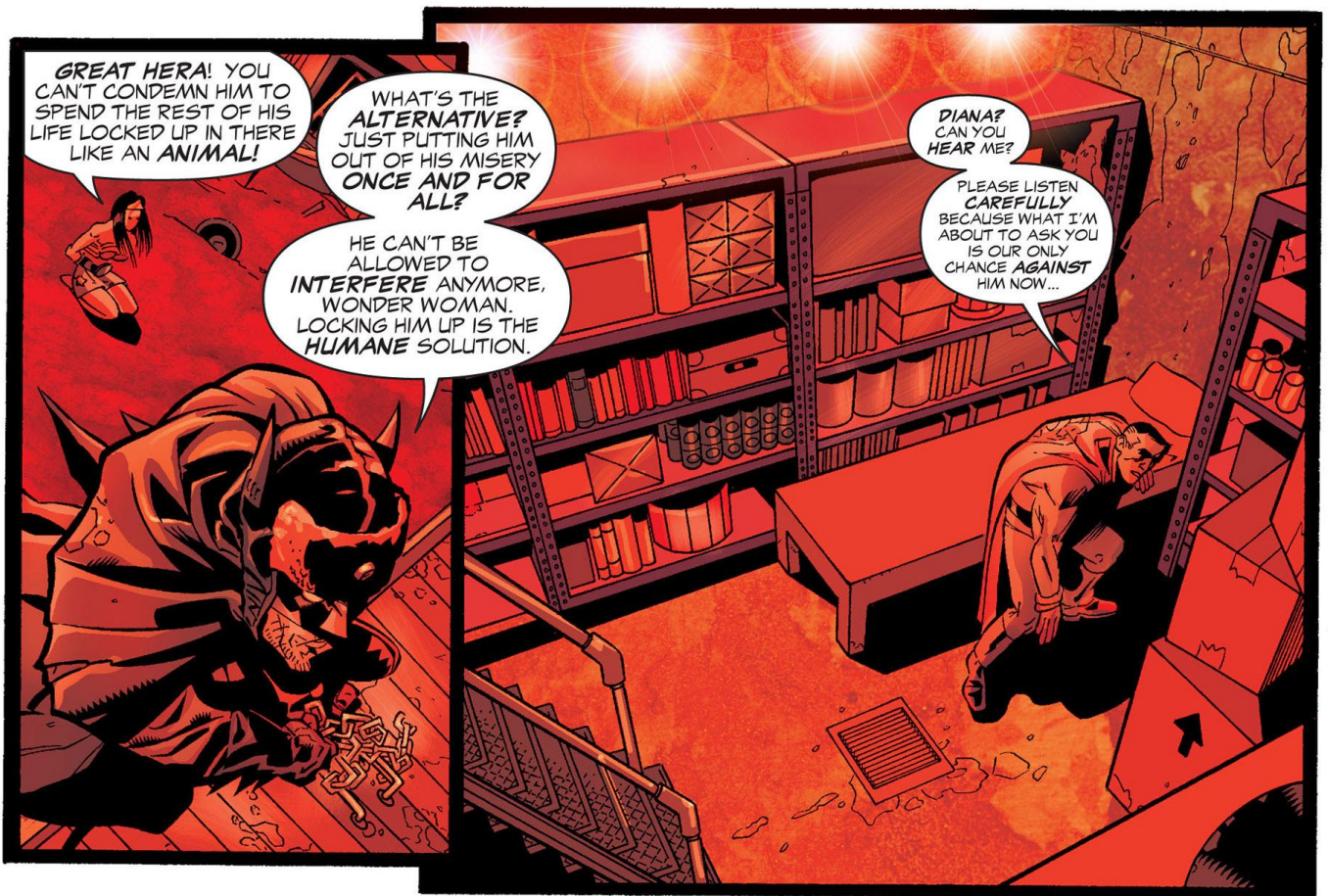


YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE
COME HERE, SUPERMAN! YOU
SHOULD HAVE DIED ON YOUR
OWN WORLD AND KEPT YOUR
ALIEN FINGERS OUT OF
HUMAN AFFAIRS!

WE AREN'T TOYS
OR PETS YOU CAN
TRAIN TO DO WHATEVER
YOU PLEASE! WE'RE
PEOPLE! HUMAN
BEINGS!



MAYBE
NOW YOU'LL
APPRECIATE
WHAT THAT
MEANS!



GREAT HERA! YOU CAN'T CONDEMN HIM TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE LOCKED UP IN THERE LIKE AN ANIMAL!

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE? JUST PUTTING HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY ONCE AND FOR ALL?

HE CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE ANYMORE, WONDER WOMAN. LOCKING HIM UP IS THE HUMANE SOLUTION.

DIANA? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY BECAUSE WHAT I'M ABOUT TO ASK YOU IS OUR ONLY CHANCE AGAINST HIM NOW...

... AS LONG AS I'M TRAPPED DOWN HERE BENEATH THESE RED SUN RAYS, I'M POWERLESS. BUT THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF GENERATOR OUT THERE PROVIDING THE ELECTRICITY, DIANA.

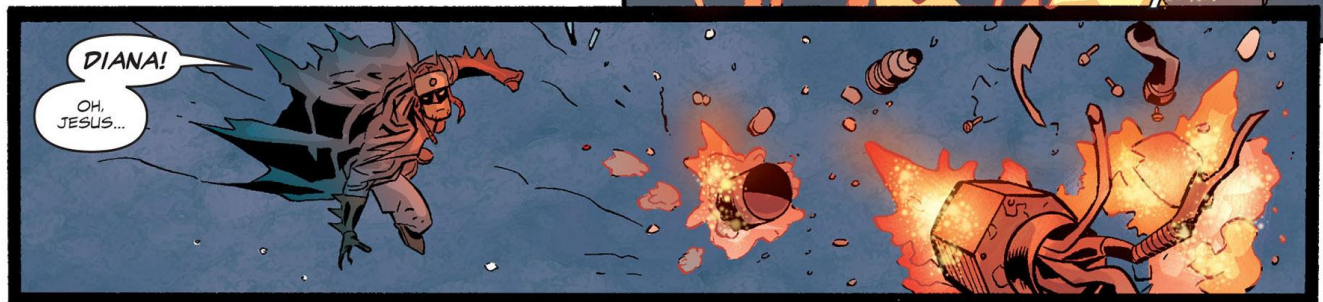
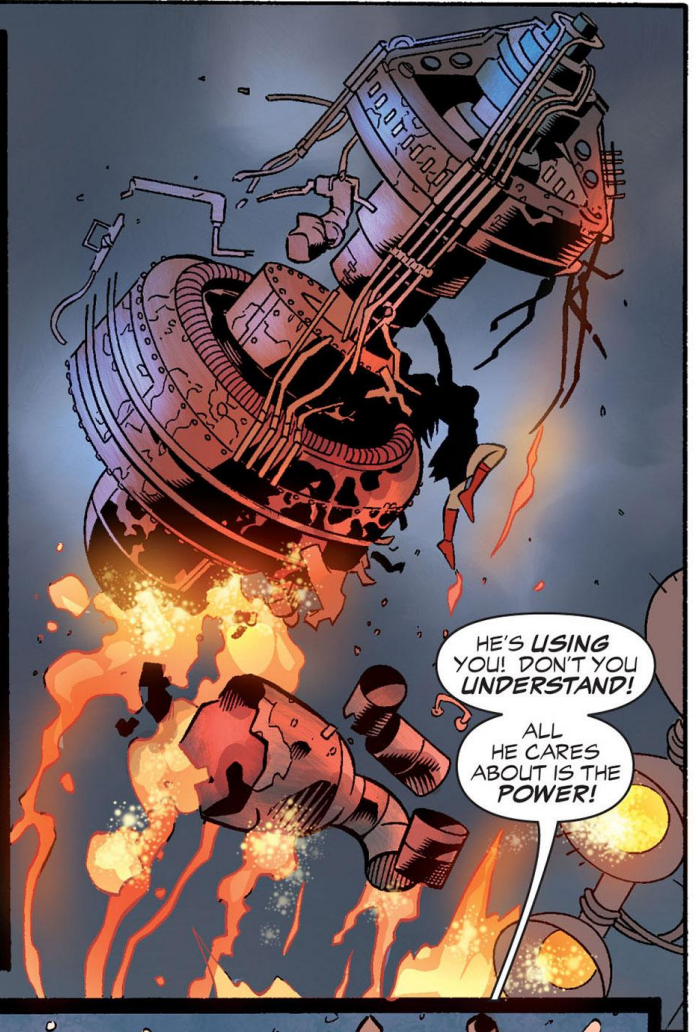
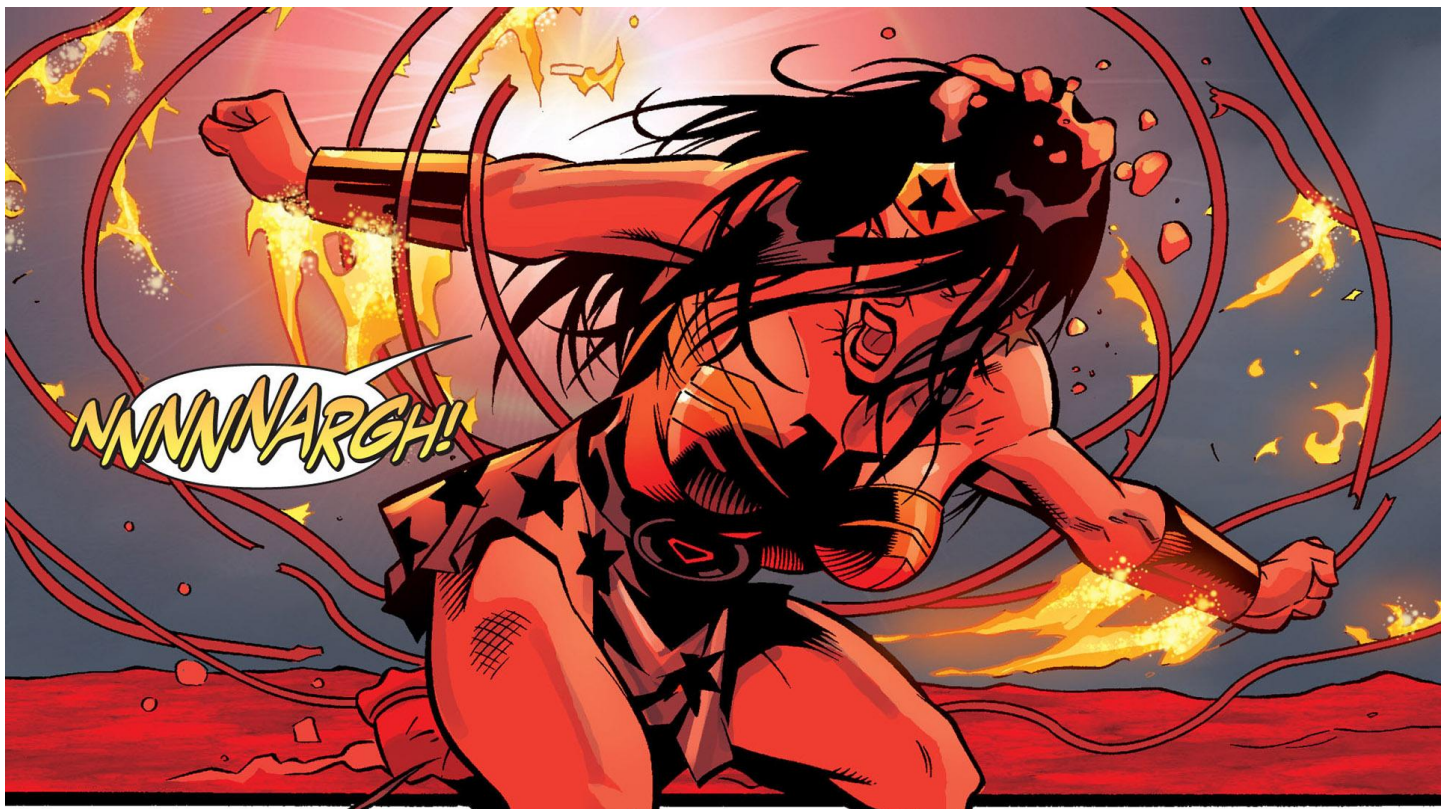
I NEED YOU TO FIND IT FOR ME AND DESTROY IT.

I KNOW BREAKING THE LASSO IS GOING TO HURT, BUT THERE'S REALLY NO OTHER WAY WE'RE GOING TO BEAT HIM, DIANA.

WE CAN'T LET BATMAN DESTROY EVERYTHING WE'VE EVER WORKED FOR, AND YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON NOW WHO CAN GET US OUT OF THIS MESS.

PLEASE, MORE THAN ANYTHING I'VE EVER ASKED YOU FOR BEFORE, I NEED YOU TO HELP ME HERE, DIANA...

AS YOUR OLDEST AND DEAREST FRIEND, I'M BEGGING YOU TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES HERE.





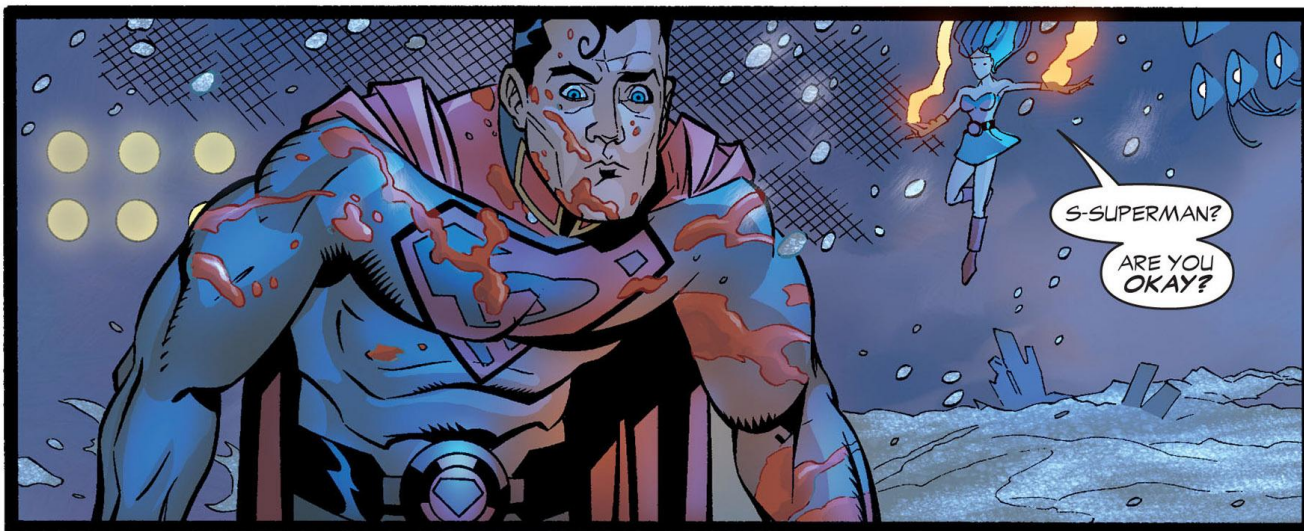
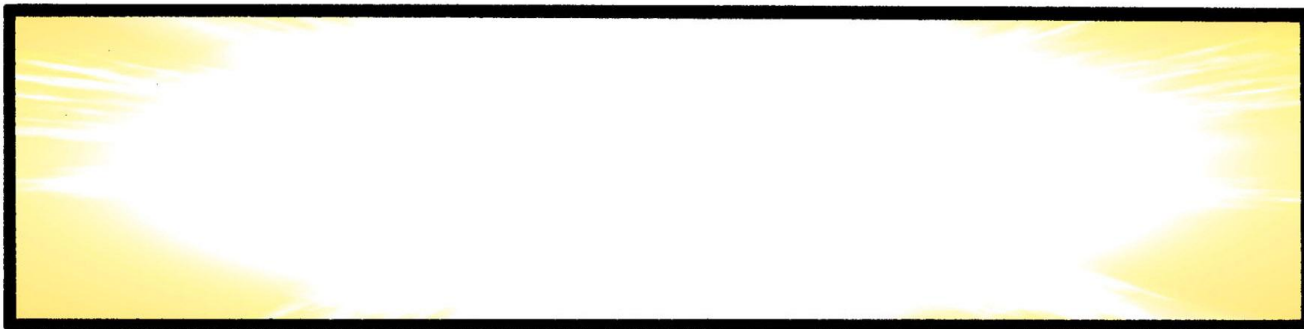
NO MORE TRICKS, BATMAN. NO MORE SOLAR LAMPS OR MAGIC LASSOS. JUST A FEW HOURS' BRAIN SURGERY AND A JOB IN A MOSCOW BANK FOR YOU.

NOW TELL ME: WHO SET ME UP?

COME NOW, SUPERMAN. SURELY YOU KNOW I'D RATHER MARTYR MYSELF FOR THE CAUSE THAN END MY DAYS AS ONE OF YOUR RIDICULOUS SUPERMAN ROBOTS.

WHY ELSE WOULD I HAVE SWALLOWED A BOMB BEFORE YOU AND I WENT HEAD-TO-HEAD?

OH, AND BY THE WAY. IT WAS PYOTR WHO BETRAYED YOU.





NEW MEXICO:

THINGS ARE FALLING APART, DOCTOR LUTHOR. THE UNITED STATES HASN'T EXPERIENCED THIS KIND OF SOCIAL UNREST SINCE THE HORRORS OF THE CIVIL WAR.



MY DEAR FATHER PUT IT BEST WHEN HE SAID MY LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORY MUST NOT BE AS THE FIRST AMERICAN PRESIDENT TO DIVORCE AND REMARRY WHILE IN OFFICE.

WE'VE GOT TO USE WHAT WE HAVE HERE IN AREA 51 TO PUT THIS COUNTRY BACK TOGETHER AGAIN, MY FRIEND.



RIOTS IN CALIFORNIA, THE WHITE HOUSE BOMBED BY COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS, TEXAS AND DETROIT SERIOUSLY TALKING ABOUT INDEPENDENCE...

I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T BE GETTING MY VOTE NEXT TIME, JACK.

AH, BUT REMOVE SUPERMAN FROM THE WORLD STAGE AND A VERY DIFFERENT PICTURE EMERGES, DOCTOR LUTHOR...



...AND NOW WE FINALLY HAVE THE MEANS TO DO IT.

THE SHIP ITSELF IS MADE OF A FASCINATING ALLOY WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY YET. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE THE AGE AND PROBABLE USE OF THE VEHICLE.

OUR DEAD FRIEND IN THE SOLUTION HERE SEEMS TO HAVE BELONGED TO A GROUP OR A CORPS OF SIMILAR BEINGS CHARGED WITH THE DUTY OF POLICING THE UNIVERSE.

POSSIBLY AS SOME KIND OF SPACE COPS.

KEEP TALKING, JACK. I'M ALL EARS.

ACTUALLY, THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO POINT OUT THAT WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY AMONG FRIENDS HERE, JACK. YOU KNOW THESE REPORTERS AND THEIR LOVE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT...

LISTEN, SOMEONE WHO HAD A THING GOING WITH J.F.K. AND THE HEAD OF THE MOSCOW POLICE FORCE IS HARDLY IN A POSITION TO TALK ABOUT SECURITY RISKS, LADY.

WHAT'S THE LANTERN FOR?

AH, NOW THIS IS INTERESTING.

AT FIRST, WE THOUGHT IT WAS JUST SOME KIND OF DECORATION. BUT NOW OUR PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT IT MIGHT BE A DOORWAY INTO A POWER SOURCE AS OLD AS THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

THE RING WAS ATTACHED TO THE ALIEN'S THIRD FINGER AND, AS YOU CAN SEE, FEATURES A LANTERN OF NEAR-IDENTICAL DESIGN.

UNFORTUNATELY, NOBODY AT THE BASE HAS BEEN ABLE TO GUESS THEIR RELATION, BUT WE HOPED YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO SHED A LITTLE LIGHT ON THE SITUATION.

DEAR GOD, JACK! ARE YOU PEOPLE REALLY THIS STUPID?

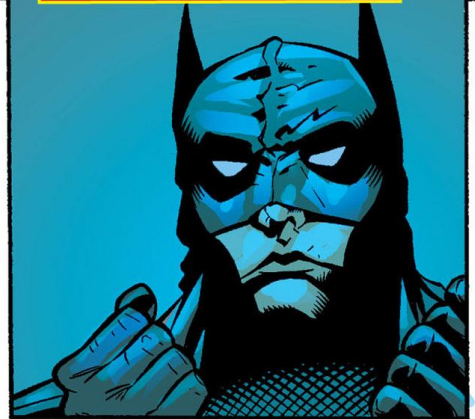
WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT HERE IS A WEAPON, OLD FRIEND.

TIME PASSED
AND MY GRIP
GREW TIGHTER.

RARELY A DECISION WAS MADE
ACROSS THE LENGTH AND
BREADTH OF THE SOVIET UNION
WITHOUT MY PERMISSION IN
SOME FORM OR ANOTHER.



MY DESIRE FOR ORDER AND
PERFECTION WAS MATCHED
ONLY BY THEIR DREAMS OF
VIOLENCE AND CHAOS.



THE POPULATION WAS
LARGELY GRATEFUL
AND OBEDIENT BUT
THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS,
INSPIRED BY THE DEATH
OF BATMAN, REMAINED
SOMETHING OF A
PROBLEM.



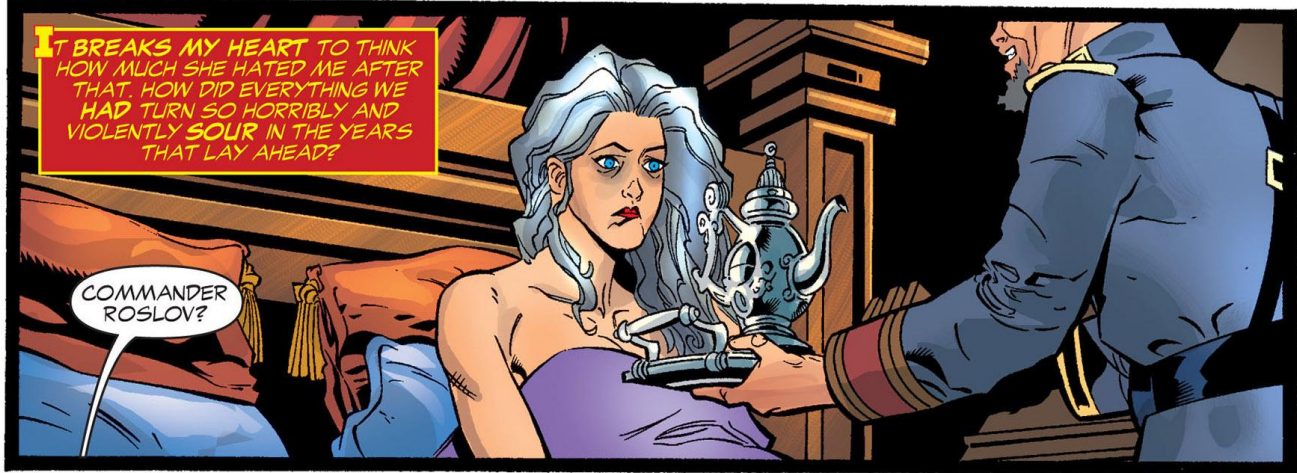
I OFFERED THEM
UTOPIA, BUT THEY
FOUGHT FOR THE
RIGHT TO LIVE
IN HELL.





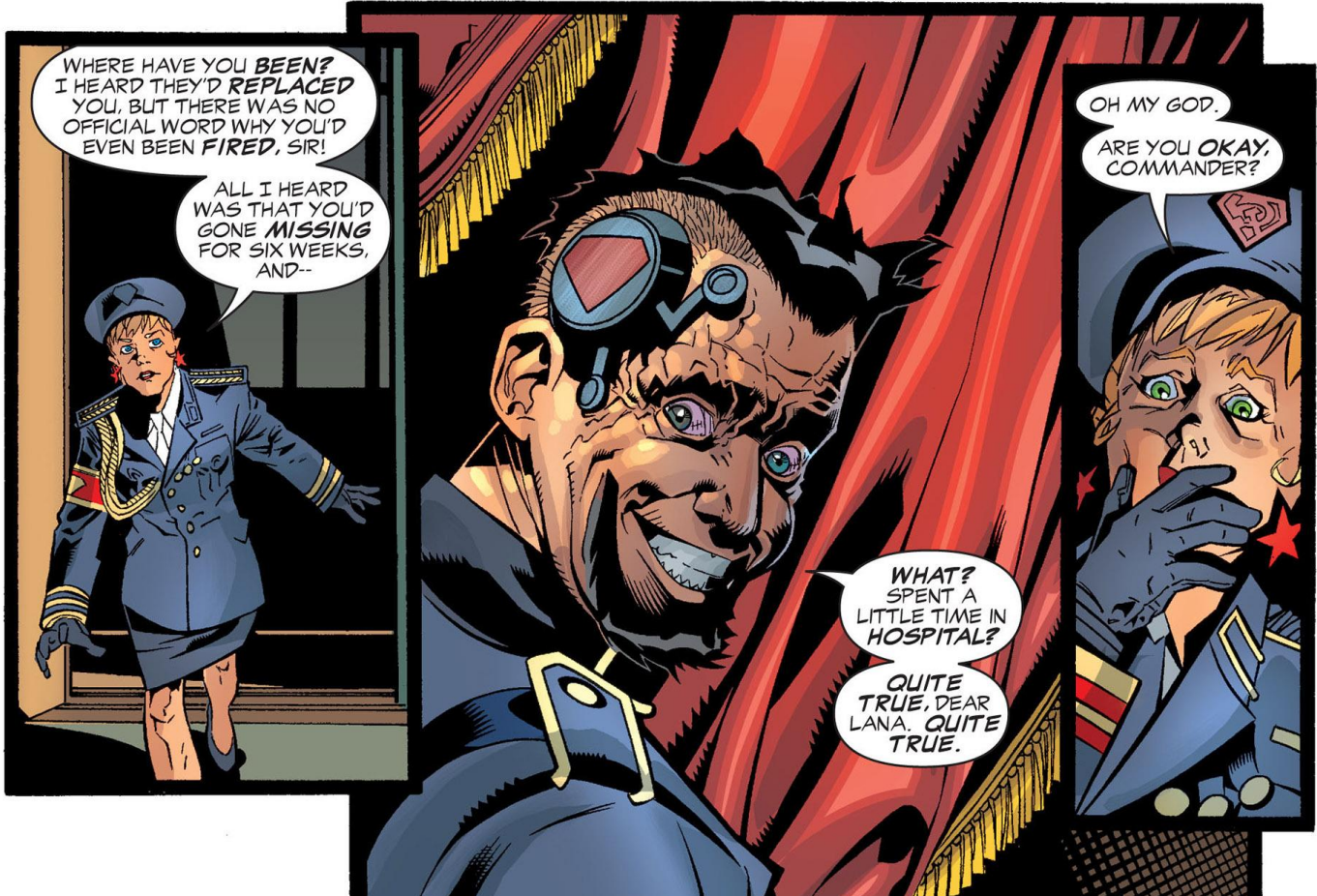
DIANA, OF COURSE, WAS THE ONLY ONE AMONG US WHO TRULY KNEW THE MEANING OF THAT WORD.

HER DAYS HAD BECOME A MONOTONOUS TIMETABLE OF BATHING, EATING AND SLEEPING, UNABLE TO EVEN SPEAK FOR LONG MONTHS AFTER HER EXPERIENCE IN SIBERIA.



IT BREAKS MY HEART TO THINK HOW MUCH SHE HATED ME AFTER THAT. HOW DID EVERYTHING WE HAD TURN SO HORRIBLY AND VIOLENTLY SOUR IN THE YEARS THAT LAY AHEAD?

COMMANDER ROSLOV?



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I HEARD THEY'D REPLACED YOU, BUT THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL WORD WHY YOU'D EVEN BEEN FIRED, SIR!

ALL I HEARD WAS THAT YOU'D GONE MISSING FOR SIX WEEKS, AND--

OH MY GOD. ARE YOU OKAY, COMMANDER?

WHAT? SPENT A LITTLE TIME IN HOSPITAL?

QUITE TRUE, DEAR LANA. QUITE TRUE.



ACTUALLY, I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER, THANKS FOR ASKING. BUT, IF YOU'VE COME HERE LOOKING FOR SUPERMAN, I'M AFRAID HE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE, MY DEAR.

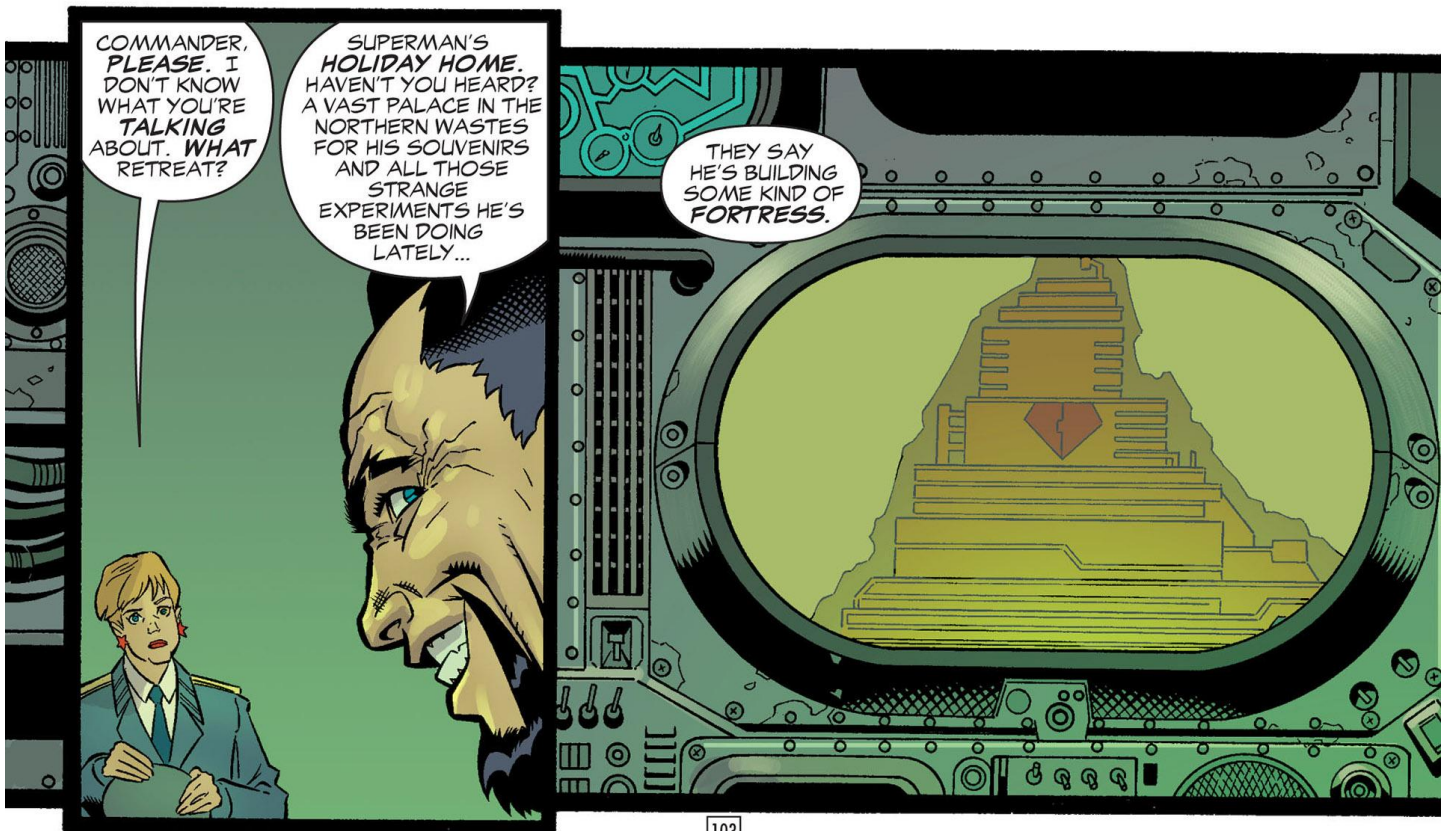
THIS IS THE NEW **COMMAND CENTER** WHERE MOSCOW'S DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS WILL BE CONTROLLED BY SUPERMAN'S REPROGRAMMED **BRAINIAC MACHINE**.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IS SUPERMAN GONE?

ONLY **TEMPORARILY**, COMRADE. SUPERMAN SAID HE JUST NEEDED SOME TIME ALONE TO COLLECT HIS **THOUGHTS** AGAIN.

THAT'S WHY HE COMMISSIONED ALL THOSE **ARTISTS** AND **SCIENTISTS** TO DESIGN THIS WONDERFUL NEW **RETREAT** HE'S SO EXCITED ABOUT.



COMMANDER, PLEASE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE **TALKING** ABOUT. **WHAT** RETREAT?

SUPERMAN'S **HOLIDAY HOME**. HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? A VAST PALACE IN THE NORTHERN WASTES FOR HIS SOUVENIRS AND ALL THOSE **STRANGE** EXPERIMENTS HE'S BEEN DOING LATELY...

THEY SAY HE'S BUILDING SOME KIND OF **FORTRESS**.



HE'S WATCHING

YOU