



**Action Comics #31**  
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**Space**

Verdan twisted the control on the massive world harvester space craft. At the end of the mile long vessel a section slid open and round glowing nodules sprayed out, falling like round globs of snow toward the planet below.

Verdan sat back and sipped his bitter truder tea. A few cycles and the work would be done, then autopilot back to base for delivery. This was the easiest job he had ever had with The Planetary Conglomerate, lots better than raking out the modern stables. The stench those beasts produced was unbearable.

Now all he had to do was input the coordinates of a world ripe for the taking, and sit back while the harvester nodules collect every usable resource from the target planet, and then take the raw energy back to The Conglomerate Home-world for refinement and distribution.

It was a sweet job.

Superman bit down on the juicy fruit and handed one to Kara.

"It's a Date Plum *diospyros lotus*, ancient people called Greeks called it "the fruit of the Gods".

Kara took the fruit and bit it. "mmmm, it's good." She said between bites.

The juice dribbled down her chin. Superman took the end of his cape and dabbed it away.

"This place, the rain forest, reminds me of home. I like it. Not at all like that Metropolis. That female that I meet? Is that your mate?"

Superman blushed. "Not exactly, we're uh", Superman searched for a word she might understand, "courting"

"Do you have offspring"?

"No."

"And until you found me, you thought you were the last of our kind."

"Yeah, it's complicated, here."

"That is why I would like to go home."

"Kara, are you sure you want to go back."

"Yes, it is my home as this is yours, as much as this place reminds me of home, it is not. I miss my", she searched for the word. "friends."

Superman and Kara slowly lifted up, from the rain forest floor, taking care not to damage the dense canopy.

"We'll make arrangements to get you home as soon as we get back to the fortress. But I hope you will come back."

Kara reached out and touched Superman's hand.

"I'm sure I will, cousin, now that I know I have even more family."

Kara's touch was warm, not like touching a human; it actually seemed to radiate warmth.

Was this what Lois felt when she touched him, Superman wondered.

## **Metropolis: Daily Planet**

"Nice scoop on this Supergirl, Lane." Perry shouted across the newsroom from the door of his office.

Lois didn't look up from the computer screen; she kept typing and raised her hand over her head to acknowledge the accolade.

"Nice piece, Lane. The article I mean." Steve Lombard threw the paper down on Lois' desk.

"What do you want Lombard?" Lois kept typing.

"You think you can introduce me to Supergirl?"

Lois stopped typing and looked up at Steve. He had parked himself on the corner of her desk.

"No."

"Well, she'll need someone to show her the ropes, show her how things work on earth. Specifically between men and women."

Lois picked up the paper and swatted him over the head with it. "Get out, you moron!"

"Oh, come on Lois! Don't keep all the super for yourself, share the wealth, throw your old buddy Lombard a bone, or better yet throw Supergirl one."

"You are the nastiest human being I know, Lombard!"

"Why thank you, Lois, that's the nicest thing you've ever said to me." Lombard bolted out the newsroom door as Lois picked up her stapler.

"@\$\$hole", she muttered as she turned back to her computer screen.

## **The Fortress**

Superman and Kara stood looking at a large crystalline space craft.

"Keelex was able to use the schematics from my rocket, and the crystal technology of the fortress, along with other technological advances available to us through the Justice League to construct this space craft. It'll get us to your planet in hours, instead of the days it took me before."

"Us, you're going too?" Kara shifted her weight from foot to foot.

"Yes, don't worry though, I'm not staying", he smiled. "I just want to make sure you get there safely. I have a boom-tube return setup for here at the fortress, you can keep the ship in case you want to come back."

"Thank you, Kal." she tugged at the cape she now wore.

"Is the outfit not comfortable for you?" Keelex had designed clothes for her based on Superman's outfit, using a full body, Olympic swimsuit. It may or may not have been a programming flaw that added the cape.

"Oh no it's fine Keelex, just more than I'm used too. Thank you Keelex for all your help."

"It is good my programming was useful to you, safe journey Kara."

Superman and Kara sat down in the craft. Keelex turned crystals at the control panel and the ship slowly lifted out the east exit toward the top of the mountain.

Once clear of the earth's atmosphere the ships hyper/star drive, a unique combination of Kryptonian, Thanagarian and Apokoliptian technology kicked it into hyperspace.

### **Kara's Planet hours later:**

Kara stood sobbing and staring out over the horizon. Everywhere she looked there was nothing but dark ash and twisted black forms. It was if the entire planet had been ignited in a flash, like she had seen the lightning do on the plains where the hoofed beast had once roamed.

Superman laid a hand on her shoulder. "I'm sorry, Kara. I have checked the co-ordinates a thousand times this is the correct planet."

She pulled away from him. "It's you, your fault, you did this! If I had been here", she struck so swiftly that Superman didn't see it coming. The right uppercut caught him squarely under the chin and he went flying backwards uncontrollably.

He crashed down into the ash sending a plume of grey smoke into the air.

He could see her flying toward him, her speed fueled by her rage.

Superman reached out beside him grabbing the blackened husk of what once was a large tree. He brought it up placing the length of it between himself and Supergirl.

"Kara, please, I am sorry, I didn't, couldn't know."

Kara grabbed the blackened roots of the tree and pulled, it split down the middle and she wrenched it from Superman's hands.

"You took me from my home!! I COULD HAVE STOPPED THIS!" she screamed and drove the tree like a tent stake at superman, driving him into the ground.

Kara fell to her knees, the blue on the neoprene swimsuit stained black with ash. She began to weep.

"My home, my family", she paused realizing that in her anger and frustration she may have killed the last remaining family she had.

## **Metropolis**

Lois fumbled with the keys to her apartment while holding her mail in one hand. She had a bad habit of not checking her box often and as such wound up carrying large bundles of mail into the elevator. She checked her messages, Dad, Perry, cell phone carrier, Lucy, the usual suspects.

She flipped through the mound of mail, bill, bill, bill, vote for me, no he sucks vote for me, save big, cell phone carrier.

She came to the large white envelope on the bottom and threw the rest of the mail on the coffee table. She ripped open the envelope, "OK, Fero Corporation, lets see what my friends at the D & B Million Dollar Directory have to say about you."

### **Kara's Planet:**

Superman watched from beneath the surface, he had to give her time, don't push her. Something horrible had happened here. Even the rock was lifeless; the usual energy put off by precious metals was even gone. As if a giant tick had sucked all the life from the planet inside and out. Superman shifted his vision; there was something there after all, a barely perceptible energy trail. He slowly began to tunnel upwards.

Kara saw his shadow darken the already blackened ash in front of her.

"I'm sorry, she said. I know it's not your fault. What could have done this?"

"I don't know, but I think we can find out. Do you know how shift your vision to see energy?"

Kara stood, her suit, hands and face, were streaked with the black ash. "I can see the light that surrounds all things."

"Good, use that and tell me what you see." Superman pointed out toward the black horizon.

"Trails of light that all come together and go up into the sky."

"Right and I bet whatever did this left those trails."

Before he could caution her against going off half cocked, she was halfway into the stratosphere.

### **Aboard the world harvester craft**

Verdan slipped the holo cube into the player. It was a long trip and a healthy male like Verdan has to have a way to pass the time. An image of three females shimmered out from the player. "Where are all the guys at tonight"? One said. "I don't know but I sure wish we could find some." "You don't need them when we've got this." A third said.

BADDOOM! The image flickered and winked out as the ship rocked.

Verdan rolled off the bed, quickly throwing on his clothes. "What in the green tokar was that?!"

"Computer, scan hull." he shouted.

"Scan complete." it burped back over the intercom. "There is an entity assaulting hull plate 787930"

Occasionally a pirate foolishly unaware of the Planetary Conglomerates power and reach would attack one of the world harvester ships. They would soon regret it though as the ships were heavily armored and bristling with weaponry.

Verdan watched as the screen as some sort of small being pounded on the outside of the ship. Too small to be recognized as more than a piece of space junk the ships automated weaponry had not yet fired. Every erg of energy used was less to sell on the black market.

Kara flew headlong into the massive ship. Someone in there had killed her home, and she would make them pay. Nearby a panel whirred and a large gun slid from a recess and fired. The energy washed over Kara, unaffected, she stared intently at the base of the weapon.

Verdan could not believe what he was seeing as beams shot from the little creatures eyes and cut the armature that held the weapon. Energy gushed from the open wound as Verdan worked at the controls to stop the energy hemorrhage.

Kara pulled back her fist and punched through the weakened metal. The pressure inside came rushing out at her, but she held on and pulled the

metal backward till she could pull herself through.

Verdan watched the screen switching on the emergency system as the creature crawled through the hole it had just punched in his hull! What was that thing!

Kara fell to the floor inside, she heard a slight humming and saw a blue flash as a force field kicked in covering the hole she had just crawled through, a second later and she would have been trapped between the inside of the pressurized ship and the vacuum of space.

Verdan grabbed the amour suit and a plasma rifle. Whoever, whatever this was it had to be stopped, there was no way he was going back to the conglomerate and telling them that some red and black bug had compromised his payload. He would take his chance with the bug, thank you very much.

The blast caught her in the shoulder as she rounded the corner of a corridor, stunning her and spinning her to the ground. Verdan leveled the blaster at her head.

The Planetary Conglomerates reach was galaxy wide. They played mostly in the back star systems, out of the way places were most sentient races didn't go. Their crew and "emissaries" however were very diversified, most species having those members that were willing to make a quick credit and not ask questions. This meant for the Conglomerate that communicating with all the different races had to be simplified; all their employees and ships had universal translators installed, which explains how Verdan heard Kara say,

"You! You destroyed my home, and I am going to kill you." She leapt into the air as Verdan fired the plasma rifle. But neither force met their intended target.

Superman appeared between them, knocking the plasma charge away with the back of his hand and blocking Kara's advance with his broad shoulders.

"Kara! Stop this, you have no idea what's going on here."

"I know he is responsible and he will pay."

Verdan clicked a switch on the plasma rifle and another charge more powerful than the first began to build up. "I don't know who both of you are, but this ship and its contents are property of the Conglomerate, you are trespassers and will be executed!"

"Now, hold on, we're just looking for some answerooooOOOWWWWW" Superman yelled in pain, as Verdan's plasma blast seared the skin on his chest.

"Computer, 45-63" Verdan called into the air as he ran back toward the control room. It would cost him more precious energy cargo, but better to return to the Conglomerate with some than nothing.

Kara went to the fallen Superman, "Are you hurt."

"Ughn still burns, but I'll live." Kara turned to go after Verdan. Superman grabbed her arm.

"Kara, please, I know you're hurting, don't kill him."

She didn't have time to answer. Thousands of small bots came swarming up the corridor. They covered the two Kryptonians completely. Tiny plasma bolts stung like needles into their skin.

Superman yelled to Kara, "There's too many! We have to cut off the energy source. I'll cover you, use your vision."

Superman clapped his hands together, the concussion destroying most of the bots, but just as soon more swarmed in their place.

Kara spun around till she was a blur. She had done something like this before when she was attacked as a child by large stinging insects, it had the same effect with the bots, slinging them into the walls of the ship, some exploded, most went back on the attack.

Supergirl swatted them aside. The ship's energy center glowed like a beacon to her vision, she headed down the corridor toward it.

The more Superman fought, the more bots attacked him. The plasma bolts from the little bots had gotten stronger. They had gone from stinging to hurting. Superman swatted them down and more came. Heat vision blast reduced them to slag, more came. They tugged at his eyes, his ears, his fingers. Superman was no longer visible under the shiny moving skin of bots. He had to keep going, make himself the bigger threat than Kara, and keep them occupied so she could get to the energy source.

Kara made a double fist and slammed against the bulkhead of the reactor room and the door folded like paper. Around the corner the bots came running at her, their metal feet clicking on the floor like the sound of metal popcorn. They overwhelmed her in a second forcing her into the reactor room.

Covering her like a blanket, the plasma bolts cut into her. It would be easy to let them take me, she thought. My planet is gone, the place I grew up, the creatures that I lived with, everything is gone.

"Kara!" Superman stood in the doorway, his body pock-marked with plasma burns.

Everything that is, except him.

With a burst of super speed superman grabbed each bot and flung them from her. Almost as quickly they were returning to both of them.

"I have an idea." Kara said, "Follow me".

Kara looked to floor and her heat vision cut through the bots and into the floor. Her, Superman, the bots, they all broke through to the next level. Kara poured on the heat cutting into the next floor. Superman picked up the idea and added his own to the barrage. They quickly dropped through the floors, till finally they were at the outer hull.

Superman and Supergirl both punched the hull, and it ruptured outward, spewing forth man, woman and bots.

The ships energy had been severely drained fighting the two invaders so there was no energy to spare to seal the gaping wound. The tunnel the

pair had cut lead straight back to the reactor, the weakened floor buckled under the decreasing pressure and the reactors moorings popped and groaned as it pitched forward. Wires and cables snapped as little bots tried to seal the damage and effects repairs, but it was no use. The reactor toppled over and the energy flared forth.

Superman reached out to Kara's arm and steadied her. He touched his belt and the ship they had arrived in shimmered and appeared. They got in and the craft pressurized with a whoosh.

"Well, that idea certainly worked out well." Superman said.

"The being, that did this he's still in there." said Kara, "We have to ... ", she was interrupted by the light filling the dark void of space, as the ships reactor went critical and the energy stores ignited.

The kryptonian ship was buffeted along by the expanding energy wave. Shards of it began to break and shatter off.

Superman hugged Kara close to him. "I'm sorry", he whispered as he activated the boom tube to home.

### **The Planetary Conglomerate Homeworld:**

Verdan could not see who he was addressing, it wasn't just dark, all light, all wavelengths had been masked. Whoever the Conglomerate was, they were making sure no one knew them.

"Verdan why did you leave your cargo", a voice boomed.

"The creatures that boarded the ship, they cut right through the hull! I couldn't stop them! They were awful, just awful!"

"We have studied the holo recordings of the incident, the beings that you encountered will be dealt with accordingly. We will ask you again, why did you leave your cargo"?

"I barely escaped with my life."

"YOUR LIFE IS NOTHING THE CARGO IS ALL!"

A shaft of light sliced through the darkness from overhead, and Verdan was turned to ash.

**Smallville:**

The tiny bell mounted over the doorway of the Kent General Store tinkled, announcing the arrival of a customer.

"I'm in the back, I'll be right out." Martha called out.

Martha parted the little curtain that separated the stockroom from the retail floor and was met by her son Clark, standing with outstretched arms and a smile as wide as Kansas.

"Clark!" Martha hugged her son, and Clark hugged back.

"It's good to see you Mom." Clark said into the top of Martha's gray hair, she smelled like apricots.

Martha broke the hug and held him at arms length. "I read in the paper about ... " Martha stopped, she just now noticed the girl standing at the front door looking intently at everything, as if she were seeing it all for the first time.

"Is that her?" She asked, "of course it is". Martha slipped around Clark, "Hello, Kara. My name is Martha."

"Hello."

"Well lets not all stand around here. Come in the back. Let's sit down and have some pie."

**One whole rhubarb pie later:**

"Are you sure you are OK with this Mom?" Clark asked as he finished his glass of milk.

"It's great Clark, Kara and I can get to know each other and she can help me with the heavy lifting." She winked at Kara.

Kara smiled. Martha handed her a napkin and motioned that she had milk on her lip. Kara wiped it away.

"Ok, but I want you to have this." Clark handed Martha a small device that looked like a simple button. "Take this, it's a League signal device, you need me, you hit that button, and if for any reason I can't be reached, it will call headquarters."

Clark then handed a small gold cell phone to Kara. "You take this. It looks like a cell phone and it can be used like one, but thanks to my friend Ray Palmer, watch this."

Clark lowered his head looking over his glasses. "Just say, Keelex."

The little phone flipped open and hovered in the air. Two appendages unfolded from the side and a triangular shaped head with a visual input screen lifted from the top.

"Keelex." Kara exclaimed.

"You two seemed to hit it off so well I had Mr. Palmer help me to disguise him as a cell phone so he could stay with you and continue to help you adjust to earth."

Kara stood and hugged Clark. "Thank you, Ka ... I mean Clark... That may be the hardest thing to get used to."

Martha picked up the dishes and walked to the sink. "You'll catch on in no time dear, I'm sure of it. I'm sure Clark has lots of other things to do, let you, I and Kleenex go see what we can do about your room."

"Keelex" The small gold robot correct her.

**End**

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