



The Adventures of Superman #2

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Adventures of Superman

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The transmission was beamed across the globe, picked up on the international wire services, and run on continuous loops on the cable news networks. It was a fuzzy black and white picture, distorted by snow and howling winds, but it was clear enough; the man was in a form of strange armor, spiked and menacing, and his voice was one that demanded attention...

"People of Earth, hear me! I am Zod. I have chosen this world as the capitol of my galactic empire, and do hereby now decree that the leaders of your city-states shall come unto me in the southernmost continent and do me obeisance. If this is not done in one planetary revolution, I shall unleash an apocalypse upon the Earth and lay it utterly to waste. Rejoice, cretins, for your savior has come. Rejoice and kneel before Zod!"

Lane! Kent!"

Perry White stormed out of his office, the pressroom of the Daily Planet seething in barely controlled chaos; the video of General Zod was on all the wall-mounted monitors, his ominous voice playing over and over again. Perry looked around, bellowing the names of his star reporters.

"They're not here, chief." A young voice called over the din, and Jimmy Olsen pushed through the throng of people to his boss. "Clark is MIA, but Lois called in about ten minutes ago, before this Zod thing broke, to say she was following a lead on the LexCorp story."

"Great Caesar's Ghost! The biggest story of the century, and my two best reporters are AWOL!" White gnashed the end of his unlit cigar.

"You got me, chief!" Jimmy said brightly.

Perry glared at him.

"Great Caesar's Ghost..." He muttered as he walked away.

Fawcett City gleamed like a quaint Middle American anachronism from the 1930s, with towering Empire City architecture, clean subways and a working trolley. Superman flew in low, just over the WHIZ broadcasting tower, and angled towards the brownstone apartment across from Fairfield Park where he had often visited his childhood idol.

Captain Marvel, the first and greatest hero! Emerging just prior to the dark days of the Second World War, this great champion of Truth and Justice fought against tyranny and super-villainy wherever he found it, long after even the fabled JSA disbanded in 1951. C.C. Batson, his alter-ego, was a very old man now, but still vigorous— and when he spoke the magic name of the old wizard, the ever-robust and youthful Captain Marvel would appear to fight again!

Passers-by gawked at Superman, and he nodded politely as he rang the door-bell and waited patiently.

It took a minute or two (or longer), but at last the door was opened by a portly, gray-haired man with wild sideburns and eyebrows.

"Holy Moley..." His jaw dropped when he saw who his visitor was.

"I'm sorry about the unannounced visit, Dudley, but I was hoping I could see the Captain..." Superman smiled apologetically.

"Superman!" Dudley Batson finally managed to get out, making way for the Man of Steel to come in, and escorting him to the comfortable, but somewhat Victorian-looking living room. "Jumping Jehosophat, what happened to you?"

"I'm sorry Dudley, but I don't have a lot of time to explain. If you've seen

the TV or heard the radio in the last fifteen minutes, you'll know what I mean. There's a trio of Kryptonian villains out there, and I need the help of the World's Mightiest Mortal."

The older man flinched at Superman's words, scratching his chin sheepishly.

"Umm, can't Wonder Woman help you, Superman... ?"

"Diana isn't in residence at the Themysciran Embassy right now, and all communication with Paradise Island seems to have been cut off [**Editor's Note: Please see the recent issue of *Wonder Woman***]... Is there something wrong with C.C.?"

The emotion clear on his face, Dudley took Superman by the arm and led him down the wood-paneled hall-way, his eyes glistening.

"As you know, Superman, the powers that old wizard granted my cousin have kept him very well preserved, but he is nearly a hundred years old now... and while he may still seem vigorous, his wits are not what they used to be. He's never quite gotten over losing Billy all those years ago, and when Marilyn died, well... " Dudley shook his head sadly.

Superman was aghast.

"What are you saying? Is he alright?" For the Man of Steel, C.C. Batson was more than a kindly old man, or even the hero Captain Marvel— he was an icon and a inspiration, the reason that a young Clark Kent once dreamed of putting on a cape and fighting for what he believed in.

"See for yourself... " Dudley opened the door to a spacious bedroom, where the lone occupant sat in the bed, gazing out the window.

Superman stepped slowly into the room, clearing his throat and waiting for C.C. to turn to him. The man in the bed did not look almost a century old, though his hair was silvered and his brow wrinkled. But when he turned to regard his visitor, with his customary squinty-eyed expression, the age was clear for any to see.

"Billy, is that you?" He said in a steady, but rheumy voice.

Superman felt a pang, recalling that 'Billy' was the name of the son that C.C. and his wife Marilyn had lost to Captain Marvel's arch-foe Thaddeus Sivana, more than 50 years ago. When Superman had first met Captain Marvel—the day the Man of Steel sprang onto the world stage and the World's Mightiest Mortal finally retired—kindly old C.C. Batson had told Clark Kent how proud he was to finally have a successor, and how much Clark reminded him of his own long lost son...

That's why Superman had to swallow before he found his voice to answer.

"No sir, it's me Su— Clark."

There was no recognition in the old stalwart's expression. He merely nodded and turned back to the window, his shoulders sagging.

"We never spoiled him." He sighed, his eyes focused on a distant point. "My wife Marilyn and I... But then, he never wanted to be spoiled. He was a very good boy, our Billy. Worked so hard and saved every penny he earned at that paper route. Wanted to be a newscaster."

Superman came over and sat on the edge of the bed.

"I would have loved to meet him, Captain."

Batson nodded, still looking out the window.

"He was a good boy." He reaffirmed, then sighed heavily. "Sivana took him away from us. But we never gave up hope, Marilyn and I... Someday, we told each other, he would walk through that door— like you did— a grown man... a *good* man... "

Feeling time slipping away, Superman said: "Captain, I need your help. Villains from Krypton have come to Earth, and I don't know if I can take them on myself... I need the Power of Shazam!"

Batson did not turn from the window for a long moment. Finally, he said, somewhat perplexedly: "Why do you keep calling me Captain? I can't remember ever holding a military rank... I was an archaeologist

and a professor... "

The words stung the Man of Steel. *Just speak the name and you will be restored*, he wanted to say, *The old wizard's name!* But then he really looked at the dear old man in the bed, and his heart tugged. This soldier had fought his wars— and longer than any had any right to expect him to. Now, in his dotage, he deserved his rest. He had more than earned it.

Clark knew what he had to do.

He got to his feet, smiling down upon his hero.

"I guess you can say I was a student of yours, Dr. Batson." He laid a friendly hand on the older man's shoulder, and was rewarded with a slight smile. "'O, captain, my captain... '"

A moment later, Superman streaked across the skyline of Fawcett City, alone.

He was certain he had done the right thing, and took some satisfaction from that, but he realized that left him with no options: he was going to have to face Zod and his Tigress alone...

Gambling that the would-be assassin had followed Lois, and that Dr. Hamilton's involvement had not been exposed, the two of them headed directly to the secret Project Cadmus facility, an innocuous abandoned looking warehouse in Hob's Bay.

"Luthor owns every building in this part of the docks." Hamilton told her as they left the car, and Lois donned the white lab coat and accepted the "borrowed" credentials. "You may not know this, but LexCorp is actually the largest landowner in Metropolis. I wouldn't be surprised if he owned the *Daily Planet* building... "

"You just get me in there, Doc, and get me some proof of this wild story, and I'll blow the lid off LexCorp so fast you'll have to pull the I.R.S. out of Luthor's butt with a pliers!" Lois promised.

There was a tense moment when they waited for Hamilton's access card to work, swiped at the incongruous digital lock on the otherwise moldering door— "Don't be fooled by the outside; the whole structure is built solid as a rock, with polybendium steel, and lined with lead, of course!" He said at her dubious look— but the lock flashed green, and the door opened with a click.

The long, metallic corridor was empty, and Hamilton hurried onward, saying: "There won't be a lot of personnel around— I'm certain Luthor would have dispatched them to the scene of Superman's fight with that bruiser this morning— they'll be crawling all over the scene, trying to collect DNA samples... "

Lois had missed the titanic brawl that had occurred downtown just a little while ago, but Jimmy had filled her in when she called earlier. She shuddered to think that there was someone out there powerful enough to fight Superman to a standstill... !

Dr. Hamilton led them through a series of corridors, past unused labs, and some where she could spy technicians busy at their monitors. Upon a turning of the hall, they came at last to a large hatch with a wheel lock— guarded by a man in a LexCorp security uniform.

"Oh!" Dr. Hamilton exclaimed in surprise, the man with the gun looking him up and down suspiciously. "Are we on alert, officer? I need access to Lab Alpha."

"Orders from Mr. Luthor himself, Dr. Hamilton. Nobody gets into this lab today. We have a leak in Project Cadmus."

"Oh, dear! How awful! How can that possibly be—" Emil fluttered anxiously, while Lois pressed forward, making as if to peer over the guard's shoulder.

"Hey, aren't you Lo—."

The guard reached for her to pull her back, but was unprepared for the sudden jolt of electricity that shot from Lois' pocket taser. The guard fell, twitching, but unconscious, Lois catching him before he hit the floor.

"Ms. Lane!" Gasp'd Dr. Hamilton.

She grinned lopsidedly. "A WayneTech Palm Taser. A gift from an ex-boyfriend..." She explained.

A few moments later, they were in the lab, locking the unconscious guard in a storage closet.

"This is the heart of Project Cadmus." Hamilton told her in a hushed whisper. He gestured to a great cylinder of amniotic fluid, in which a figure floated, dozens of tubes connecting its body to various monitoring devices. Hamilton flicked on the light and Lois gasped.

"My god, what is it...?"

The figure in the vat was humanoid in shape, but was not human. It's stark, pasty skin lacked all pigmentation, and its features were craggy and chiseled, as if he had been carved from some weird, alien substance. He seemed somehow familiar to Lois, something about the short black hair, the bright, but lifeless blue eyes...

"He is a modern-day Frankenstein's monster." Hamilton admitted, hanging his head shamefacedly. "And I am the vile doctor. I did not cull him from the scraps of dead men, but one live *superman*..."

Lois turned to him, aghast.

"Dr. Hamilton, *you cloned Superman?*"

"No." He said quickly. "Cloning requires source genetic material, which Luthor has never been able to obtain. What Project Cadmus has done here is something completely different and completely new. We've *created* life, Ms Lane, using an adaptive protoplasmic organic material that Mr. Luthor himself invented. The being before you is a thing of flesh and blood and steel and a dozen other elements, all wrapped in its gene code. But the most vital piece of the puzzle is the Kryptonite that has been bonded to its DNA. Not enough to make him radioactive, but enough to allow his unique adaptive cellular structure to mimic a Kryptonian's. And that, coupled with the data we've collected from our surreptitious study

of Superman... "

"Are you saying that this thing has the powers of Superman?"

"Not yet, Ms. Lane."

The answer came not from Dr. Hamilton, and the two spun around to see Lex Luthor stride into the room, flanked by two armed guards. He did not look at all angry to see them, in fact, he wore a self-satisfied smirk on his face as he sauntered past them.

"Luthor, this is an abomination." Lois seethed at him. "Not to mention, an illegal genetic experiment. Your jealousy of Superman has finally driven you too far!"

"Nonsense." Lex scoffed, going over to the vat where his creation floated insensate. "Think of the medical applications for my new compound: it might be used to regrow amputated limbs, for skin grafts, for—."

"For creating a bizarre simulacrum of your worst enemy." Lois finished for him.

Lex looked over his shoulder at her, smiling benignly.

"Funny that you should use that word. He is freakish and imperfect, bizarre, even. Some of the lab boys have actually taken to calling him Bizarro... But now I have the last piece of the puzzle for my Jigsaw Man." He held up a small vial of red liquid.

Hamilton gasped.

"Kryptonian DNA... !"

"Exactly, Dr. Hamilton. Oh, and by the way, you're fired." Lex chuckled at his own aplomb. "And now if you two will excuse me, I'm in a bit of a hurry here. My guards will escort you out, and you both can expect to hear from my lawyers in the morning."

Lois defiantly jerked her arm out of one goon's grasp.

"By that time my story will be on the front page of the *Planet*, and you'll be the one meeting with the lawyers, Lex!"

Luthor's lips pursed in a droll expression.

"I doubt that very much, Ms. Lane. There's a New World Order on the horizon. This time tomorrow, the world will have a new respect for Lex Luthor and his Bizarro!"

On the deck of the U.S.S. *Theodore Roosevelt*, General Sam Lane, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, peered through the binoculars into the frigid glacial distance, monitoring the enemy encampment. It was a garish, weird scene, flickering with bursts of electricity and alien configurations. Something howled, and the noise was carried on the wind, make the hairs on his neck rise.

Dropping down out of the sky over the naval battlegroup, Superman landed next to Lane, and said: "Mr. Chairman, I thought we agreed to give me an opportunity to stop Zod, first?"

Lane looked him up and down.

"And I thought you said you'd have reinforcements."

Superman did not blink. "That's not an option now, Mr. Chairman. But I have years of experience using my powers, whereas Zod and his Tigress only hours. I can subdue them. Trust me."

"There's too much riding on this, son." Lane fixed him with a hard stare. "You have one hour, but then this battlegroup will open fire with everything it has, including our thermonuclear payload."

Superman nodded, and wasting no time, zoomed off towards the wreckage of his Fortress...

The canine vulpa strained against its iron chain, its jaws slavering.

A gauntleted hand fell to its head and scratched behind its ears. Zod scanned the landscape through the slits in his spiked helm, disregarding the offshore U.S. fleet as insignificant.

"He's coming." Faora announced, her voice aquiver with anticipation. She stood, as always, at the left hand of Zod, searching the skies herself.

He made no attempt at stealth. He flew straight for them, fists out, and his chin forward.

"At last." Zod rumbled. "The son of Jor-El... !"

Superman pulled up short, hovering in the air before them, crossing his arms over his chest.

"General Zod, I presume?" His voice was steady and strong, and he seemed unafraid. His cobalt eyes flickered warily to Faora and to the growling vulpa, but back to Zod. "I have been deputized on behalf of the American people to tell you your demands are utterly rejected, and to bring you to justice for the theft of the *Admiral Byrd*, including three thermonuclear warheads, and not least of all, the destruction of Krypton!"

Laughter echoed from the depths of Zod's helmet.

"Such bravado! You are a true son of the House of El!" The Destroyer said. "Have you defeated my Hound, then, your bastard brother? If you bow before me now, I will allow you to take his place at my side, and give you the hand of fair Faora, his mate. Think of the child you will have, born under this yellow sun... ! We will rebuild Krypton on this Earth and make it a paradise!" To emphasize his words, he held up a mailed fist.

Superman was taken aback. He had expected defiance, derision, and threats— not this insane offer! Faora gazed up at him, her eyes burning, licking her lips hungrily.

"You're mad, Zod!" The Man of Steel shot back. "If you think I would ever align myself with you... ! You are the enemy of all that is good. Your ambition destroyed our home world, and you now threaten my

adopted planet—." He glanced to the enormous device that looked like the warheads of the *Byrd's* three missiles, horribly modified by Zod's sinister design. "What you cannot rule, you would ruin. In the name of my father, I condemn and reject you, Destroyer. And I will bring you to justice, just as I have your Hound!"

He glared down at the would-be world conqueror, and Zod glared back, the two men taking their measure of each other.

At last, a sigh escaped the dark helm of Zod.

"I feared that would be your answer." He called up to Superman. "Which is why I took the precaution of arming the echobomb. It is primed and nearing critical mass. Its detonation is imminent. If Earth is to be denied me as well, then I shall render it into cinder and ash!"

Superman sprang into action, streaking towards the device.

But Faora was waiting just for that. She leaped into the air, intercepting him with a whirling kick that snapped his head back, and sent him veering away from his target. She flew after him, her teeth flashing in a cruel smile.

Shaking off the blow, Superman pulled out of his dive and turned just as Faora collided with him. The two crashed to the ground below, sending up clouds of snow and crystal. They landed hard, rolling, but Faora came out straddling him. Her nails raked his face, and his blood arced through the air. He grabbed her hands, struggling to stave off her frenzied assault. Any reticence he may have had about fighting her because she was a woman disappeared when he looked into her twisted, hate-filled face.

"How dare you spurn me?" She spat at him. "Kru-El is twice the man you are. You could never take his place in my bed!"

"He's an animal." Superman shot back. "And you and Zod are no better!"

He gathered his strength, and heaved her off of him, sending her

skidding across the landscape. He got to his feet just in time to face the assault of Zod's snarling vulpa. The beast sprang at his throat, its teeth snapping for flesh. Superman managed to get his arm in front of the creature pushing back the hot jaws, keeping him at bay. But its tremendous weight bore Superman down to his knees, and he staggered backward beneath the claws that were tearing gouges into his flesh.

Gritting his teeth, Superman blasted the vulpa with his heat vision, igniting its head. The thing yelped and fell away, rolling in the snow to extinguish its burning flesh.

Then Faora was back. She pressed a furious assault upon him, a kind of Kryptonian martial art that Superman was hard pressed to stave off. And she was good; very good. She was a whirling dervish: too many of her punches landed, too many of her kicks nearly felled him. She was getting the hang of her super-speed...

And the vulpa was recovering, and looking for blood.

He had been forced into a fight on their terms, where he was outnumbered. He had to change the rules.

He shot into the air, leaving her momentarily dazed by his retreat. He had to reach the echobomb, disarm it, and—

He was hit by a blast from the ground. Twin rays of intense heat and force burned into his chest, knocking him out of the sky. He fell in a spiral, crashing to the snow, at the feet of Zod, whose own heat vision had just caught him by surprise. Before he could rise, he felt Zod's metal boot come down upon his neck, pressing him into the snow.

"I have waited for this moment for many years, son of Jor-El." The Destroyer exulted, grinding his heel harder. Superman gasped, struggling for the strength to push himself to his feet. "Would that you and your father had one neck I could snap...!"

"Alien!" Cried a clear, and familiar voice, stealing Zod's attention. "Step away from that so-called superhero!"

Disbelieving his own ears, Superman craned his head up as much as he

was able— to see Lex Luthor in a green and purple battlesuit standing not ten feet away, his breath frosting in the cold, staring down General Zod!

Unamused, Zod nonetheless heard something in the Earthling's voice to alarm him. His boot came off of Superman's neck, and the battered Man of Steel rolled onto his back.

"Earthling, for this audacity, I salute you." Zod declared in a deadly serious voice. "I shall make your death especially spectacular."

"I don't think so, Zod!" Luthor retorted. He had seen Faora coming from out of the corner of his eye, and he made a quick signal. Before she could reach him, something black and silver erupted from the snow with a fearsome roar and tackled her, bearing her to the ground.

"I call him Bizarro." Luthor didn't even glance at the titanic struggle going on practically at his side. "And he's as strong as any of you freaks, as this little vixen is finding out... "

Faora had been caught completely unawares. The huge, hulking figure was dressed in a costume much like Superman's, except that it was all black, with silver trimmings. Bizarro pummeled at her mercilessly, never letting her catch her breath, all the while making inarticulate grunting sounds.

Zod regarded the struggle with a dispassionate calm, as Superman climbed to his feet.

"Luthor, the echobomb, can you disarm it?" Superman asked urgently.

Doubt crossed Luthor's face, just for a moment, but long enough for Zod to see it. The general let out a sharp whistle, and his vulpa emerged like a ghost from the snow. It lunged for Luthor, blood in its eyes. Lex brought up his arm and directed a searing blast of energy at it from his gauntlet, but the creature shrugged it off and pounced on him.

Like a rocket, Superman launched himself at the echobomb. The device was a bundle of complex constructs and steaming vents. Superman searched it frantically for a control box, finding only an escalating power

indicator— the thing was 95% to critical mass, and throbbing with the power to kill a world.

"It cannot be disarmed, son of Jor-El!"

A double fisted blow to his back slammed Superman against the device. Zod loomed menacingly over him, grabbing him by the cape and pulling him up for another blow. Superman's eyes blazed and flashed— and so did Zod's! The sizzling beams of their heat vision met in the frozen air between them, vying for supremacy, neither one giving or gaining. Sheer force of will empowered the bruised and battered Man of Steel against the fresh Zod— and slowly, but irrevocably, the power from Superman's eyes forced Zod's back! The general had to disengage to avoid a direct hit, but as it was, was thrown back by a glancing blow!

With the bomb building to detonation, Superman could not afford to leave behind such a dangerous foe determined to hinder him. He had to stop Zod, or die trying.

The two combatants hurled themselves at each other, each one landing a titanic blow that sent the other reeling. The general had lost his helm in the initial clash, and his scarred and blackened face was a thing hideous to behold. Superman was the first to his feet, but Zod was braced for his attack. Nevertheless, Superman's uppercut sent the Destroyer of Worlds staggering backward.

"Give it up, Zod!" Superman implored. "This is madness! Don't let another world die! How can you live with that on your conscience?"

The general lumbered to his feet, his eyes wild and wide.

"If this world does not kneel to me, it is not fit to survive!" He raged and charged his foe.

Superman caught him up short, the two grappling hand to hand, dodging blasts of heat vision. They pushed and shoved against each other, gritting their teeth and digging in like wrestlers.

"Surrender, Son of Jor-El!" Zod spat, his gruesome visage close to Superman's own face. "In mere moments this Earth will be a wasteland, and only we shall survive. You *will* kneel before Zod!"

The Destroyer bore down hard, causing Superman's knees to buckle and shake.

In his mind's eye, Superman saw the selfless heroism of Captain Marvel, the dedication of the Dark Knight Detective to his crusade, and the fight for Truth and Love that Wonder Woman stood for... and he heard the voices of two Kansas farmers telling him: "Your Kryptonian blood may give you all those powers, son, but it's your *humanity* that gives you your strength. Now stop fooling around with that Zod fella, and show him why they call you *Superman!*"

Summoning every reserve of energy he had, the Man of Steel gritted his teeth and surged upright, causing Zod to lose his balance, and thus his advantage. With all of his might, Superman pushed his enemy down upon his knees, much to the stunned surprise of Zod!

"I will *never* bow to you Zod!" He vowed, crushing the general's mailed fists in his own. "Your reign of terror is over!"

And Zod, on his knees before the son of Jor-El, could only gasp in disbelief.

Behind them, the echobomb had reached 99% to critical mass... !

A wave of nausea suddenly washed over Superman, and Zod, too, seemed to be effected.

Superman raised his head to find Luthor, with his Bizarro creature dragging a dead or unconscious Faora, standing close by. And Lex held up his gauntlet, where a glowing green gem was set: kryptonite!

Superman released the beaten Zod, staggering backward but staying on his feet as Luthor came closer, bringing with him waves of death!

"Luthor— this is no time for your vendetta— the bomb—!"

His eyes narrowed and Lex glanced from the swooning Zod, to his own archenemy. Then, slowly, deliberately, he lowered his fist and covered the kryptonite.

With a derisive curl of his lip, he said: "I got this here. Go do your job, alien, and save the world!"

His strength almost instantly returning, Superman shared a look with his long-time nemesis, then, with a quick nod, sped into action!

With no time left to disarm it, Superman braced himself and lifted the whole thing into his arms. He shot into the sky in a blur, carrying the doomsday device before him!

Weakened from his recent battles and from his exposure to the kryptonite, he prayed his strength wouldn't give out, and that he was fast enough... !

The echobomb reached critical mass just as Superman escaped the atmosphere. Feeling it rumble in his hands, about to detonate, he gave a final effort and heaved it far into the blackness of space!

The explosion was enormous, and seen from earth as a magnificent supernova in the sky— but with no fuel in the void to sustain it, it flared only briefly, and then harmlessly sputtered out...

For the first time all day, Superman breathed easily and allowed himself to smile in relief. He arced around the curve of the earth, and dove back into the atmosphere...

The next day...

"This is outrageous!"

Lois Lane stormed out of Perry White's office, flinging herself sullenly into her chair, as Clark lowered the morning edition of the *Planet* he was reading. The headline read, in big bold print:

**BILLIONAIRE SCIENTIST LEX LUTHOR A HERO! DRIVES ALIEN
TERRORISTS OFF EARTH!**

By Cat Grant

After fighting Superman to a standstill, the Kryptonian criminal General Zod and his associate Faora Jax-Ur were forced to leave the planet by a Kryptonite-wielding Lex Luthor, following a failed bid at world domination. Threatened with execution by kryptonite poisoning, the two intergalactic terrorists were allowed to depart from Planet Earth, with an injunction never to return.

"Superman argued clemency for his fellow Kryptonians," Luthor was quoted later, onboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt.

"Mark my words, letting them live to threaten us again another day was a mistake. If they ever set foot on this planet again, I will not be so merciful."

Another Kryptonian is in custody with S.T.A.R. Labs in Metropolis.

His condition is unknown at this time.

The epic battle in the Antarctic has left Superman's secret fortress in ruins...

"To be fair, Lois, Lex did help Superman—." Clark began reasonably, but sensibly stopped when he noticed the storm clouds brewing on his colleague's brow.

"What do you know, Smallville! You spent most of yesterday buried under rubble from Superman's fight downtown." She grouched, though she had been the first that morning to worry over Clark's many cuts and bruises. "Besides, I wasn't talking about Grant's sycophantic article. I was talking about mine."

"The Cadmus Project." Clark nodded seriously. "We're not running it, are we?"

"No." Lois leaned forward, her elbows on her desk, her chin in her hands. "And it's not Perry's decision, either. He just got a call from the White House. The President himself is killing the story, in the interest of 'national security'."

"Lex made a deal with President Lord?" Clark guessed, raising an eyebrow. "Those are some strange bedfellows... "

"What did you expect? Lex Luther is a national hero now! Plus, I get the impression that the technology of Project Cadmus will find some sort of government application."

"I expect your secret source, Dr. Emil Hamilton, will get a phone call from the D.O.D. R&D Department any day now, then."

Lois snorted. "No doubt. But I hear he's considering an offer to go work with S.T.A.R. Labs; maybe do some *good* for mankind... " Lois looked up into Clark's eyes, her expression troubled. "You should've seen that awful creature, Clark. Bizarro. I'm telling you, he's going to cause trouble for Superman one day. Big trouble... "

Clark recalled the scene at the South Pole yesterday, of Bizarro mercilessly pummeling Faora, nothing but fearsome power and dumb rage—all directed by the will of Lex Luthor. He suppressed a shudder, and knew he would have to deal with this menace very soon... And he would also have to find a way to deal with Kru-El; they could not keep his half-brother a comatose husk forever...

But those were problems for another day.

He folded up his paper, and slapped it down on his desk, smiling up at

Lois.

"What do you say to an early lunch, Lois? We could use a break from the daily grind, at least for an hour. I hear that there's a great new Thai restaurant on Second Street... ?"

Lois perked up. She had a well-known weakness for exotic food.

"Your treat?"

Clark stood up, and offered her his arm, pushing his glasses up his nose.

"On my salary? Are you kidding? You're the Pulitzer Prize winner here!"

She linked her arm around his, falling automatically into their easy banter.

"That's more of a prestige thing. The actual cash prize is nothing to write home about."

"Still... "

Lois' musical laugh tinkled throughout the newsroom.

"Stick with me, Smallville, you'll make it in the big city yet!"

THE END!

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The Adventures of Superman #0 (2005)

The Adventures of Superman: Lost Sons of Krypton, Prelude:
Strange Visitors!

A strange visitor from another planet comes to Metropolis--- and Superman is all that stands in his way! It's a battle royale in the skies and streets of the City of Tomorrow as a mistake from Jor-El's past comes back to haunt his son. And intrepid reporter Lois Lane is onto the story of her career, but can the Man of Steel save her when she goes too far?

The Adventures of Superman #1 (2005)

The Adventures of Superman: Lost Sons of Krypton, Pt. 1: A War of Brothers!

Zod, the Destroyer of Krypton, has come to Earth, and with his Tigris and Hound, the bastard son of Jor-El, at his side, can even Superman stand against him? Meanwhile, Lois plays a deadly game to get to the bottom of the sinister machinations of Lex Luthor!

Wonder Woman #0 (2005)

Wonder Woman: A Game of Gods and Men, Prelude.

Meet the Amazing Amazon as she hosts a summit of world leaders at Themyscira House--- but danger stalks the hallowed halls as a familiar foe lurks, thirsty for the blood of her enemy Wonder Woman! Meanwhile, on Paradise Island, former USAAF Colonel Steve Trevor becomes embroiled in the deadly affairs of gods and men--- and learns that sometimes they are one and the same!

Detective Comics #0 (2005)

Detective Comics: Lustmord, Prelude.

A wicked new serial killer with a bloody history stalks the night-time streets of Gotham, and no one is safe! Reeling from personal crises, the Dark Knight must confront hidden dangers from his own past and new enemies laying in wait for him... From Crime Alley to Arkham Asylum, Batman is tested by a diabolical mastermind!

Detective Comics #1 (2005)

Detective Comics: Lustmord: Shadows and Fog.

The mystery of the Gotham Ripper deepens as his murderous rampage continues. Batman haunts the streets and shadows, determined to bring the lunatic to justice, but in Arkham Asylum, plots are laid for the Dark Knight's demise!

Detective Comics #2 (2005)

Detective Comics: Lustmord: An Uncommon Fondness for Blood. With Vicki Vale in the clutches of the Gotham Ripper, Batman must contend with a foe who has studied him for years--- and discovered his secret identity! This is the gruesome conclusion to the Lustmord storyline!

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman #0 (2005)

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman: Under Ancient Stars.

In the days of the pharaohs, in the land of the pyramids, is born a hero for all time! Defying the will of men and gods, Prince Khufu and his beloved Chay-Ara embark upon a destiny filled with triumph and tragedy, sacrifice and murder. With the wizard Nabu and the champion of Shazam who will one day be known as Black Adam at their side, they must use the power of the otherworldly Thanagarian Nth Metal and the gifts of the hawk-god Horus to defeat the villainous immortal tyrant known as Vandal Savage! Born in the fires of war, undying passion and treacherous betrayal, this is a definitive retelling of the ancient origin of the hero who will be known as--- Hawkman!

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman #2 (2005)

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman: Wings of Destiny, Part 2.

The two part origin arc of the Golden Age Hawkman concludes as Carter Hall takes up the mantle of the immortal hero and races against time to save Shiera Saunders from the clutches of the villainous Dr. Anton Haster! But first he must survive the attack of the undead Sons of Anubis, and defeat the man who is destined to slay him!

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman #1 (2005)

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman: Wings of Destiny, Part 1.

"Wings of Destiny, Pt. 1" First in a two part origin arc! It is 1938, and the world hovers on the brink of war... Troubled by dreams of

past lives, museum curator and archaeologist Carter Hall receives a mysterious package from a lost colleague that sends him across the globe to Egypt, where he will be reunited with an immortal love and encounter an enemy that stalks him through the ages! A hero discovers his destiny as the Golden Age Hawkman is born!

Wonder Woman #1 (2005)

Wonder Woman: The Swords of the Amazons!

As Wonder Woman hunts the Cheetah, Doom's Doorway opens and Themyscira is besieged by the horrors of the underworld! Diana must contend with a deadly and secret mastermind determined to destroy her and all she holds dear!

Teen Titans #0 (2005)

Teen Titans: Friends and Heroes.

Reeling from recent harrowing events in Gotham, Dick Grayson struggles with the decision to hang up his cape and mask forever as he goes off to college in New York City. Joined by Roy Harper and Wally West, the trio have a fateful meeting with the girls who will forever change their lives! Guest starring Wonder Woman!

Wonder Woman #2 (2005)

Wonder Woman: The Rage of Angels.

As the Minotaur leads the Sons of Uranus against the walls of Themyscira and Wonder Woman does battle with Typhon, the Father of Monsters, a more devastating threat comes to Olympus... Nothing will be the same after this issue!

Teen Titans #1 (2005)

Teen Titans: Serpent's Tooth, Part 1 (of 2).

As the team comes together, Wally West is seduced by a mysterious girl with a dangerous secret. The Titans must infiltrate the church of a fanatical ancient cult to rescue one of their own, but a fierce enemy awaits them: Enter Brother Blood!

Teen Titans #2 (2005)

Teen Titans: Serpent's Tooth, Part 2 (of 2).

The Titans have fallen to Mother Mayhem and a dark messiah is on the brink of awakening! Only Dick Grayson and his new ally,

the mysterious and dangerous girl known as Raven, stand in the way of the resurrection of the dreaded... Brother Blood!

New Outsiders #0 (2005)

New Outsiders: What Happens in Vegas...

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MATURE READERS TITLE.

A gritty and realistic look at vice, corruption and superheroing in Sin City! Meet the New Outsiders---Green Arrow, Black Canary, Huntress, Batgirl, Zatanna, and a driven District Attorney named Adrian Chase, the Vigilante!--- an unorthodox team of heroes banded together to stand against a sinister conspiracy and depraved foes!

New Outsiders #1 (2005)

New Outsiders: House Rules: Luck be a Lady.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MATURE READERS TITLE.

Things heat up in Vegas as the Vigilante and Huntress face off against each other, and Green Arrow and Black Canary enlist the aid of young college prodigy Barbara Gordon to break into L'Inferno and rescue an old friend from the clutches of the criminal organization, the House, and its cruel mistress, Roulette--- and only Zatanna stands in their way!

New Outsiders #2 (2005)

New Outsiders: House Rules: The Most Dangerous Game.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MATURE READERS TITLE.

With Black Lightning's life at stake and Green Arrow and Black Canary in the clutches of the House, Batgirl looks for some unlikely allies as she plays a dangerous game with Roulette in the conclusion of the New Outsiders origin arc!

JSA: Legends of the Golden Age #0 (2005)

Justice Society of America: Legends of the Golden Age: The Society, Prelude.

In the dark days before WWII, A Secret Society of Super Villains unleash a masterplan to seize the world in its iron grip of tyranny! But, in the gathering shadows of war, there is a glimmer of hope! The emerging mystery men of America--- Hawkman! the Flash! Hourman! the Atom! Starman! Dr. Fate! the Sandman! and the Amazing Amazon, Wonder Woman!--- rise up in a Justice Society

to oppose the evil oppressors! But can even they withstand--- the Spear of Destiny!?!

All-Star Comics #1 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Captain Marvel, Part 1 (of 2).

At last! The history of the World's Mightiest Mortal in the DC2 is finally revealed! The ancient wizard Shazam recalls the career of his champion, even as foes from the past regroup to threaten the world once more. But will there be a Captain Marvel to stand against them?

Action Comics #7 (2006)

Action Comics: Hostile Takeover.

What is Genesis Corporation? Clark and Lois want to know--- and so does Lex Luthor! The Countdown to the Crisis heats up as some major players are revealed and a three-way brawl erupts in the skies over Metropolis!

Action Comics #8 (2006)

Action Comics: For All Mankind...

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 9!

Darkseid has assembled nearly all of the components to complete the Anti-Life Equation. Now, Wonder Woman leads a daring mission to the very gates of Darkseid's palace to rescue the Man of Steel and bring hope to the war-torn planet Earth! Don't dare miss this pivotal chapter, as one man shows just what it means to be a hero! You won't believe the shocking ending!

Action Comics #9 (2006)

Action Comics: Return to Smallville, Part 1 (of 4).

In the wake of the crisis, the greatest tragedy of his life brings Clark Kent home to Smallville. But can you go home again? A new era in the life of the Man of Steel begins here! New dangers await, an old romance is rekindled--- and you won't believe the shocking ending!

Action Comics #11 (2006)

Action Comics: Return to Smallville, Part 3 (of 4).

The mystery villain stands revealed and the truth about Connor finally comes out! Superman stands alone against friend and foe

alike and the surprises keeps coming in this penultimate chapter of the new adventures of the Man of Steel!

Action Comics #10 (2006)

Action Comics: Return to Smallville, Part 2 (of 4).

Reeling from Lana Lang's recent revelation, Clark is forced to re-evaluate his future--- unaware that a secret enemy is lurking and waiting to destroy him! Meanwhile, Lois Lane shows up in Smallville on the trail of the biggest story of her career: the secret identity of Superman!

All-Star Comics #2 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Captain Marvel, Part 2 (of 2).

Billy Batson has no time to adjust to his new role as Captain Marvel as the Monster Society of Evil unleashes their attack upon Fawcett City! And not even the wizard Shazam is safe when the villains storm the Rock of Eternity and a new, deadly fiend is born!

Wonder Woman #8 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Hell Hath No Fury...

All-Star Comics #5 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Martian Manhunter.

Snatched across time and space by the machine of Dr. Erdel, J'onnn J'onzz is the Last Son of Mars, a dead planet wasted by a telepathic plague created by his own brother. On Earth, he is the Martian Manhunter, a crusader for justice in the years after the JSA retired and before the advent of Superman. Now, hoping to at last find his place on his adopted homeworld, he is John Jones, Private Investigator--- but his quiet retirement is at an end when a beautiful dame walks into his office with legs to kill for and a fiery disposition...

Rogues Gallery #1 (2006)

Rogues Gallery: Catwoman: Hot Tin Roof.

A wave of cat burglaries sweeps through Gotham's elite society! But as the Crown Jewels of Bahdnesia come to the city, can the beautiful socialite Selina Kyle resist the lure? Sparks fly when

Batman comes face to face for the first time with the deadly feline fatale, Catwoman!

DC2 Special #1: An Arkham Christmas Carol (2006)

DC2 Special: An Arkham Christmas Carol.

Wonder Woman #4 (2006)

Wonder Woman: The Eye of the Storm.

The true enemy is at last revealed, and the gods of Olympus discover there is a traitor among them! Meanwhile, the war on Paradise Island comes to a turning point as mysterious new arrivals appear--- but are they friends or foes? And in the end, Diana must set out upon a new quest to save everything she holds dear...

Wonder Woman #5 (2006)

Wonder Woman: The Quest for the Syrinx.

Nemesis is awake, and destined to bring about the end of the cosmos! Only the Syrinx, the Pipes of Pan, can stave off the inevitable fate of the universe, and now Diana, Hippolytus and Steve Trevor set off on a quest to the isle of the witch to find the legendary artifact. But will Circle prove Wonder Woman's most implacable foe yet?

As the traitor to Olympus makes his next move, the gods brace themselves for the final assault of the Furies!

Wonder Woman #3 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Horns of Doom.

Both Olympus and Paradise Island are reeling from the cataclysmic events of last issue, and the true enemy is at last revealed! Be here when Wonder Woman and the Minotaur face off at last under the walls of Themyscira!

Wonder Woman #6 (2006)

Wonder Woman: The Isle of the Witch.

The Quest for the Syrinx continues! As Wonder Woman confronts her old enemy, the witch Circe, the plots and machinations of all the players start to become known: friends are not who they seem and the true plans of the Olympian traitor are revealed as the

Game of Gods and Mortals hurtles towards it's epic conclusion next issue!

Wonder Woman #7 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Down the Widening Gyre.

Wonder Woman must journey into the Underworld to retrieve the Mask of Hecate for Circe, as time is running out! Even the Gods of Olympus prepare to meet their end as Nemesis, She Whom None Can Escape finally rises to work her terrible will, and the final moves of the Game of Gods and Mortals are played out! The Olympian traitor is revealed--- and his masterplan at last is clear!--- in this penultimate chapter of the epic storyline that began in Issue 0!

Wonder Woman #9 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Armageddon Aria.

The war is over and Wonder Woman is faced with a host of new problems: what to do about the war-like Lost Amazons, who will rule Paradise Island--- and who wants her to get... married?!? And Godfrey's Glorious Crusades reaches fever pitch as a deadly new foe is unleashed upon Diana--- and leads directly into next month's crisis!

Wonder Woman #10 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Darkseid Is.

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 13!

At long last, the Anti-Life Equation is within the grasp of the Lord of Apokolips! The world's greatest heroes come together for the first time--- to destroy each other! Don't miss the epic battle as Wonder Woman stands alone against a world turned against her!

JSA: Legends of the Golden Age #1 (2006)

JSA: Legends of the Golden Age: Attack of the Giant Nazi Robots!

It's mayhem at the 1939 Worlds Fair in New York, as Baron Blitzkrieg attacks the greatest gathering of scientific minds in the world, and the Secret Society of Super Villains continue their quest for the Three Holy Artifacts!

This is it! The birth of the JSA!

Teen Titans #10 (2006)

Teen Titans: Forever and Never, Amen!
Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 7!
The city of Metropolis teeters on the edge of an uneasy peace as the truce between Lex Luthor and Darkseid begins to break down. Who are the Forever People and what happens when they turn the city of refugees against the Titans? Bedlam ensues!

Justice League #0 (2006)
Justice League: Justice Falls.
Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, concludes!
This is it! The final battle between Earth and Apokolips as the World's Greatest Heroes take the fight to Darkseid! Don't dare miss this issue--- one year in the making!--- and the senses-shattering conclusion to this epic storyline!

Justice League #1 (2006)
Justice League: A League of His Own, Part 1.
It's finally here! The World's Greatest Heroes have come together as one! But not everyone is happy about that... It's the grand opening of the Hall of Justice, and all of Metropolis has turned out to honor their saviors. But hatred and jealousy lurk in the heart of one man as he schemes to destroy the newly-formed League! And this time, the League has met its match!

Justice League #2 (2006)
Justice League: A League of His Own, Conclusion.
The most powerful members of the Justice League have fallen to Amazo. Now, only Batman stands against the villainous Professor Ivo and his killer android, with all the powers of the World's Greatest Heroes at his disposal...

World's Finest #1: Batman (2007)
Join us on Earth-X for the re-imagined Batman and his new adventures.

World's Finest #1: Superman (2007)
Join us on Earth-X for the re-imagined Superman and his new adventures.

World's Finest #1: Wonder Woman (2007)

Join us on Earth-X for the re-imagined Wonder Woman and her new adventures.

All-Star Comics Annual #1 (2007)

All-Star Comics Annual: Justice Society of America: The Time of Their Lives.

All-Star Comics #10 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 1 (of 4)

All-Star Comics #11 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 2 (of 4)

All-Star Comics #12 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 3 (of 4).

All-Star Comics #13 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 4 (of 4).

The Flash #23 (2008)

The Flash: Flash of Infinite Worlds!

When Barry Allen agreed to help his good friend Ray Palmer with an experiment, he never thought he'd find himself in another reality! The Cosmic Treadmill takes the Scarlet Speedster to a parallel Earth, and just may give him a glimpse at his own tragic destiny! Can even the Flash fight the future? Find out in this first ever DC2/DC3 crossover issue as we enter the Multiverse!

Adventure Comics #11 (2010)

Adventure Comics: Stranger New Visitor.

The long-awaited return of the DC2's original Superman book, by its original creative team! Springing from the pages of last month's "Action and Adventure" Annuals, the new era for the Man of Steel continues here, as Lois investigates the sinister Evil Factory, a strange figure in a familiar costume arrives and a threat from beyond the stars strikes in the heart of Metropolis... A huge storyline for the Man of Tomorrow begins here!



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