KINGDOM COME™

Dedicated to
CHRISTOPHER REEVE
who makes us believe
that a man can fly.
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In Elseworlds, heroes are taken from their usual settings and put into strange times and places—some that have existed or might have existed, and others that can’t, couldn’t or shouldn’t exist.

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DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, New York 10019
A division of Warner Bros. – A Time Warner Entertainment Company.
Printed in Canada. First Printing.

Cover painting by Alex Ross. Kingdom Come
fort created by Alex Ross & Todd Klein.
Publication design by Graphitti Designs/J. Beatman.
THE NEW BARDs

An Introduction by
Elliot S. Maggin

In the waning moments of the twentieth century, the superhero is Everyman.

Look at the way we live: traveling over the Earth at astounding speeds with unimaginable ease; communicating instantly at will with people in the farthest corners of the globe; engineering economies, driving environmental forces, working wonders. If a person from only a hundred years or so in the past could look in on our lives, that person would suppose that we were not mortals, but gods. He would be bowled over by what the most ordinary among us could do with a car or a light switch or an automatic teller machine. This is the way many of us have always looked upon our super-heroes—as though they were gods. Our person from a lost century would be wrong about us, of course, but no more wrong than we are about our heroes.

In the story that you hold in your hands, Mark Waid and Alex Ross tell us that our proper response to the inexorable march of progress that has brought us to this place and time in the history of civilization is to find a way to confront it responsibly. Not modestly. Not unself-consciously. Not with faith in a power greater than ours to descend from the sky and set things right despite our best efforts to screw up. We have an obligation to know who we are and where we are and what we can do. We have an obligation to understand the ramifications of the things we do, and to choose to do them—or not—with our eyes open.

That is what Kingdom Come is about.

As I write this, I am completing
a novel—about a hundred thousand words, one string after the other without pictures other than the occasional new free-standing illustration by Alex Ross—called *Kingdom Come*. It is an elaboration in prose of the story that follows.

In order to write it, I, like Mark and Alex, have to believe in heroes. I do. I believe in Superman. For real. I really believe in Wonder Woman, so help me. I believe in Santa Claus. I believe that men have walked on the moon. I believe that every Passover Elijah the prophet comes over for a sip of wine. I believe in metaphors. Metaphors are real. That is why the Scriptures are composed not only of the proverbs and prophecies that Pastor McCoy, in the pages that follow, spouts in involuntary reflex; but that is why those Scriptures surround and embrace those pronouncements in stories—the allegories and metaphors—that teach us our values. Here before you is a clash of good against evil, of course, but more than that. There are clashes of judgment, clashes among different interpretations of what is good and what is justice, and clashes over who is to suffer the wages of the evil born of our best intentions.

This is a love story. This is a story of hatred and rage. This is the *Iliad*. This is the story of how we—us, we ourselves; you and I—choose to use whatever special powers and abilities we have, when even those powers and abilities are only a little bit beyond those of mortal men. This is a story about truth obscured, justice deferred and the American way distorted in the hands of petty semanticists.

Super-hero stories—whether their vehicle is through comic books or otherwise—are today the most coherent manifestation of the popular unconscious. They're stories not about gods, but about the way humans wish themselves to be, ought, in fact, to be. They're the successors to the stories that once came from the hoe-down and the campfire and the wandering bard. We—all of us—come up with these stories all the time around dorms and car pools and along cafeteria lines at work and at school. Here's one:

I have a friend named Jeph. You know Jeph. I was maybe nineteen or twenty and he was maybe twelve or thirteen and I was a student at this college and Jeph's stepdad was a big muckamuck at the college and stepdad and I made friends. I went over to stepdad's house for dinner one day and Jeph and I got to talking about our common ground: our mutual love for super-heros and their stories. We came up with a nifty story over mom and stepdad's dinner table. See, I'd just sold my first comic-book script, a Green Arrow story called "What Can One Man Do?" and I had a problem. I had a meeting soon with Julius Schwartz, the Bard of Bards, to see whether I was a one-trick pony or I could do this sort of thing again. I had to come up with a hit-it-outta-the-park idea for a Superman story or else spend the next three years in law school. I guess I told Jeph a few of my ideas and I guess Jeph told me a few of his. And Jeph came up with this thing he called "Why Must There Be a Superman?" It was about the Guardians of the Universe planting a new idea in Big Blue's head.

The idea was that maybe, in his zeal to preserve life and ease the path of the human race, Superman was keeping ordinary everyday good humans from growing on their own. Maybe he was killing the butterfly by helping it out of the chrysalis. Not for sure, but just maybe. That was Jeph's idea.

So I went to Gotham to see the Bard and I had maybe a dozen little germs of ideas packed under my scalp. I'd try this one on him. I'd toss him that one. I'd pitch him another one. Some of them he liked; some of them he didn't. Some of them inspired ideas of the Bard's own; some of them made him snort or snore. By the end of a couple of hours—they were a loud, intense couple of hours, as hours I spent with the Bard of Bards always would be—I was emotionally exhausted and still he wanted to hear more. So I dredged up this idea about what might happen if the Guardians came calling on Superman with the tiniest little criticism of how he was going about his job. Now you're talking fresh stuff, the old man let me know. He got excited. He yanked people in from the hall and made me repeat the idea for them.

I called the story "Must There Be a Superman?" and Saint Curt and Murphy drew it and it made me happy and I put words in Superman's mouth pretty much steadily for the next fifteen years and never went to law school. And I swear I did not have a clue where the idea had come from. Who knows where
ideas come from anyway? I didn't remember—still don't remember, in fact, but I believe Jeph—until Jeph told me about his contribution years later. Like twenty or so years later.

Jeph has never suffered, I don't believe, for my inconsiderate oversight, and in fact has always been my friend. He's done well, too. With his buddy Matthew he wrote the first great super-hero movie of the modern period, Commando with Arnold Schwarzenegger, and lots of other great stuff. And one day later on I was editor of Jeph's first comic-book series of his own, an eight-issue masterpiece with Tim Sale called Challengers of the Unknown. Now he writes for Hollywood and he writes for DC and Marvel and he's happy and he's still my friend, and now I get to make this right too.

Today there are new bards and new stories. Not long ago Mark and Alex went to Gotham to see Dan Raspler—who, it seems to me, was just a smart, ambitious kid last time I saw him and now he's a big muckamuck like Jeph's stepdad—to sell Dan on an idea about what the world would be like if all the super-heroes were to retire and their children, grandchildren, and successors generally turn out to be schmucks.

The theme of "Must There Be a Superman," that icon of another life, is the theme that the new bards of Kingdom Come continue. Maybe complete. It is about the time in the lives of Superman, Captain Marvel, Wonder Woman, Batman and the others, when they learn that they are not gods. And it is about the time in their lives when finally they learn that despite their limitations they must be potent and responsible anyway. Now is the time in the life of the human race when all of us need to learn these same things. That is why this story, despite its garish primary-colored clothing, is an important one.

The heroes of fable and fact to whose virtue we all aspire, are not only colorful people leading vivid lives; they traditionally understand the value of human life in all its places and conditions. But real-life heroes, unlike many of the icons we have created, also understand human dignity and human immortality, and these are concepts that are lacking in, for example, Superman's education. Heroes especially need to understand the value of the things of a life: its artifacts, its ideas, its loves. It is the markers you leave along that road that define you. It is the trees a man plants, the children he raises and the stories he tells that signify his life. It is the palaces a people build, the heritage they inspire, the art they create that makes their civilization. I've been trying to tell Superman for years that he mustn't just save lives, he has to spit-polish the real estate too. He's never understood that. He never got it until Mark and Alex told him. They got through to him, finally, and for that I'm proud of them.

In Kingdom Come, Mark and Alex draw a dichotomy between the human race and what we call the metahuman race. It is the source of conflict throughout the story. And the story's synthesis is the realization that this distinction is false. As clearly as another hero, Mahatma Gandhi, asserted that he is a Hindu as well as a Muslim—as well as a Christian, a Jew or a Buddhist if that becomes appropriate—so do we learn here that the most ordinary among us are heroes, and the most colorful and vivid among us are quite ordinary and flawed. It is a conclusion to which our new bards lead us as elegantly and precisely as Socrates led us through an argument or Pythagoras led us through a geometric proof.

Even super-heroes need to grow. We know that now. When you read Kingdom Come, you will too.

If we were to peek in on the lives of the people of the Earth in generations to come, surely we would think we were gazing upon Olympus. And of course, again, we would be wrong. They are only our children, our grandchildren and our successors who will surely stride the Earth as titans in those days, wearing our own features and our own shortcomings.

They are our messengers to that resplendent future. And they will bring with them into their time whatever values and iconography that we have to offer them today. Here in the pages that follow is an admirable start. To cite the sentiment of another old friend whom I miss (And if you travel west anytime, Alan, come find me, will you?): This is an imaginary story...aren't they all?

Elliot S! Maggin
Where the Wind Hits Heavy
New Year's, 1997
CHAPTER ONE

Strange Visitor
“There were voices...

...and thunderings, and lightnings...

“...and an earthquake.”
“And there followed hail and fire mingled with blood.

“There fell a great star from heaven, burning as if it were a lamp..."
...and I beheld and heard an Angel...

...saying with a loud voice...

...woe, woe, WOE to the inhabitants of the Earth...
I see things, Norman. Divine prophecies!

Wesley, you've had them before. That's why you're here...

Not nightmares, Pastor!

Visions!

Ah, Jeez...

Mr. Dodds...

Doc-tor...

Wesley, please... take comfort. There is peace awaiting...

Seven thieves will utter their voices! And it was given unto him to make war with the saints!

Babylon falls, Norman, I be the one who listens to me.

The sands run out... and I can do nothing but wait in my own faith for sleep to finally claim me! Someone must act!

For me, not Kaffee for you.
HEAR ME, NORMAN! I OWE YOU MUCH...

...yet I have nothing to leave you... save insight...

...and I will give power unto my two witnesses...

...huh-huh... huff... huff... huff!

...Mr. Weeley...

...huff... huff... huff!

It's all there! the end is near! Read the book!

REEEEAD!

First...

...first Corinthians 15?

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep..."

"...but we shall all be changed..."
There was more, but Wesley never heard it.

In the end, he was listening to another voice...from Lord knows where.

My service was brief...his mourners, few. My wife and I met Wesley in his twilight...and had been the last of his friends.

He came to our church questioning what there was to believe in these days. I wish now I'd had better answers.

The three of us shared many a dinner in this apartment. Elton, God rest her soul, would in one moment tease Wesley mercilessly about living in the past...

...and in the next, beg him to spin another tale of his...how did he put it...his glory days.

Sometimes, I wish I'd made more time to listen. With her, Wesley's stories were melodies of wonder. Back then, it seemed, his dreams were of yesterdays, not tomorrows. Of times bright, not barbaric.

Once upon a time, he said, he'd called himself the Sandman.

U.N. Enacts More Metahuman Censures

Will Censure Curb Metahuman Violence?

91% NO
7% YES
2% UNDECIDED

He was a super-hero.

Klik

You'll excuse the expression.
Before the bitterness overcame him, Wesley and I would walk... pick our way through the city.

For hours, he'd bemoan the passing of things like Olympic Games and Nobel Prizes.

Sometimes, he'd ambush complete strangers and ask them how much they missed the concept of human achievement.

I don't know what surprised me more. The oddity of the question...

...or the growing number of people who seemed to know what he was talking about.

I'd try to defuse him. I'd joke that he was growing like any old codger unable to appreciate the new generation.

He wouldn't laugh.

Wesley insisted that human initiative began to erode the day people asked a new breed to face the future for them.
Of costumed champions who had, in his day, inspired human achievement...not belittled it.

He swore he'd never forget the world they came from.

He wanted them to be remembered.

He wanted them to live again.

GOOD AFTERNOON, CITIZEN!

HOW MAY I SERVE YOU?
SO WHADDAYA THINK? NOT A BAD JOB ON THE NIGHTS, HUH? THEY TELL ME I MAKE A PRETTY GOOD GREEN...

WHADDAYA CALLIN’? ARROW.

HELLO, CITIZENS—HOW MAY I SERVE YOU...

I WANT TO SPEAK TO THE MANAGER TELL BOOSTERGOLD THAT BERNIE HERE TO SEE HIM...

I’LL HAVE AN AMERICAN WAY ON WHITE...

AND FOR THE LADY?

GIVE ME A BLACK CONCOCT, STRAIGHT UP...

...DAMN IT SOMEBOY’S RUN OFF WITH THE HANDCUFF, ARROW...AGAIN...

...SO GET ANOTHER ONE OUT OF THE BACK...
The Sandman had gone to his grave without one grain of faith in the future.

And the saddest part was... he was far from alone.

With each passing day, hope for tomorrow has become more and more precious a commodity among everyday folk.

Still, I tried to keep the faith... and knew to the scriptures.

According to the word of God, the meek would one day inherit the earth.

Someday.
But God never accounted for the mighty.
The world Wesley left is filled not with his heroes... but with their children and grandchildren.

They number in the nameless thousands... progeny of the past, inspired by the legends of those who came before...

...If not the morals.

They no longer fight for the right. They fight simply to fight; their only foes each other.

The superhumans boast that they've all but eliminated the super-villains of yesteryear.
Small comfort.

They move freely through the streets... through the world.

They are challenged...

...but unopposed.

They are, after all...

...our protectors.
I tell myself that this, too, shall pass... that humans still have a chance to reclaim a world rightfully theirs while it still exists.

That in the face of superhuman might and superhuman odds...

time has not yet run out for humanity.
I am wrong.

“AND THERE FOLLOWED HAIL AND FIRE WINGED WITH BLOOD...”
As they leave, they shy from my gaze. My congregation has trusted me for years... and today I betrayed them.

In mourning... unable even to fathom the news that has stopped the world, they came to me seeking encouragement...

...that I cannot give.

The news...

Wesley knew.

The visions he had... the prophecies, the dreams... I thought he was insane.

His dreams are now mine... and they are visions of utter despondence. He wanted someone to act... but what can anyone do?

But if he was...

...then so now am I.

Kansas proved it. Thanks to the superhuman, the end is near... and the Word of God, so very far...
I HAVE NEED OF YOU, NORMAN MCCAY.

AND NOW THE VISIONS TALK TO ME, I HAVE GONE MIND...

HARDLY, IN FACT, YOUR SANITY MAY BE PARAMOUNT TO MANKIND'S SURVIVAL.

EVEN AS I STAND BEFORE YOU, AN ACT OF UNSPEAKABLE EVIL HAS BEGUN TO MANIFEST. ARMAGEDDON IS FAST APPROACHING.

BUT YOU KNOW THIS.

YOU HAVE THE DREAMS.

YOU... SEE INTO MY MIND... MY SOUL? YOU ARE AN ANGEL...?

LONG AGO, I WOULD HAVE JUDGED SWIFTLY, WITH CLARITY... BUT MY FACULTIES ARE NOT WHAT THEY ONCE WERE.

IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT MY TASK, I MUST ANCHOR MYSELF TO A HUMAN SOUL WHO SEEMS JUSTICE.

OF A SORT, A HIGHER POWER HAS CHARGED ME WITH THE TASK OF PUNISHING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS COMING EVIL.

BUT I DON'T...

YOU WILL.
IF THIS IS TRUE... IF THIS IS NOT SOME NEW DELUSION... THEN WHY ME?

NOW YOUR DREAMS WILL GUIDE US BOTH IN ORDER TO RAISE MY MISSION. WE MUST BOTH WITNESS THE EVENTS THAT WILL LEAD TO ARMAGEDDON.

BECAUSE I CAME TOO LATE IN SEARCH OF THE DREAMER WESLEY DOBBS, SHE SAW TOMORROW WITH A POWER HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND... BUT PASSED TO YOU NONETHELESS.

COME WITH ME.

I... I CANNOT SIMPLY LEAVE MY CONGREGATION DEPENDS ON ME. THEY LOOK TO ME FOR--

VERY WELL... BUT EXPLAIN THIS TO ME.

IF YOU ARE TRULY A BEING OF GREAT POWER... HOW IS IT YOU CAN FIND NO WAY TO AVOID THIS CATACLYSM?

THAT IS NOT MY TASK.

ONCE, EARTH BOASTED OTHER SAVIORS WHO MIGHT HAVE STOOD IN THE TIDE OF DESTRUCTION. BUT AS YOU WILL SEE, THEY ARE NO LONGER THE SOLUTION.

THEY ARE, IN MANY WAYS... THE PROBLEM.
WHERE ARE WE?
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
I SEE A MIDWESTERN FARMLAND... BUT THAT’S NOT POSSIBLE...
THERE IS NO NEED TO LOWER YOUR VOICE, WE CANNOT BE SEEN OR HEARD.
NOT EVEN BY HIM.
THE FARMER LOOKS FAMILIAR.
HES... THOUGH HE IS NOT OF THIS WORLD, HE CAME TO EARTH...
YOU KNOW HIM. BY A NAME HE HAS NOT USED IN TEN YEARS...

I REMEMBER! HE LEFT METROPOLIS. SOMETHING HAPPENED. A... TRIAL...

I CAN'T... REMEMBER WHAT WAS INVOLVED, BUT I RECALL A SENSE OF...

... INEVITABILITY? OBVIOUSLY, WHATEVER HAPPENED DROVE HIM HERE. BUT, MY GOD... HE IS NOT ALONE.

... NOT SINCE HE BEGAN HIS SELF-IMPOSED EXILE.
HELLO, CLARK...

Diana, haven't seen you in months. What brings you to the farm?

...Kal.

The vain hope that you're not still here.

These are my roots. You can't live forever in solitude.

I'm not afraid of him.

I didn't mean him. I meant...

Kal. You've lost so much since I first met you...

They were your parents, Kal. And she was your wife. Don't call them 'Earthlings'.

Hear me out, I...

Really?

Earthlings. Die. You know that.

I'm Superman. I can do anything.

Except apparently, face your fear.
YOU'RE SPOOKING THE ANIMALS.

AT LEAST I PROVOKED A REACTION IN SOMETHING.

THINK AGAIN.

KAL, HE'S OUT OF CONTROL.

I TRIED TO TELL THEM THAT TEN YEARS AGO.

I'M NOT INTERESTED.

I SEEM TO LIVE IN NOTHING BUT HES?

LISTEN TO ME, DAMN IT! I'VE COME WITH NEWS... FROM THE OUTSIDE. BAD NEWS. IT'S SHAKEN THE WORLD.

AND THEY DIDN'T LISTEN. I KNOW. STOP PUNISHING THEM.
Here are two words. See if they sound familiar.

Truth and justice.

You can’t have completely forgotten them.

Just see for yourself. See what he has let happen to the world. That’s all I ask.

And steel yourself.

Oh.
FIGHT BEGAN IN THE AMERICAN CITY OF ST. LOUIS, WHERE MAGOG AND HIS JUSTICE BATTALION DESCENDED UPON THE BATTERED PARASITE.

BATTLE RAGED TO THE WHEATFIELDS OF KANSAS.

WITNESSES CHARACTERIZED THE PARASITE AS FEARFUL.

FILE PHOTO

ONLOOKERS STAGGERED—AND YET NOT SURPRISED—BY THE SAVAGERY OF MAGOG'S ATTACK.

PARASITE OBVIOUSLY PANICKED BY THE BEATING.

MAGOG—ONE OF THE NEW BREED OF HEROES, KNOWN TO MANY AS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERMAN'S FAREWELL TO EARTH!

LEAVE ME ALONE! LEAVE ME ALONE!

CLAIM HIS PLEAS FOR MERCY WERE IGNORED.

SPECULATE THAT TRAGEDY MIGHT HAVE BEEN AVERTED HAD MAGOG RELENTED.

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:30 PM

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:26 AM

LIVE 11:26 AM

HIS SURRENDER REFUSED, PARASITE UNLEASHED A DESPERATE SALVO TOWARDS THE NUCLEAR POWERED CAPTAIN ATOM. THESE FINAL WORDS RECEIVED TO WHEEY'S ON-SITE CAMERA-MAN...

ONLOOKERS STAGGERED—AND YET NOT SURPRISED—BY THE SAVAGERY OF MAGOG'S ATTACK.

OH, MY GOD! THE PARASITE HAS SPLITT CAPTAIN ATOM OPEN!

HE'S PLAYING THE PIANO!

LIVE 11:25 AM

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:25 AM

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:26 AM

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:30 AM

LIVE 11:26 AM

LIVE 11:25 AM

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:25 AM

WHEEY-TV NEWS 11:30 PM

E QUELLA FUI LA FINE.
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FROM HERE.

GO BACK TO YOUR ISLAND, DIANA.

YOU'RE SAFE THERE.
"...NEITHER WILL THE REST OF US..."

WHO?

THOSE WHO, A DECADE PREVIOUS, FELT THE CRUSH OF SUPERMAN'S GREATEST AND MOST NECESSARY FAILING...

...HIS INABILITY TO PERCEIVE HIMSELF AS THE INSPIRATION HE IS.

THE SHOCK OF SEEING SUPERMAN SUDDENLY ABANDON HIS NEVER-ENDING BATTLE TOOK AN IMMEASURABLE TOLL ON HIS CONTEMPORARIES, HIS PEERS.

SOME, THEIR SPIRIT STRIPPED, CHOSE SUPERMAN'S PATH AND RETIRED.

OTHERS, UNABLE TO TURN THEIR BACKS COMPLETELY ON THE WORLD THEY KNOW, CONTINUE TO USE THEIR SPECIAL ABILITIES TO CHAMPION ORDER...

...THOUGH IN SOME MOST CLANDESTINE WAYS.
"IN THE TIME OF SUPERMAN'S ABSENCE, KRYPTONE CITY HAS BECOME A UTOPIA—A PROCTORATE REFINELY PATROLLED BY A GALE FORCE ONCE HUMAN.

"NO ONE SEES HIM... NO ONE HEARS HIM. HE RUNS A LONELY RACE... BUT ALL WHO LIVE HERE HAVE FELT HIS PRESENCE.

"HE IS EVERYWHERE AT ONCE... A GUARDIAN ANGEL WHO RIGHT EVEN THE MOST HARMLESS OF WRONGS WITH LIGHTNING SPEED.

"HE LIVES BETWEEN THE TICKS OF A SECOND.

"HE IS THE FLASH."
“Another of yesterday's guardians has since claimed the Pacific Northwest as his aerie.

“Some call him a savior... others, an environmental terrorist. He is feared and respected by those who would deprive the beasts and birds of their sanctuary.

“His name is Hawkman.”
“Yet another takes his refuge high above the Earth’s surface... his self-made Emerald City twinkling in the night sky like a verdant star.”

“Here, Green Lantern commands a lonely throne... ever vigilant, ever waiting for signs of threats extraterrestrial.”

“He waits still.”
"THE GODS OF YESTERYEAR NO LONGER WALK AMONG THE HUMANS. NORMAN MCCAY, INSTEAD, CULLED BY SUPERMAN'S SURRENDER, THEY JOURNEY APART... DIVORCED FROM THE COMMON MEN WHOM THEY ONCE SO GLADLY SERVED.

"THEY HAVE LOST THEMSELVES IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS AND FUTURE TIMES.

"THEY HAVE LEFT HUMANITY TO ITS OWN FATE."

AND WHAT OF THOSE WHO WEREN'T GODS? I SEE "TO REMEMBER ANOTHER... ONE WHO MADE HIS HOME IN GOTHAM CITY..."

"WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE BATMAN?"

AH..."
BATMAN HAS HIS CITY UNDER CONTROL...
THAT'S ALL?
THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO SHOW ME?

THAT DISTURBS YOU?

YES! YOU'RE AN ANGEL! THAT MAKES YOU A MESSNER OF HOPE!

AT NO TIME DID I PROMISE YOU HOPE...

A GREATER POWER SENT YOU! YOUR VERY EXISTENCE IS A TESTIMONY TO FAITH!
YOU MEAN THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO TELL ME IS THAT THOSE WHO CAME SAVE US WONT?


AND THE SUN AND THE AIR WERE DARKENED!

THATS WHAT WESLEY SAW! THE DESTRUCTION OF KANSAS WAS TRULY THE BEGINNINGS OF THE END...

FOR THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES HEROES NOW SHARE A SILENT SMILE!

LOOK AROUND US!

THEY'RE WORSE THAN BEFORE! THEY'RE NOT ACTING OUT OF BOREDOM, THEY'RE ACTING WITH ABANDON!
BEFORE KANSAS, THEY AT LEAST HAD SOME GRASP OF RESPONSIBILITY!
NOW THEY HAVEN'T EVEN THAT!

NOTHING MATTERS! THEY'RE FOLLOWING MAGGIE'S RECKLESS LEAD--AND THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL!

WONDER WOMAN WAS RIGHT: THE MADNESS WILL GO ON--
---And on!

Don't you understand?

If any of us are to survive... any of us... now more than ever...

...we need hope!
And suddenly...

...there was a wind.

No. Not a wind. A blur of motion... bending the steel of their weapons...
...and changing the very course of the mighty river below.

Even before the bystanders freed themselves from the cablecar, they knew. We all did.

We knew...and remembered.

LOOK!

UP IN THE SKY!
He had not turned his back on us.

He stands in the sky... faith rewarded.

He is returned... and--

--Dear God.

The threat of Armageddon hasn't ended.

It's just begun...
CHAPTER TWO

Truth and Justice
“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God...

“...and another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer...

“...and the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar...

“...and the seven angels prepared themselves to sound...”
... angels...

... no... I'm with the angels...

aren't I...?

WHERE HAVE YOU TAKEN ME? I NO LONGER HAVE ANY SENSE OF TIME OR PLACE...

TIME HAS LITTLE MEANING WHERE WE WALK, NOR ANY MEANING FOR YOU FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT, GUIDED BY YOUR VISIONS, I SHOW YOU ONLY THAT WHICH WE MUST SEE. YOU ARE DISORIENTED?

ENORMOUSLY, I WASN'T REALLY ASLEEP, AND YET, I WAS DREAMING AGAIN...
“Today, the American Commando declares war on the wretched refuse!”

“Immigrants dare expect sanctuary? America’s not as big as it used to be! For God’s sake—Kansas is gone!”

“We can’t house you now! We can’t even feed you now! But still you force yourselves on us!”

“Many years, the American Commando and his Minutemen have protected the U.S. from foreign threats... only to have overlooked the most insidious menace of all!”

“The poor, tired, huddled masses yearning to breathe free, seeking citizenship!”

“At the command of the Braintrust, Minutemen will cleanse America’s shores!”
We will defend the nation against...

Defend yourself! American commandos! This land is ours to guard!

America, love it...

...or leave it.

Good God... the bystanders...

These aren't heroes! They're madmen!

They're ready to battle over territory! Without bothering to dare who's caught between them!

Someone should do something!
Superman had returned... in doing so, drawing from exclusion the titans of yesteryear...

...their emerald flashes and scarlet strobes lighting the darkness of the day.

Gods themselves.
NO! The Minutemen are distracted! We're losing our mental link!

Then concentrate! Command them to fire at anything that moves!

Tell them!
Over the thunder of panic, I hear names unfamiliar.


They sweep their foes aside like tempias—

--while Wonder Woman protects the innocents.
With a final red glare, the fight is over.

Below, the bystanders buzz with gratitude.

The reporters...

...with questions.

Where’ve you been all this time?

Really? Them?

You seen all this in years?

Where are they going?

Seems like a lifetime...

Hell, a lifetime.

Quick! Radio downtown and let ‘em know...

"...They’re headed for the U.N. building!"
In our absence, a new breed of Metahumans has arisen... a vast phalanx of self-styled "Heroes" unwilling to preserve life or defend the defenseless...

We have returned to teach them the meaning of truth and justice.

Together, we will guide this new breed with wisdom... and, if necessary, with force. Above all, we will restore order.

A Legion of Vigilantes who have reawakened their great powers... who have forsaken the responsibilities due them.

We will make things right again.
WILL THER BE OTHERS?

OUR RANKS WILL GROW.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO SHUT DOWN THOSE WHO DON'T HONOR YOUR PRINCIPLES?

I DON'T ANTICIPATE ANYONE ACTING WITHOUT OUR SANCTION.

ANYONE WOULD INCLUDE MAGOS?

SUPERMAN, ARE YOU TRULY PREPARED TO CONFRONT MAGOS... IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE?

MAGOS WILL BE DEALT WITH... IF HE SURFACES. GIVEN THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ACTIONS IN KANSAS, THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY.

BUT WHAT ABOUT RESPONSIBLE FOR MILLIONS?

OTHER HEROES AFRAID OF HIM REALLY SOLVING THE PROBLEM?

THAT IS ALL.

IT'S CERTAINLY ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE DELEGATION... IS ANYONE HERE DELIGHTED WITH WHAT WE'VE JUST HEARD?

NO?

WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED...?
There's a fear in the room.

No, a validation of fear.

Long have these mortals suspected that they are no longer the captains of humanity's destiny.

Their suspicions have just been confirmed.

You said you're here 'to judge a coming evil. Superman is somehow entwined in this sin, but what exactly is it? The answer to that question remains locked in your prophetic dreams, Mr. M.

What do you see? What do you hear?

A jungle of images, a cacophony of apocalyptic voices...

It still makes so little sense...

Superman said his league will grow, who else will he call to his side?
BRUCE?

BRUCE, I KNOW YOU'RE DOWN HERE.

YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME.

1 BOW TO YOUR SUPERIOR WISDOM.
After all...

...you know all about hiding...

Don't call me Clark.

What happened to the manor?

Once my identity got exposed? Bane and Two-Face happened to it. Doesn't matter. I have everything I need down here.

Besides, it's not as if anyone intrudes on me. That hardly ever happens...

...Clark...

That's right. Someone told me your next became free once Bane ideological blew up Arkham Asylum and everyone in it.

Not to mention Belle Reve prison and Blackgate. Not an action I'd condone...

But tell me the thought of it doesn't give your invulnerable skin a little tingle.

I don't have that dark a side.

Tell that to your tailor.

Black is a new look for you.
Bruce... the League needs you.

I'm busy.

Too busy to help save the world.

The crisis at hand isn't new, Clark. Where have you been?

The crisis at hand isn't new, Clark. Where have you been?

Perhaps I should ask Masque.

Twenty-five and thirty-two... resign patrol.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Frictions have been building to head for years, Clark.

The metahuman population boomed while you were gone... once ordinary folks decided you and I were too gentle and old-fashioned to face the challenges of the 21st century.

They wanted their heroes stronger and more ruthless.

Be careful what you wish for.

Maneuver twelve.

Right now, the metahumans have the kids to Earth's kingdom. Wrestling control is a delicate matter.

It requires finesse... and meticulous, careful planning against those enemies more hidden... but it can be done.

Without it, maybe, Superman and the Justice League booming into town... punching now, asking questions later.
Dick doesn’t see it that way.

You got him to reclaim the Robin mantle. Is that supposed to sway me? I try harder. He and I never did see completely eye to eye.

I have my own controls in place, thank you. They may be slower and more methodical than yours...

Now who has the utopia?

We’re not limited to Gotham, Clark. We’ve built a network that extends from here all the way through Star City.

I have allies. Human allies, a little more in tune than your friends to humanity’s needs.

We don’t want to rule the world. We just want to straighten it out. Our way by ourselves.

Then you’re sure you won’t join me?

For a man who can hear clouds scrape together, you don’t listen very well.

The only thing I wonder about your down and dirty quick and fast totalitarian “solutions”...

...Is whether I’d be the first to be “reformed” by your new regime.

Goodbye, Clark.
“HE KNEW WE WERE HERE. I COULD FEEL HIS X-RAYS. HELL, I’M PROBABLY STERILE NOW.”

“LET IT GO, LEE...”

“OLIVER QUEEN. DINAH LANCE. TED KORD. URBAN WARRIORS...”

“ACTUALLY, OLLIE, GIVEN THE LOW LEVEL OF RESISTANCE INVOLVED, I DORDURATE NOTHING INTRINSICALLY HARMFUL ABOUT...”

“STOP MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR SCIENCE, BEETLE. LET AN OLD MAN BE PARANOID.”

“HURRISE, IF THEY'RE REALLY AFTER ME, IT AINT PARANOID... IS IT, BATE?”

“IN TIME, THE LEAGUE WILL DO SERIOUS DAMAGE. IF THEY'RE ALLOWED INTO OUR ARENA, THE WORLD IS DOOMED.”

“SUPERMAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT HIS REALLY UP AGAINST.”

“FORTUNATELY...”

“WE HAVE OUR OWN TEAM TO CALL INTO PLAY.”

“YOU SOUNAS IF YOU HAVE A PLAN...”

“SPITFIRE: HOW SOON THEY FORGET.”

“DOES BATMAN EVER NOT HAVE A PLAN...?”

“WE'VE GOT CONTACTS ACROSS THE WORLD. IT'S TIME WE DREW THAT WEB TIGHT...”
Great minds do not always think alike...

"Were they ever friends, Superman and Batman?"

"The way they bicker, it’s hard to tell..."

In their day, they were the truest representatives of their kind...

"One, the zenith of human fortitude and ambition..."

"The other, the pinnacle of otherworldly power..."

Of course, Superman is an alien.

Otherworldly...?

An accident of birth. For most of his life, he walked among the humans as well as above them.

He remained tethered to human concerns through the love of an earthly woman... until her life was stolen.

And Wonder Woman?

Eternal princess of the Amazons. She is both an ambassador of peace and a master of warfare.

Of all Superman’s lieutenants... it is she who bears watching most closely.

Like Superman, a paradox.
And so, as hours fold into days, we bear silent witness to Superman’s squad while they silence skirmish after skirmish.

Whenever possible, Superman negotiates peace.

Whenever impossible, he enforces it...

...at every turn, transforming enemies...
...into allies.

All the while, a world hungry for hope gradually surrenders its fear to the skies.

With a cadence almost military, the League marches from shore to shore. Together, they act as an unstoppable unit, breaking rank...
...only occasionally.

Don't worry, ma'am! I'll handle this!

Diana...

Diana, take a breath. They're not evil, they're just misguided.

You're right. They seem to have learned little regard for human life...

How badly if they want to act like warriors... I'll show them war.

...and there is nothing more sacred than that.
I said two sugars.

KRAK

You ham.

I feel nauseated... and not for the first time.

Sorry. Immortal habits die hard.

I do my best to stay as impassive as my guide... and yet, in this one murderous moment...

I swear I feel him bristle...

I just had her trained.

Not very well.

Hello, Luther.

Mr. Savage. I see you've brought King with you. Perhaps he'd like to meet everyone.

Come join us.
WE CALL OURSELVES THE MANKIND LIBERATION FRONT.

YOU KNOW IBN AL-YU'FARSH...HER TO RAS'ALGHUL'S EMPIRE...

THIS IS LORD NAGA...

“WHO IS KOBRAZ?”

GENTLEMEN... I NEED A STATUS REPORT.

XU'FARSH, WHERE DO WE STAND WITH MEDICAL ATTENTION AND DISASTER RELIEF FOR THE KANSAS VICTIMS?

DELAYED... PERHAPS FOR WEEKS.

WHO IS CATWOMAN?

AND HER COMPANION—EDWARD NAGA...

WHO IS THE RIDDLER?

TECH DISPERSED THIS QUARTER, NAGA?

WE HAVE INTEGRATED ANOTHER SIX SCORE VIGILANTEC.

GIVEN THE ARKHAM AND BELLE REVE SURVIVORS WE RE-OUTFITTED AND RENAMED, WE ARE NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR EIGHT PERCENT OF THE “SUPER-HERO” POPULATION.

SPLendid.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER THAT HE IS HERE SOLELY AS A GUDGEON TO MISS KYLE.

EXCELLENT.
Selina, what's the outlook on... Whoa! Parson me for questioning... But you're impeding public service? You're arming Metahumans? Wouldn't all that serve to make the world a worse place to be?

Selina, for your own good... keep your guest in line.

Remember, dear... curiosity killed the cat.

Actually, Luther...

...I had a similar concern. May I assume that the MLP works, then, to raise the stakes rather than lower them?

In a manner of speaking.

Where does the 'warning liberation' part come in? Did I miss something?

No pain, no gain. Our objective is to heighten the tension between humans and Metahumans...

...to bring it to a head so that humans have no choice but to reclaim the reins of world power...

Regardless of the cost, there will be war... bloodshed... but in the end, mankind will once again rule the earth.

'Mankind!' and that would translate as... you guys.

Wow, when is a villain not a villain? When he labors for a greater good.

Nick?
Which brings us to our new problem. The resurfaced Justice League...and now their untimely arrival has turned our ten-year agenda into a ten-day stratagem.

I never dreamed they'd return...not in a million years.

Nevertheless, the Gods have stepped down from Olympus...and frankly, I see several ways to turn their arrival to our advantage.

In fact, by entering into a certain alliance...

...I can guarantee a chance to hasten the current crisis to its end...by exaggerating it.

And in the meantime, we have nothing to fear from the League?

He will not touch me! He will not touch me...

Not even from...Superman?

...He cannot. In fact, I've got the most marvelous anti-Superman plan.

Isn't that right, boy?

Absolutely, Mr. Luthor.

The captain of the lightning and the thunder...

Come, we have spent too much time wallowing in sin.
"There are other players who demand our attention."

Good Lord!

Whoom!

These kids... they're monsters, beasts!

They will be trained.
This doesn't help.

Kssh tssh kssh chuff kssh tssh

Party's over.
Ooh, I'm shakin'. Ain't it past your bedtime, Grandpa? What does the 'G' stand for? Senior?

Shaw! Whatever you're sellin' I ain't--

Will you shut up?

Whump

Thank you. I'm here because the world's in bad shape. We have a lot to do and not a lot of time to do it in.

I want you to join the League... willingly.

Before you do you should know that we have rules. Heroes act in a certain way.

This isn't it.

Those of you who take up with us... willingly... will be expected to be as responsible as you are powerful. You'll be expected to behave better.

Those who don't... will be dealt with.
Time shifts.

Armies build.

And the voice of Wesley Dodds murmurs gently to me.

"...and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."

A quote from Revelation. Another one.

Revolution.

Armageddon.

Superman’s troops seek wield power enough to shake the earth.

Will they have enough power to save it?

And if so...

...from what?
America heals, but America is not the world. Stronger in number, the League begins to confront anarchy on a global scale.

As on their home territory, Superman's army begins to meet with success more infrequently.

Most metahumans fall into line at the mere sight of the man from Krypton.

Social government was never Superman's arena. Is it possible that the constant pressures thrust upon him as an emerging world leader...

...could bend even a man of steel to the breaking point?

Many do not.

Clearly, each rebellion further frustrates him.
Meanwhile, those closest to Superman began to ask her another question.

In all these missions, they ask... now is it they have yet to unearth Magog?

With his super-senses, Superman should be able to find anyone...

...if he's looking.

It's not supposed to be this way.

What?

Magog whereabouts unknown!

We shouldn't have to fight this hard.

You said it yourself, Kal.

And yet, we're ending up with more captives than conquerers.

What do we do with those who refuse to see the light?

I have a suggestion. Follow me...

We do what we have to do.
QUITE THE KINGDOM, ARTHUR... AN ARCHITECTURE WORTHY OF PARADISE ISLAND. EVERY BIT AS BEAUTIFUL AS ANY PLACE ABOVE THE SEA.

MORE.

THE TIMES OF TIME HAVE BEEN KIND TO YOU, PRINCESS. YOU HAVE NOT AGED A DAY SINCE WE MET.

WOULD THAT THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAD FARED WELL, ARTHUR. BUT TIMES ABOVE HAVE GROWN HARD AND HARSH.

THE SEAS PROVIDE THE PERFECT BUFFER BETWEEN YOUR WORLD AND Ours, BEARING THAT IN MIND, WE HAVE COME TO ASK PERMISSION TO CREATE HERE AN UNDERWATER PENAL COLONY...

...ICK, REBELLIOUS MEGANIAH.

WHAT?

DON'T INSULT ME BY ACTING DISRESPECTFUL, SUPERMAN.

IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE UNUSUALLY SUBMITTED TO THE SURFACE WORLD'S REFUSE.

PERMISSION DENIED.
Arthur, if you could only see the trouble we’re in up there.

Johns, stand at our side as you did in your youth.

A faint invitation, though I miss the camaraderie. You know I was never comfortable being your Aquaman.

I have long since ceded my name and role to my protégé. I understand many of our old friends have followed suit.

My subjects need me, princess.

You have hundreds of champions to defend a few land masses. I protect the other seventy percent of the world, and there is only one of me.

My dear, surely you understand how uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

No...!

Yes, recently my Amazon sisters decreed that I had failed in my mission as an ambassador...

...that I had not made the world a better place.

...that they stripped me of my royalty and of my heritage.

I am no longer welcome on Paradise Island.

I am no longer the king of Atlantis.

There is no room for a king who cannot reign.

I am no longer welcome on Paradise Island.

...for so long as it lasts.
How long were you planning on keeping that from me?

Which? The prison... or my loss?

Both, Diana, you have changed... and I don't like what you're asking me to do.

I'm not used to forcing others to follow my lead. Now I'm supposed to jail those who won't to act as judge and jury against our own kind?

That's a Fascistic line, Diana.

Then get ready, we are at war, Kal... and we will take prisoners; we will have to.

They're not our kind; we're protectors of humanity, they are barely human.

Is this you talking, Diana?

I sense so much anger in you...

Passion.

Wht... sense what... but we thought you'd want to know.

Not anger, Kal.

Skiffe.

Know what?

It's Magog, Superman.

We've found him...
“WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK IN KANSAS, MAGOG?”

“Well, well. Look who it is. The Metropolis Munchoast. I never left, Blue Boy.”

“I saw the news. Footage of your last mission... and believe me, it will be your last.”

“You led six unstable powerhouses against one pathetic parasite—in overkill! I used that to murder one million people.”

“Go ahead, take a swing. Punish me. Try to look me away... if you’ve got the guts.”

“I’m not afraid of you, Magog.”

“OH, GET OUTTA TOWN!”

“Actually, you’ve got a lot of nerve blaming me. This was your fault.”

“No wait. You already did that.”

“My fault...?”
"THINK BACK, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LET HIMSELF GET STRUNG UP BY THE MAN ON THE STREET."

"HAD T'VE BEEN FATTING AT YOU FOR A WHILE BEFORE I EVEN CAME INTO TOWN. HELL, THEY WERE CALLING YOU OLD-FASHIONED WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER."

"YOU WOULDN'T GET IN STEP, YOU WOULDN'T FLICK WITH THE TIMES."

"OK, POP, ALL MAN, OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW. BRIGHTER, FASTER, MEANER. NEXT YEAR'S MODEL. THAT'S WHAT THE HANG-UP CROWD ALWAYS WANTS."

"WORLD'S OLDEST BOY SCOUT... BUT YOU WOULDN'T CHANGE."

"REMEMBER THE DAILY PLANET ASKED IF THAT'S WHY THE JOKER BUT'S IN HIS WALL WHEN HE CLEW INTO OUR TOWN."

"HOW MANY DID HE TAKE OUT JUST THAT LAST TIME 'NINETY-TWO MEN...?"

"AND ONE WOMAN."

"HELL, WE BOTH TORE UP THE CITY LOOKING FOR THAT BASTARD. I REALLY THOUGHT YOU OR BATMAN WOULD GET TO HIM FIRST."

"EVEN I ALMOST MISSED HIM."

"MUST THERE BE A SUPERMAN?"
"Almost.

"I WILL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WHEN YOU SAW ME STANDING OVER THAT SMOKING CREEP."

"All the way to jail, I thought. What a sap. What an old woman. Blue boys dragging me in for having stones he doesn't."

"Times are tough, Joker. I've been deservin' worse than 'chuffs for years. So I took it on myself to lay him down. I can't be judged for that."

"And I was right."

"D.A.: "Justice Done""

"I was a hero."

"Magog Acquitted"

"Metropolis Marvel?

Random Metropolitans tell us who best defends their future:"

- Magog: 77%
- Superman: 18%

"Above: Superman, enraged by the verdict."

"In these dangerous times."

Metropolis - Following a weeklong trial that polarized law enforcement officials nationwide, the fuming Magog Case yesterday ended in a unanimous not-guilty acquittal of Magog by any member of the jury. A native New Jerseyan, Magog was charged with murder, murder in the third degree, and burglary in the third degree. According to James Cambidge, head of the Metropolis Chamber of Commerce, "Superman's been around for a long time — but how much better has he made this city?" The prayers of the Mathman, the Toyman and the Madman are long past. Superpowered criminals rule the land. Metopolis is a city built on the backs of its strongest. If Superman were to fall and fail, they might as well be a Metropolitan to defend. Feeling that, perhaps he should consider leaving Metropolis in the hands of those who will have..."
"But you just wouldn't roll with it. You had to get in a last shot and piss me off."

"I wanted that torch passed. I wanted to cement my claim as Metropolis's new number one."

"...and I won by default..."

"...when you flew off with your cape between your legs."

"I never got a piece of you... and now you're right here. Right where I wanted you."

"The way you took off! I always thought you were afraid of me. A lot of people did. But that wasn't it.

"You were afraid... that I was the man of tomorrow.

"You were afraid of the future I represented."
WELL, LOOK AROUND YOU.

THIS IS WHAT I REPRESENT.

YOU MUST BE Proud.

Proud?

Proud?

GoD DAMN YOU!

KRA-KOOM!
Proud of being the Man of Tomorrow?

Your fault...you bastard.

They chose the Man Who Would Kill over the Man Who Wouldn't...

...and now they're dead.

The world changed...but you wouldn't.

So they chose me.
A MILLION GHOSTS.
PUNISH ME.
LOCK ME AWAY.

KILL ME.
JUST MAKE THE GHOSTS GO AWAY.

WE ARE AT WAR.
"AN ART THAT, WITH ONE FINISHING STROKE, I FINALLY MASTERED...

"BUT TO WHAT ULTIMATE TRIUMPH?

"APOKOLIPS IS STILL HELPLESS WITH THOSE WHO CANNOT... WILL NOT... HELP THEMSELVES."

"OFTEN HAVE I CONSIDERED IMPRODUCING THE MORE ABERRANT LOWLIES, EXILING THEM TO SOME DISTANT ORB..."

"BUT IT SEEMS UNCONSCIONABLE TO INFLICT SUCH GRUESOME WOUNDS ON ANOTHER PLANET."

"I'M SURE YOU AGREE."
Far be it from me to argue with the Lord of Apokolips.

I'm impressed, age has calmed your legendary temper. You seem fully in control.

You're more like Arzark than ever, Orion.

So it was written to be, our story has always been a generational one.

It is said that many men eventually become their fathers.

I wouldn't know.

I'd heard you'd finally... liquidated Darkseid's throne. I was curious to see what you'd accomplished in his stead.

Not much.

Frankly, Orion, of all the old allies I have encountered, you disappoint me the most.

You're a god, you have the power to change your world.

Or to destroy it.

You would be surprised, I fear, at how easily one can lead to the other.
I thought I had transformed Apokolips by finally overthrowing Darkseid’s despotic rule. I imagined the horror of learning that, to the lowlies ground under Darkseid’s heel, since Apokolips was young, liberty was every bit as paralyzing as fascism.

They rushed to elect a new ruler. They chose me. Such was my reward.

So bring them to my realm, Superman. Bring to me those whose presence on your world you consider too threatening. They cannot possibly be more challenging to me than my own subjects.

Deportation was never my intent. I have no desire to see anyone removed from their homeworld.

Given the nature of my own struggles, I had hoped that Orion, the dog of war, could lend some wisdom... but I was mistaken.

I can learn nothing from you.

That hardly matters.

If this is about emancipating a world from fears of tyrannical shackles...

...it isn’t my help you need...
NEVER ENOUGH TO FREE YOUR BODIES! YOU MUST FIRST UNLOCK YOUR MINDS!
WE WILL SHOW YOU THAT A SLAUGHTER-HOUSE IS NOT A HOME!
WHEN YOU REACH OUT AND TOUGH FREE DOM-

--YOU TOWER AS TALL AS ORION! WE FEAR YOU--FOR YOU CAN DREAM OF THINGS BEYOND HIM!

I SEE A LESSON PLAN COMPLETE WITH VISUAL AIDS.
I ALWAYS SUSPECTED YOU TWO WOULD END UP AS TEACHERS.

SO MUCH THE BETTER FOR WHAT I HAVE IN MIND, BECAUSE I NEED A VERY SPECIAL KIND OF HELP. ARE YOU AND BARDA IN?

KA-KLIK

DON'T SAY "IN," IT'S TOO CONFUSING.

YOU'LL NEED A SECURITY FORCE IN THE FACILITY. I'LL PUT TOGETHER THE BEST--

BOOOM

THERE YOU ARE, QUINN! I CAME TO RETRIEVE YOU FROM ORION'S LAIR, BUT YOU WERE GONE!

HURRY! I CANNOT KEEP THE BOOM TUBE OPEN MUCH LONGER!

I SEE YOU'VE BEEN RECRUITING.

YOU WERE COUNTING ON US TO WORK ALONGSIDE AVIA?

I WAS TOLD THAT YOUR STORY HAS ALWAYS BEEN GENERATIONAL.

LET'S GO.
Time folds...

...and a new structure rises from the ashen fields of Kansas.

An invention of necessity.

A stronghold of justice.
IT SEEMS UNWISE TO CONTAIN SO MUCH POWER AND FURY UNDER ONE ROOF AND YET...

WHAT OTHER CHOICE DOES SUPERMAN HAVE?

IT IS A QUESTION HE WILL ASK HIMSELF A HUNDRED TIMES IN THE DAYS TO COME.

MEANWHILE, AN UNGODLY FELLOWSHIP HAS BEGIN TO MANIFEST, ONE THAT MAY CHANGE ALL THAT WE KNOW THIS FAR.

OBSERVE...

...CONGRATULATE OUR FRIEND XU/FRASCH FOR NEGOTIATING THE UNION THAT MAY YET MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR MANKIND.

FRIENDS, I PRESENT TO YOU OUR NEARESTLY IN THE WAR AGAINST THE GODS...

...THE BATMAN!

THEY'VE BEGUN TO BUILD A GHULAG YOU KNOW THIS.

I KNOW THAT I DON'T WANT TO SPEND MY REMAINING DAYS THERE.

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE YOU'RE HERE, IF I'D KNOWN THAT A COMMON ENEMY COULD BRING US TOGETHER I WOULD HAVE INVENTED ONE YEARS AGO.

THIS MUST BE KILLING YOU.

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE BUT TO THROW IN WITH LEX LUTHOR?

ALONE, NEITHER YOU NOR I CAN EXPECT VICTORY, BUT TOGETHER...

...WE CAN CURTAIL THE JUSTICE LEAGUE... ONCE AND FOR ALL...
CHAPTER THREE

Up in the Sky
"...and he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth...

"...and when he had cried...

"Seven thunders uttered their voices..."
CERTAINLY, YOU MUST SHARE THEM. HOW ELSE DO YOU EXPLAIN THE ROAD WE WALK?

HOW ELSE DO YOU UNFAIRLY LEAD US TO THE TABLEAUS AND REALITIES BEHIND MY DREAMS?

I SEE MANY THINGS: NORMAN McGREGOR, BUT THE FUTURE IS NOT ONE OF THEM.

I DO NOT LEAD YOU, YOU LEAD ME...

ONLY YOU FORESEE THE ROAD TO RAGNAROK.

And with that pronouncement, we begin once more to wander the Earth like spirits. Time ebbs and flows around us.

...INEVITABLY...

...TO AN IMMINENT HOUR WHEN JUDGMENT MUST BE PASSED... AND JUSTICE SERVED.

Many of the places I see are new and strange.

Others...
...all too familiar.

Once the Kansas wastelands were stripped of radiation, Superman's penitentiary was fast completed.

The Gulag was built to imprison the dead, the least and most uncontrollable of the superhumans.

Thanks to its vast size, it was intended to house prisoners for months to come.

Within two weeks of its construction...
“STILL, THE WALLS HOLD... THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO THE SHIAGL'S ARCHITECT AND WARDEN.”

“ONCE THE GREATEST ESCAPE ARTIST OF THREE WORLDS, SCOTT FREE IS AN UNPARALLELED MASTER OF BONDS AND TRAPS.”
"Under his command, guards stand ever vigilant over the belligerent..."

"...and the repentant."

"They are gathered here for what purpose? So they can brood?"

"It's really very simple..."

"No. So they can learn."

"In this world, there is right and there is wrong..."

"Oh, yeah?"

"And that distinction is not difficult to make..."

"So where does rising up of our freedom fail, oh great and powerful one?"
PLEASE UNDERSTAND OUR INTENT. NONE OF YOU ARE HERE FOR PUNISHMENT, YOU'RE HERE FOR EDUCATION.

WE'RE HERE BECAUSE OF FORCED BURNING, YOU STUPID RECORDING!

HOW MANY DIFFERENT WAYS CAN YOU SAY "THAT POLLY AUNNA CRAP"?

WE CANNOT ACT AS JUDGE AND JURY. WE ADHERE TO A MORAL CODE BASED ON THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE...

EASY FOR HIM TO SAY, DID HE EVER HAVE TO FIGHT THE SLAUGHTER BRIGADE?

DAY AFTER DAY, HE TALKS TO US LIKE WE'RE THE BAD GUYS!

THE POWERS WE HAVE... THE THINGS WE DO... THEY'RE MEANT TO INSPIRE ORDINARY CITIZENS... NOT INTIMIDATE THEM OR TERRORIZE THEM...

I'M SICK OF THIS MEDIEVAL THINKING. HIS CODES JUST AS EMPTY...

WHO RASED ECLIPSO? HUH? WHO TOASTED CAP'N AL CHANCE? BANG LIKE HS, THAT'S WHO WE SAVED LIVES, MAN!

HE STICKS UP IN HERE JUST BECAUSE WE DON'T KISS BABIES AND SALUTE THE FLAGS!

"MAN OF TOMORROW! MY ASS. TRY MAN OF THE NINETEEN-FIFTIES, TIMES CHANGE... BUT HE STILL EXPECTS EVERYONE TO WAVE THEIR COMRADE DIVE!

"AS THIS STUPID Hologram!"

SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY...

UH-CH..."
That must be why you opened fire in the middle of a human crowd. Why you thought it was acceptable to threaten an entire city full of unarmed citizens.

"Tawpers flare."

"Schweinhund!"

"I'm sure Von Bach would agree with you. We brought him in for killing opponent who had already surrendered."

Conflicts escalate.

Even as a wraith, I feel the air electrify. The prisoners are packed too closely. Nerves are raw.

"THOOM!"

"You have a lot to learn, Von Bach. Get to it.

"Kein Brühung, Kosmonaut!"

"Von Bach? You all right, man?

"Бумм! おまったようも おけい!"
...even to the old wizard who first called down the thunder for him.

Even now, the wizard pleads for understanding from his brethren.

The galactic lords and immortals who are the quintessence of all power cosmic...

How interesting that you insist upon this. That you're all so concerned with how unconcerned you should act.

Tell me do you think dwell on the earth's problems because you are so cosically bared, or is it just possible...

Please... I could love him no more were he my son... and he is lost?

We must help him. We must help them all!

No more, Shazam, cer the millennia, we have often lent our guidance and wisdom to the earthlings... only to watch them march profitably towards disaster.

Can that is not wrong. The humans are not our responsibility. They are but motes in the cosmos... an insignificant factor in the grand life equation.

That you congregate in order to prevent each other from interfering...
Clearly, the conversation was not meant for my ears. My senses assaulted, I turn away...

Only to face a dead man.

Hiya.

You... you can see me...

Even though I got no eyes! Pretty wild, huh?

Name's Boston. I'm a ghost, nice to meet ya.

So this... void is your realm?

Mine? Nah. I just enjoy poppin' around the ethereal planes from time to time.

I always liked to travel.

Used to be with the circus. I was a daredevil trapeze jockey. Now I'm the agent of a higher power.

Can you imagine?

Wait. Who am I talkin' to? Of course you can, no offense, padre.

Pastor... and no, Franky, I can't imagine any of this. Since seminary, I have been more philosopher than priest.
...so then I flew him up to about, oh, here...

And I said, “Do you see that beautiful blue marble, Brainiac? That’s my world. Return it. Now.”

Did we hear you?

Actually, not in airless space, no. But believe me, he got the message. NORAD was back on line within five minutes.

So did you destroy him?

Just short of buried some of his circuitry on Saturn... some on Argo...

And the rest... inside a Pulitzer in Clark's apartment.

Oh, that's funny. You never told me that story before.

Gods... Those were better days...

Easier, anyway. Diana, what's this about being ousted by your own people? When did this happen?

Shortly after you went into seclusion.

For years, I had been the amazing ambassador to the outside world. My mission was to spread a message of peace and order.

As the world continued to darken, there was some doubt as to how well I had done my job.
MY AMAZON SISTERS... MY OWN MOTHER... I CAME TO
SUGGEST THAT I HAD PERHAPS FAILED.

THEY ACTUALLY PUT ME ON TRIAL.

I FLED MY CASE... BUT IN THE END, THEY DECIDED THAT I HAD
indeed, NOT CHANGED MAN'S WORLD.

THAT IT HAD CHANGED ME.

THEY STRIPPED ME OF MY ROYALTY AND MY HERITAGE.
There may have been some justice to their decision.
Do you believe that?
The Amazons believe in peace through strength. Too often, I relied on an olive branch and not a Cestus... I always admired your gentility.

You said it yourself once, Clark... Kal, we are warriors. We have an obligation to wage combat.

Given who we are, Diana... given the power we possess... we have a greater obligation to keep the peace.

You did your best. Then why isn't the world better?
There are degrees. How many degrees were you interested in hearing about when you retired?

Only the weak succumb to brutality.
THOSE... THOSE THINGS NEVER HAPPENED.

FORTUNATELY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THEIR WORLD, DO YOU?

NO! NO!

BUT THEY COULD HAVE. AND REALLY, THAT'S THE POINT, ISN'T IT?

SUPERHUMANS CAN DO ANYTHING THEY PLEASE.

THEY CAN MAIM... THEY CAN KILL...

...THEY'VE MADE THE WORLD AVERY UGLY PLACE.

THAT'S RI-IGHT!

YOU'LL STAY RIGHT WHERE I ORDER YOU TO STAY.
INGENIOUS LITTLE BUMMER, SIANA WAS. DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT WHEN THEY COINED THE TERM 'MAD SCIENTIST,' THEY WERE THINKING OF HIM?

OUR OLD FRIEND SIANA SAID TO THAT, 'DON'T HE?' HERE LET ME GET THAT.

WELL, REST IN PEACE, SIANA, SCIENCE...

...MARCHES ON.

THE NORMS CRAWL IN...THE NORMS CRAWL OUT...!

SKU...SHA... SHAZ...

OH, NO, NO, THERE'LL BE NO RETREAT. NOT YET.

I STILL HAVE A VERY SPECIAL JOB FOR YOU...
I think that you authorized triple shifts without telling me.

Strength in numbers. It took you a long time, but you finally learned that.

Magnificent. Aren’t there? Between your design and my production, the Justice League doesn’t stand a prayer of survival.

Soon, we will be able to crush them with an unyielding legion of steel soldiers...

I can feel your pulse through here, Luthor. Don’t double-cross me.

Our objective should be order... not world domination. Don’t forget your agenda.

Oh...I wouldn’t dream of it.
Ridding the world of the League is a necessary evil. Mankind was never meant to bow before a Kryptonian and his ilk.

My thoughts exactly.

Once Superman and his toadies are out of the way, the Man Kind Liberation Front can seize power...

...and with your little robots keeping the peace, return the reins of civilization to the humans.

Sounds like a plan. Then again, so does this. Can't we just drop a K-bomb on the Blue's Sputnik?

S'Adly, Mr. Queen, Kryptonite no longer packs the punch it did in the good old days. As I learned the hard way.

Chalk it up to the solar radiation. Superman's cells have been quizzing all these years. He's at the height of his invulnerability.

Once war begins, Batman, can your players advance to the front lines if necessary?

We'll be in place, luthor. Obviously, we haven't the raw might to match Superman's army...
...but we have the fire of youth on our side.

The sons and daughters of many of the Leaguers have come to lend their support.

And they're prepared to fight tooth and nail with the generation that sired them?

Aren't all young people, son?

They're prepared to strike when I give the signal.

I assume your tactical strategy somehow involves the guile?

Why, yes...

Details?

Soon enough. In fact, I'm awaiting word myself. Now, if you'll excuse me...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. I DO!

I'M AWARE OF THAT OLD FRIEND.

BUT LET'S NOT DO THIS TELEPATHICALLY. YOU WON'T STAY FOCUSED.

TALK TO ME.

JUST RELAX... AND TALK.

WHO...?

IN THIS FORM? AN EVERYMAN. SOMEONE WHO SO DESPERATELY LONGED TO UNDERSTAND THE HUMAN DORME THAT HE FINALLY, IN ONE TERRIBLE MOMENT, OPENED HIS MIND TO THE WORLD.

HE WAS A MARTIAN CHAMPION.

AND WAS FOREVER SHAZTED BY ITS THOUGHTS.

NOW HE IS NOT MUCH OF ANYTHING.

AND TODAY WAS NO EXCEPTION.

JOHN... CAN YOU VERIFY?

TOO MUCH NOISE! TOO MUCH!

WHAT N- NOW? I WANT TO STAY. I WANT TO... M-MATTER,

OH, YOU... YOU DON'T THINK I'LL... A-HELP...?

SHH... OHH. IT'S OKAY.

YOU'VE PAID YOUR DUES, OLD FRIEND. GO HOME AND REST.

JOHN, YOU FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT LONGER THAN ANY OF US.

CRAZY OF RED SANDS AND SILENT STARS.

YOU'VE DONE ALL THATS EVER BEEN ASKED OF YOU...

I WILL WILL ATTEMPT...
Captain Marvel mills about. His eerie grin carving a swath through Batman's ranks.

May I...?

OH!

Sure. Help... Help yourself...

I have heard him called. The world's mightiest mortal.

No doubt. The intimidation his mere presence exudes is uncanny.

Clearly, these heroes regard him with a growing increase accorded only one another.
GERMANY IS ALL CLEAR.

ROOM, YOURE TELL HIM!

LOOK AT HIM! CAN T A 
MAN WITH 
TELESCOPIC 
VISION SEE 
THE WORLD 
AROUND HIM?

SO HE CAN HEAR 
YOU!

What happens next is... for the first time... my own fault.

I have overheard Flash described as a man too fast to be contained by one plane of existence. Apparently, entire strata of reality are open to him.

SHH... HE CAN HEAR YOU!

...AND ITALY.

AUSTRIA LOOKS CLEAR...

CHECK. METAHUMAN ACTIVITY HAS BEEN ABOLISHED IN EUROPE. MOVING ON TO AFRICA?

--- DROPPED A BUILDING ON YOU?

--- PUT POWER WOMAN AND 
WE BOTH INTO BODYCASTS, LISTEN, IM WITH YOU. I WAS ALL FOR THE GHAG---

--- BUT THROWING VON BACH 
INTO THAT CAULDRON IS LIKE FOILING 
A HYDROGEN BALLOON WITH A 
MATCH. SUPERMAN'S PRISON IS 
PRESSURE COOKER ENOUGH AS 
IT IS.

HE THINKS HE CAN GET EVERYONE 
TO BEHAVE LIKE THEY DID WHEN TIMES 
WERE BRIGHTER... BUT EVEN HE 
CAN'T TURN BACK THE CLOCK.
“...that I have forgotten that fact?"

“Who are you? Where did you come from?”

“Answer me, damn it!”

“Why are you here?”

“...?”
MY NAME IS NORMAN McOAY AND I’VE BEEN...

THIS ISN’T GOING TO... MAKE ANY...

WARN ME?

SAVE THOSE I MYSELF HAVE KNOWN BEFORE...

...AND ALL GREEN GRASS WAS BURNT UP...

...AND THEGun AND THE AIR WERE DARKENED.

FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM...

FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND! A CATASTROPHE COMES! I SEE ARMIES RAISED AGAINST YOU! I WARN YOU --

He glares with x-ray eyes, looking for meaning to my babble... as my mind goes dry. I can find no words...

LISTEN THEN. I DON’T KNOW WHO YOU’RE CAME FROM... BUT YOUR WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS.

ARMAGEDDON IS HARDLY ON OUR CALENDAR, THERE ARE GRIM DAYS... BUT WE HAVE MATTERS FULLY UNDER.

HOLY GOD!
WHERE DID THE OLD MAN GO? WHO WAS HE?

I DON'T KNOW.

WHY DID YOU UNDERMINE MY AUTHORITY?

I SAW A CRISIS. I REACTED IN A CONVINCING AND UNQUALIFIED MANNER. THE OTHERS NEED TO SEE THAT SORT OF AUTHORITY...

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER. WE'RE OVERDUE FOR A MEETING WITH THE U.N.

THEN I GUARANTEE THEY'RE WONDERING WHEN WE STARTED MAKING UP OUR OWN LAWS. LET'S GO.

"WE HAVE TO CONVINCE THEM THAT WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS."

...FLATTERED THAT THE MIGHTY JUSTICE LEAGUE HAS FINALLY DECLARED THE HUMAN RACE WORTHY OF CONVERSATION.

"THERE'S NO NEED FOR CARICUS, SECRETARY-GENERAL."

WE'RE SIMPLY NO LONGER ACCLIMATED TO BEING ADVISED OR CONSULTED. IMAGINE OUR SURPRISE, FOR INSTANCE, TO LEARN THAT THE CENTER OF THE U.S. NOW HARBORES A META-HUMAN PRISON.

YOU INSIST THAT... HARD AS THIS IS TO BELIEVE... IT POSSES NO PREVAILING DANGER.

THAT MORE INCARCERATED ARE FULLY DOOMED AND EASIER TO ACCOMMODATE.

IS THAT TRUE, SUPERMAN?
NOT ENTIRELY.

THE GULAG IS A WORK IN PROGRESS. THE LEAGUE MUST FIND A WAY TO GUIDE THOSE WHO INSIST UPON WORKING AGAINST THE COMMON GOOD.

I ADMIT TO SOME DANGER... BUT I CHOSE TO PUT THE RENEGADES TOGETHER, WHERE WE CAN MONITOR THEM AND TEACH THEM.

INSIDE A GIANT POWDER KEG, SUPERMAN, THE CONFIDENCE AND HOPE YOUR REELECTION ENGENDERED IS FAST ERODING.

GLOBAL ECONOMY IS STILL CATASTROPHIC... WORLD TERRORISM, STAGGERING. WE WILL NOT RISK ANOTHER KANSAS. I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT.

MEANING...?

STOP LOOKING SO STUNNED. DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THEY'LL SIT BACK AND LET US SOLVE THE PROBLEM AT OUR LEISURE?

THEY'RE SCARED... AND THEIR FEARS MAY SOON TURN OUR SOLUTIONS INTO addAction... THE LEAGUE WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE A FINAL DECISIVE ACTION...

KAL, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU'RE A WORLD LEADER... AND THE LEAGUE IS GETTING TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU TO ADJUST TO THAT ROLE.

AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IF THE SITUATION WITH THE GULAG PRISONERS GETS ONE PROCTOR WORSE...

MEANING THAT WE MUST BEGIN TO DECIDE SOME THINGS FOR OURSELVES. GOOD DAY.
GOOD NEWS!

THE MOMENT HAS COME TO BEGIN OUR FINAL STRIKE! THE GULAGS ARE IN TURMOIL! THE INMATES ARE...

...DARE I SAY IT...

...REVOLTING!

SUPERMAN'S PRISON HAS BECOME A CAULDRON OF HATE AND CHAOS! THAT'S OUR CHANCE TO DEPLOY OUR STEEL LEGION--

--BUT NOT BEFORE SOMEONE PAYS THAT SAVAGE CAULDRON RIGHT ON THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!

SOMEONE I'VE BEEN SlayING FOR JUST SUCH A TASK!

ME? BUT-- BUT ALL OUR TALKS--

IT'S AS I'VE ALWAYS SAID: THE SUPERHUMANS ARE EVIL. YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT.

BUT--

NO...I--

DO IT... AND WORRY NO MORE ABOUT LOSING CONTROL.

YOU WON'T. I'VE SEEN TO THAT. GO AHEAD... TAME THE WALLS OF JERICHO.

I INSIST.
THWAM!

HELLO, BILLY.

SHH... SCH...

SKUFF!

HE--HE'S NOT--?

YOU'RE KIDDING ME! ALL THIS TIME, WE'VE BEEN IN MORTAL FEAR OF BILLY BATSON?

I'VE SUSPECTED IT FOR A WHILE... AND I DON'T THINK IT'S A PROBE CONFIRMED IT. IT SEEMS MARVEL'S DUAL IDENTITY ARE IN QUITE A BIT OF MENTAL CONFLICT.

ALL THESE YEARS... AS BATSON GREW TO MANHOOD... LUTHOR KEPT HIM IN CHECK BY TURNING HIM INTO A SKEW OF SCHIZOPHRENIC PSYCHOSES.

B-BUT... OUR GOALS...

MY ONLY GOAL IN ALYING WITH YOU WAS TO LEARN YOUR CONNECTION TO CAPTAIN MARVEL. IN THIS ENTIRE GLOBAL CONFLICT, HE WAS THE WILD CARD...

... AND I HATE WILD CARDS.

YOU-YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED ME!

I LEARNED FROM YOU.
THEN MAY WE ASSUME YOU'VE GIVEN THE SIGNAL?

ABSOLUTELY.

STRIKE.

THOK

THOK

THOK

TED! FOLLOW LUTHOR!

DON'T LET HIM GET!
BILLY, STOP!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO RUN ANYMORE! I FIGURED OUT WHAT LUTHOR DID TO YOU!

CAPTAIN MARVEL RETIRED EARLY, DIDN'T HE, BILLY? OF ALL OF US, HE HAD THE HARDEST TIME ADAPTING TO THE GRIM NEW WORLD AROUND HIM.

ONE SAD DAY, HE BROUGHT MAGIC WORD FOR THE LAST TIME...

...AND VANISHED INSIDE A SCARED LITTLE BOX.
Luthor found you, look you under his wing.

Told you the same thing the world was telling you... that super-heroes were monstrous, terrible, repulsive beasts.

Don't think like that, Billy! He's twisted your brain around that insanity! The words... they're engineered to seep certain chemicals!

They're driving you, Mayor Billy! Don't let that happen! The world depends on it! You can fight!

Billy, look out!

Billy or Marvel! Either one... they eat away at your mind!

Aaaahhh...

Shazam!
GAWN IT.

FOR THE MOMENT, WHAT ABOUT LUTHOR, AND HIS MEN, ARE THEY ACCOUNTED FOR?

IN CUSTODY, EVERYONE. WHAT ABOUT MARVELS?

NO LONGER A WILD CARD. UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S STILL IN LUTHOR'S THRALL. GOD HELP US.

TAKE ME TO THE CAVE. NOW.
Yet another one of you, I'm not comfortable with.

Get used to this one.

More Amazonian wisdom.

Isn't it possible that we've already won the big fight? Once the rioters are calmed, we can install--

Oh!

You always were a bit vulnerable to magic.

Be careful. The sword was a gift from Hephaestus. It can carve the electrons off an atom.

I expect to be a soldier.

A soldier unprepared has no business calling oneself a soldier.

And you expect to like it?

And you expect to like it?

I will not sanction lethal force against the rioters. I'm uneasy with the blade.

Not all of us have heat vision.
There are lines we do not cross! We have rules!

And the prisoners don't? That's why they're prisoners! And if they don't remain prisoners, your big, blue marble testicles on the brink!

You made the decision to incarcerate them for the good of mankind, remember?

And maybe that was my mistake. Maybe I should have let the humans decide how to...

- Year! Help!
- Skoff!

For god's sake, can you hear me?

We're... We're in trouble! The fight at the galag goes worse than we expected!

The prisoners have already begun to breach the wall! They can't hold much longer... nor can we!

They're already...

...They've killed Captain Comet...

No!

Thwam!
Her lips brush his with the sound of marble scraping steel. It is a kiss completely devoid of passion.

It is a final farewell.
I need your help.

We've been through this already...

Shut up! Don't have time for your holier-than-thou cracks!

You're not above all this--not now. Not with the stakes this high!

We're racing the end of the world, Bruce! I've got a half-second lead, but by all the stars in Heaven--

That's not nearly enough!

The Gulag's ready to blow.

Yes! Even as we speak, Wonderwoman and the League stand outside its walls...
"...READY TO BRING THEM DOWN AROUND EVERYONE INSIDE!"

ATTENTION! THIS WILL BE YOUR ONLY WARNING!

ABANDON YOUR ACTIVITIES AND SURRENDER--

...OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES!

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME YOU NEVER UNAID IT MIGHT COME TO THIS?

DID YOU EVER CONSIDER THAT A WAR MIGHT BE FOR THE BEST?

THAT PERHAPS HUMANITY'S ONLY CHANGE IS FOR THE SUPERHUMANS TO SWALLOW EACH OTHER?

DON'T GIVE ME THAT!
THE DELIBERATE TAKING OF HUMAN—EVEN SUPER-HUMAN—LIFE GOES AGAINST EVERY BELIEF I HAVE—AND THAT YOU HAVE.

THAT'S THE ONE THING WE'RE ALWAYS HIDING IN COMMON. IT'S WHAT MADE US WHAT WE ARE.

WE CAN STILL INTERCODE, GATHER OUR FORCES TOGETHER, WE CAN BE THE WORLD'S FINEST TEAM.

I WILL TELL YOU THIS ONE THING, THERE'S A PLAYER YOU HAVEN'T COUNTED ON.

CAPTAIN MARVEL...

MARVEL...

HE'S BEEN BRAINWASHED, SEVERELY, ONCE. THERE WAS A GOOD KID INSIDE HIM BUT HE'S BEEN DRIVEN—

AND I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU EVER FIND HIM AGAIN.

MORE THAN ANYONE IN THE WORLD, WHEN YOU SCRATCH EVERYTHING ELSE AWAY FROM BATMAN, YOU'RE LEFT WITH SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T WANT TO SEE ANYBODY DIE.

MARVEL'S HEADED FOR THE GULAG, CLARK.

HE'S GOING TO BREAK IT WIDE OPEN ON THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO AGAINST...
Without a word, my spectral guide opens all horizons to me at once.

I see the air scorch in Superman's wake.

I see the daunting horror in Wonder Woman's eyes.
And worst of all...

"...I see the desperate hopes of the one man who might yet stop it..."

"...turned to ash and cinders..."
...By a single bolt of lightning.

Armageddon has arrived.
CHAPTER FOUR

Never-Ending Battle
There were voices... and thunderings, and lightnings...

...and an earthquake.

This was my dream...
Why not? What in God's name has to happen?

How much time must pass?

There will be a reckoning, Norman. He prepared.

As the scriptures say... Fear God, and give glory to Him...

...for the hour of His judgment is come...
Is that the only reason I am here? To watch some hideous judgment?

Superman and I share the same terror.

Damn it! Marvel, knock out of it? You can't do this!

Too much is happening too fast!

His face is a mask of confusion. He cannot comprehend how things came to this. Once upon a time, Captain Marvel was one of his mightiest allies.

We have to work together.

Now, whatever wisdom he once possessed has been dulled by ludors' brainwashing.

...making the Captain a soldier of chaos—the one warrior who can counter Superman's every move... and prevent him from containing the battle.

Superman believes himself to be the only force on Earth powerful enough to end the superhuman war.

He is wrong.
- Multi-megaton nuclear explosives held in reserve for just this moment.
- Take a good look at mankind's last hope.

- Capable of vaporizing a country. Sheathed in a force-field unbreachable by all catalogued meta-human powers. Deployment system...
- Virtually undetectable.

- All our projections estimate that one will do the job.

- As Secretary General of this new United Nations... I am empowered to sanction the use of three.

- Three? Unacceptable! Surely kill civilians, too.
- Risk of inflaming.

- Listen to me and understand! There is nothing rational about detonating tactical nuclear into the heart of any own country...
- ...but these are not rational times! We are at the flashpoint of human existence!

- My God... you can hear the battle even here! At any moment, it threatens to spread forth and enshroud the world! What then?
The only way to ensure that future generations remember this as humanity's final option... is to ensure that there will be future generations after today.

Let us strike while we still can.

Godspeed.
Even in the brightest
day, the dust of battle
eclipses the sun itself.

The prisoners released
by Marvel's Thunderbolts
strike out blindly.

Wonder Woman's troops return
force in kind.

Both sides fight with
abandon. Whatever heroic
mores of combat might once
have ruled them become
nostalgic memories.

This isn't a fight
that will eventually
die down.

This is a forest fire
that's just begun... a
war that may well
end the world.

Any instant now,
there will be
fatalities --

--and no way
to turn back.

With Superman deadlocked,
their only prayer of deliverance
reets --
-- with a force from on high.
Man or machine, each agent knows his mission.

Stern the losses of life.

Prevent the riot while there's still time to exert control.

The sheer force of Batman's presence kindles a desperate ember of hope.
---too late.

Du wirst wie eine Wame zerquetschen!!

ach...

Diana...?

Did you see that? She killed him! She killed Von Beck!

Get her!

He left me no choice. They began this. I will finish it.
I WILL NOT BE JUDGED BY YOU!

"DO YOU HEAR ME?"

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO SWAGGER OUT OF YOUR CAVE AND EXPECT EVERYONE TO BOW BEFORE YOUR FRIGID WISDOM!

WELL, IT’S TOO LATE FOR THAT, BRUCE!
WE TRIED TO HOLD ORDER-BUT IT'S TOO FAR GONE! OUR ONLY OPTION NOW IS WAR!

OUR ONLY ANSWER IS--
Marvel! In the name of Heaven... Wipe that empty smile off your face!

You were a friend once. I, how can you do this? How?

Look at the horror you've let loose!

Oh! It... Say something for yourself!

Shazam!

BOOM!

Shazam.
Open your eyes, Diana. Your answer flies on metal wings.

Those are nuclear carriers... the ultimate warbringers.

Our war is not one of violence... at the cost of some lives.

Our war ends in extinction.

If you're that devoted to the Amazon honor...

...if your soul genuinely longs for atonement on Amazonian terms...

...then let's keep fighting... and let the planes do their work.
Despite my spectral form, I feel the heat of Batman's lasers.

I feel the strain of titanium muscles.

I hear the whisper of a pilot begging forgiveness.
...over the sound of distant thunder!

ENOUGH!

SHAZAM!

BOOM!
ENOUGH!

Fingers that can fuse coal into diamond crawl across human bone.

...pick out with chilling ease the scream of human rage.

And in the hush, ears that can hear a cell divide...

A wave of x-rays confirms the bomb's potency. A telescopic glance calculates the seconds before impact. He must act... now.

IT IS TIME.

WHAT?
YOU CAN SEE THAT, CAN'T YOU? EVERY CHOICE I'VE MADE SO FAR HAS BROUGHT US HERE---HAS BEEN WRONG!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!

...I...?

THERE IS NO "EVIL" HERE! THERE IS TRAGEDY AND BECOMING...

...SO LISTEN TO ME, BILLY. LISTEN HARDER THAN YOU EVER HAVE BEFORE.

The clock is ticking.

Only moments remain before the blast...

Superman's pain spasms around Batson's jaw...

...and Batson whimpered.
LOOK AROUND US. LOOK WHAT WE'VE COME TO.
THERE'S A BOMB FALLING. EITHER IT KILLS US--

I CAN STILL STOP THE BOMB, BILL. THAT MUCH I'M SURE OF.
WHAT I DON'T KNOW IS WHETHER I SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO.

SUPER-HUMANS OR MANKIND...ONE WILL PAY THE UTLIMATE PRICE.

AND THAT DECISION... IS NOT FOR ME TO MAKE. I'M NOT A GOD...
I'M NOT A MAN.

BUT YOU, GILLY... YOU'RE BOTH.
MORE THAN ANYONE WHOEVER EXISTED, YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN BOTH WORLDS.
ONLY YOU CAN WEIGH THEIR WORTH EQUALLY.
FIGHT THE BRAINWASHING, BILLY. YOU CAN LET ME GO...

...OR WITH A WORD... YOU CAN STOP ME.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE CHOICE THAT CAN BE MADE BY YOU ALONE?

THEN DECIDE.

His tears answer for him.

DETERMINE THE WORLD.

And when he cries...

SHAKAM.
...seven thunders utter their voices.
WHERE...?

Almost certainly to confront his human attackers.

He feels completely alone. He need not.

There were survivors. They are fewer in number, and their pain is great...but their war is over.

Judgment has been passed. I am no longer needed.

Farewell, Norman McKay.

Farewell?

Farewell?
You think you brought me all this way just to watch people die?

Think again!

You want to confront evil? Then get us the hell to the H.U. now!

You saw Superman. You saw an anger that could twist steel!

If what happens next happens the only way it can... and you let it...

"That's evil."

God in heaven... run! He's gone berserk!
LOOK OUT!

THE DOORS!
HE'S WELDED THE DOORS!

COUREZ!
COUREZ POUR VOS VIES!

NANDWAN NA ANG SIBULONG! PAPATAYIN NYA ULO!

GEE MOY!
BA MAE ERKOTEKE! OLOYES!

MY GOD...
HE'S BRINGING THE ROOF DOWN!
HE'LL KILL THEM ALL!

SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

AFTER TEN YEARS, HE HAS FINALLY LET FEAR AWAY THAT WOULD COVER HIMSELF.

NOW CAN ANYONE POSSIBLY CALM THE FURY HE FEELS TOWARDS HIS PERSECUTIONS?

I CAN REACH BEHIND IT.

DO YOU REALLY THINK HE'S MAD AT THEM? HE'S RAGING AT HIMSELF!

LET ME TALK TO HIM.
NOW.

CLARK?
CLARK, DON'T... YOU BLAME YOURSELF FOR CAPTAIN MARVEL... FOR WASHOE AND KANSAS... FOR TEN YEARS THAT ENDED TODAY.

YES, YOU'RE ANGRY. BUT IN THAT ANGER, YOU'RE FORGETTING ONCE MORE WHAT HUMANS FEEL.

WHAT THEY FEAR.

THEY WON'T FORGIVE YOU FOR THIS, CLARK.

FORGIVE YOURSELF.
WHO ARE... WHY ARE YOU HERE?

TO BEAR WITNESS.

LISTEN TO ME, CLARK. OF ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN DO... ALL YOUR POWERS... THE GREATEST HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOUR INSTINCTIVE KNOWLEDGE...

OF RIGHT... OR WRONG.

IT WAS A GIFT OF YOUR OWN HUMANITY. YOU NEVER HAD TO QUESTION YOUR CHOICES. IN ANY SITUATION... ANY CRISIS... YOU KNEW WHAT TO DO.

BUT THE MINUTE YOU MADE THE SUPERMORE IMPORTANT THAN THE MAN... THE DAY YOU DECIDED TO TURN YOUR BACK ON MAN... THAT COMPLETELY COST YOU YOUR INSTINCT.

THAT TOOK YOUR JUDGMENT AWAY.

TAKE IT BACK.

IF YOU WANT REDEMPTION, CLARK... IT LIES IN THE VERY NEXT DECISION YOU MAKE.

MAKE IT AS A MAN... AND MAKE IT RIGHT.
With his dying breath, Captain Marvel managed to deploy the bomb high above Ground Zero.

Thanks to that... and to the combined powers of Green Lanterns and others... there were survivors.

The same district. The same everything.

What now?

Now we put things right. Years ago, I let those I swore to protect drive me away. We all did. And that was the day all of this began.

We... we saw you as gods... as we saw ourselves. And we were both wrong.

But I no longer care about the mistakes of yesterday. I care about coping with tomorrow... together.
THE PROBLEMS WE FACE STILL EXIST. WE'RE NOT GOING TO SOLVE THEM FOR YOU...

...WE'RE GOING TO SOLVE THEM WITH YOU...

...NOT BY RULING ABOVE YOU... BUT BY LIVING AMONG YOU.

WE WILL NO LONGER IMPOSE OUR POWER ON HUMANITY. WE WILL EARN YOUR TRUST...

...HANG THE WISDOM ONE MAN LEFT AS HIS LEGACY.

I ASKED HIM TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HUMAN AND SUPERHUMANS. BUT THE ONE CHOICE THAT WAS A FALSE DIVISION... AND MADE THE ONLY CHOICE THAT EVER TRULY MATTERS: HE CHOSE LIFE...
"... in the hope that your world and our world could be one world once again."
Time folds forward.
Healing has begun.

And in the twinkling of an eye, great powers reconstruct a once-stately manor...

...into a hospital ward patrolled by a man who has traded black garb for white.

Under his watch, survivors ravaged by the effects of the bomb are nurtured and cared for...

...while those who helped bring about the cataclysm...

...suffer their own unique justice.

SHAZAM.
SHUT UP.
Bones are set...
burns are salved...
...and wounds are mended...

...here...

...and across the sea.
Through her courage, the princess is at last granted her crown. No longer does she see herself as a failed student.

She is a teacher...

...whose work is just beginning.

Across the world, new roles are embraced... new alliances forged.

After far too long a time, the gods have chosen to work with mankind towards a common good.
Only one works alone.

Quite a memorial.

As it should be.

Not just for those claimed by the bomb... but for all those here who lost their lives to our mistake.

Let them rest in peace, Kal.

They'll only haunt you if you forget what they taught you.

Speaking of which...

What's this?

A gift.

A little something to help you see more clearly.
ALL THE SINS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED. SPECTRE, TELL ME, IN THE END, WHO DO YOU PUNISH?

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

NO ONE NEED SUFFER ANY FURTHER FOR THE TRAGEDIES WE HAVE WITNESSSED. NORMAN MCCAY, DO NOT MOCK ME.

I’M NOT. I’M MERELY WONDERING...

WHEN YOU FIRST APPEARED BEFORE ME, YOU SAID YOU NEEDED A HUMAN SOUL TO BE YOUR ANCHOR... AND YET...

... YOU YOURSELF WERE ONCE AN ORDINARY MAN. TELL ME... WHAT WOULD HIS PERSPECTIVE HAVE BEEN?

AN EXCELLENT QUESTION.

BE WELL, NORMAN MCCAY. YOU HAVE WATCHED THE TITANS WALK THE EARTH... AND YOU HAVE KEPT STRIDE.

PERHAPS YOU ARE MORE LIKE THEM THAN YOU REALIZE.

YOU EXIST... TO GIVE HOPE.
And the crisis passes. There is no grand celebration. There is too much pain to be forgotten...too much rebuilding to master.

That a dream is not always a prophecy.

But there is faith...and so, though my visions no longer plague me, I preach the lessons they have taught me.

That the future...

...like so much else...

**THE REVELATION TO JOHN**

...is open to interpretation.

And that hope is brightest...when it claims from fear.

Grace be with you all.

Amen.
ONE YEAR LATER...
GREETINGS, CITIZEN!

SMOKING OR NON-SMOKING?

BE NICE, CLARK...

YOU DON'T FIND ANY OF THIS UNSETTLING?
IT'S IN THE UPBRINGING, I'M ACCUSTOMED TO SEEING MORTALS PAY TRIBUTE TO THE GODS.

IT'S NOT A CHURCH, CLARK. IT'S A RESTAURANT. RELAX.

SO WHERE IS SHE?
YOU'RE THE ONE WITH X-RAY VISION. DID YOU LOOK BEHIND THE GIANT PENNY?

YOU DIDN'T TELL HIM, DID YOU?

OF COURSE NOT. IF IT ACTUALLY MEANS SEEING HIM SURPRISED, WHO AM I TO Hinder THE MOMENT?
KRYPTONITE

It's awfully crowded. You're sure we won't be recognized?

...and in the second place, amidst all this tawdry erc-a-brac, I doubt they'd take notice of us if we were fighting the Legion of Doom in full costume.

Clark, Diana.

There you are, you snuck up on me.

Hardly likely. In the first place, you wrote the book on secret identities...

Dick's headed for a full recovery. In... well...

...Dick's daughter is counseling him. Maybe he'll turn around yet... if he can shed the lessons of the League of Assassins.

Me, how do you do that?

That's what happens when you're raised by an isolated society of zealots. You end up a little brainwashed.

You don't say.

Water's fine.

May I bring you something to drink?

Coffee.

Milk.

And keep it coming.
Tell me... of all the places on Earth and beyond we could have met, why did you choose this one?

I didn't.

I did. I was curious. The atmosphere is elevating and humbling at the same time. Some of us can always use a little more humility.

Excuse me, are you...?

Yes...?

Ah.

Be my guest.

We have some things to settle, at least. News to share. You and I haven't really spoken much since... Captain Marvel.

But before we begin, I think it's appropriate to give a moment to those who fell in battle. We're long overdue.

So I gather from your communiqué we have business?

To past friends.
IT'S BEEN A LONG ROAD TO REHABILITATION FOR THE INJURED, FOR
TUNATELY, I'M NOT LABORING ALONE.

AND YOU'RE HAD NO TROUBLE WITH THE MAFI.

INHIBITOR COLLARS KEEP THE ROWDIER ONES... GROUNDED!

SINCE THEN, I CAME TO THE CAVE TWICE LAST MONTH, TRYING TO
HACK THE COMPUTER.

LUTHOR?

EVEN LUTHOR?

REALLY?

NO.

I WAS ABLE TO PUT SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE MANHUNGRY
LIBERATION FRONT TO WORK IN OUR AD HOC HOSPITAL.

THEY'RE PULLING THEIR WEIGHT, VANDAL.

SAVAGE ALONE HAS PICKED UP QUITE A FEW HEALING TRICKS IN HIS
FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS.

THAT'S NOT WELL-DONE.

DON'T TELL ME THAT'S IT. WE COULDN'T HAVE COMPARES
RESUMÈS BY PHONE, WE'RE HERE SOLELY TO PLAY
CATCH-UP?

NOT EXACTLY, WE...

NOT A SHADY OVER MEDIUM, MISS?...

HERE...

...WE HAVE SOMETHING TO ANNOUNCE.

YOU'RE PREGNANT.
HOW... 
HOW DID 
YOU...?

OBSERVATION, FOR 
AN AGELESS AMAZON OF 
PERFECT PHYSIQUE, YOU'VE 
PUT ON A POUND OR 
TWO. 
THAT WAS 
MY FIRST 
CLUE.

THERE 
WERE 
OTHERS.

ALWAYS THE 
DETECTIVE. NOW, 
LET'S TEST YOUR 
ESCAPE ARTS-
TRY.

I WANT A 
COMMITMENT 
FROM YOU.

Sorry if I 
stepped on your 
denouement, 
princess.

My best to you both 
Congratulations on bring-
ing another spectacu-
lar demigod into the world.

I'D LIKE YOU 
TO BE THE CHILDS 
SPOFATHER.

WHAT?

ME? 
I...DON'T 
KNOW WHAT 
TO SAY...

THEN THE 
DAY IS FULL OF 
SURPRISES.

NEWS TO YOU, 
I TAKE IT? 
WHAT ISN'T 
WHEN IT COMES 
TO HER?

HARRY: Athena's 
WISDOM AT WORK, DIANA. 
MY RECORD AS A PARENT 
ISN'T SPOTLESS.
BRUCE, I’LL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT I KNOW LITTLE ABOUT FATHERHOOD... BUT I DO KNOW THIS. THERE ARE THINGS THAT THE BATMAN CAN TEACH OUR CHILD... THAT CLARK AND I CAN’T.

THAT WE WOULD NEVER EVEN THINK OF.

MORE COFFEE, GIRL?

OH, YES.

BUT WE'RE OF SUCH DIFFERENT SCHOOLS YOU AND CLARK... YOU RULE BY TRUST.

I RLY ON FEAR.

THEN LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT WE'RE ALL MOST AFRAID OF.

LOOK AT THE LESSON WE JUST LEARNED. RIGHT NOW, THE SCALES OF WORLD POWER ARE BALANCED... BUT STILL TOO EASY TO TIP.

OUR CHILD MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE WILL NEED THE LEARNING INFLUENCE OF A MORTAL MAN...

...A MORTAL MAN WHO WE CAN COUNT ON.

...A MORTAL MAN...

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT MR. TRUST IS THE CENTER OF MY WORLD. I DON'T KNOW IF THAT MAKES ME AN EXPERT ON IT... BUT I KNOW I TRUST YOU.

DESPITE OUR DIFFERENCES OVER THE YEARS, I ALWAYS HAVE.
IT'S SETTLED, THEN?

SURE, WE CAN WORK OUT SOME SORT OF SHARED CUSTODY. THE BABY PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SPEND ALL ITS TIME IN SECLUSION WITH US.

HAVE YOU GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO A NAME? BRUCE IS GOOD...

YOU REALIZE YOU'VE JUST HANDED ME INFLUENCE OVER THE MOST POWERFUL CHILD IN THE WORLD?

AFTER ALL, WE WOULDN'T WANT THE CHILD TO BE RAISED BY AN ISOLATED SOCIETY OF ZEALOTS.

THAT'S A SPECTRE FLATTER?

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY. IT'S FLATTERING TO BE REMEMBERED SOMEHOW...

OUCH.

BRUCE, STILL WITH US?

SORRY, JUST WANDERING FOR A SECOND...

THE CHILD OF SUPERMAN AND WONDER WOMAN... AND BATMAN. IMAGINE WHAT KIND OF KID HE'LL...

--SHE'LL--

--BE.

BATTLER FOR TRUTH... JUSTICE... AND A NEW AMERICAN WAY. I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SEE IT FOR MYSELF.

LET'S GO HOME...

...AND DREAM ABOUT THE FUTURE.
THY KINGDOM

WIZARD TAKES AN EXCLUSIVE PEEK INTO ALEX ROSS’ KINGDOM COME SKETCHBOOK FOR A LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF THE DC UNIVERSE

KINGDOM COME, FINALLY, IS COMING.

The long-awaited new project by acclaimed Marvels painter Alex Ross will burst onto the stands in May. Written by Mark Waid, the four-part, 48-page monthly Elseworlds series presents the DC Universe 20 years in the future, when several heroes have aged and others have passed the mantle along, some to their descendants. A cataclysmic event forces every hero to choose sides and go to war.

“I think we’ve done a fair job of visually representing just about everybody who has had any nominal importance in DC’s history,” says Ross. His depictions of heroes return some to their roots, while others grow from current versions. “I didn’t demand that every character be dramatically different, but I did demand that it be fun for the reader. The one constant was that I tried to respect what the original creators had in mind, by letting the roots show through.”

The best part, he adds, is that “all the designs are based on what I wanted to do, with no outside input. This is all pure and undiluted, as far as my vision of how it should look. That’s very comforting and satisfying.”

On the following pages are initial sketches for some of the book’s key characters. The new names shown are Ross’s own codenames and won’t appear in the book, he notes. “I got shot down on most of them.”

BY CRAIG SHUTT
WONDER WOMAN

Created from clay and animated by the gods, Wonder Woman hasn’t aged, Ross explains. She features a somewhat bulkier upper body than most artists draw. “I wanted to give her a realistic sense of muscle tone for a woman as strong as she is, but she won’t be as overdone as Power Woman.” Her chest emblem will be larger too, something that always has bugged Ross. She also sports a loincloth, rather than trunks. “John Byrne is a sissy for not drawing all the stars,” Ross laughs. “I looked at it as a challenge. If they’re hard to draw, then so much the better, because it makes me work harder.” The loincloth “hearkens back to her skirt, which never looked that great, while giving it a sexier feel by opening up the sides.”

SUPERMAN

“Superman has held together pretty well, but you can see the age in his face when you get close,” Ross says. “He’s got a weathered Doc Savage look to him.” The chest emblem represents the biggest change, picking up the red and black styling from the 1940s Max Fleischer cartoons. “Superman’s emblem has changed over time, and I wanted to give a sense that it’s still transforming.” Even the blue and red colors are in darker tones than the standard look, he notes. “It’s dramatically different but still true to his roots. I gave him a sense of grandeur, and honestly, I’ve had no more fun drawing anyone’s costume than I’ve had with Superman’s.”
REV. NORMAN MCCAY

The Spectre co-opted this character to help him interpret the story's events from a human perspective. All of the action is seen from his viewpoint, as Marvel was seen through Phil Sheldon's eyes. Ross based the character's look on his own father. "The whole point of this project was to make my dad a key character in the DC Universe," he laughs. "Knowing the person behind this character added real depth to the project for me. My dad is a very interesting, charismatic person, like an older Jimmy Stewart figure. He represents to me an ideal of the average man from the '30s or '40s who doesn't seem to exist anymore. He's a Mister Rogers type, with the sweater and everything, although after posing in it for all the photos I took, he's probably sick of it."

RED ROBIN

Dick Grayson resumes the Robin mantle, creating a mostly black costume with a red chest plate, replicating the bird's look. "Since I went a different way with Batman, I brought a lot of the Neal Adams influence from my childhood into my take on Robin," says Ross. Readers will never hear him called Red Robin, but the name helped Ross evoke the proper look. "It reminds me of Rob Roy, kind of a swashbuckling Irish or Scottish folk hero," he notes. "He only has a few lines, but he's visually prominent and important. All the original Teen Titans are prominent."

THE FLASH

This Flash-derived character evokes a nearly godlike image, but Ross won't say which existing Flash he represents. His look comes from his solution to the dilemma of wanting to be everywhere at once. "He's never quite still," Ross claims. "He exists as a motion blur. You can assume he's in more places than the one you see him in." He'll be represented by a red glow over his entire body and static electricity curling around him, with no costume detail apparent—and toes showing. "Just as I drew a man who was fire in Marvels [the Human
**Hawkman**

This character extrapolates from the most-current incarnation, in which a hawk-god plays a key role in giving the hero his powers. "I took the body of the hawk-god and put him into our plane of existence, with the soul of one of the Hawkmen we know," he says. The Egyptian trappings pay homage to the Golden Age hero, as does the mask, which Ross based on the version drawn by Jerry Ordway in the 1980s series All-Star Squadron. "When I sat down to create this character, I drew up the version I loved the most. He's faithful to both the most recent look and the oldest."

**The Flash II**

The new Flash, like the new Green Lantern, is the daughter of a previous incarnation. "Those mantles are always passed on," Ross explains. In fact, all of the original Titans will have children appearing. His version of the young female Flash was designed before Jesse Quick adopted a somewhat similar look in the Flash comic, he notes. Without admitting who she's related to, he says coyly, "She seems to have a strong connection to Wally West's Kid Flash look."

**Green Lantern**

Ross won't reveal which Lantern is under the mask, but readers will ultimately figure it out, he says. (He promises it isn't Guy Gardner.) The look combines primarily the Golden Age version and Hal Jordan's Parallax style. "My goal was to create a design that wouldn't offend Martin Nodell [creator of the Golden Age GL]. There's a certain homage paid there, with his grandeur and general appearance." (More of Hal Jordan's style will be seen in the new Green Lantern.) This Green Lantern's personality was inspired by writer James Robinson's take in his mini-series, The Golden Age, where GL was an all-powerful hero who tried not to interfere in routine matters.
THE MANKIND LIBERATION FRONT

Waid made a strong case for including some incarnation of supervillains, so between them they created this organization, composed of key bad guys. Ross dressed them as afool businessmen and pictured them as he thought they might age. “Even without their costumes, I was able to work in many aspects of their personalities and histories,” he says. For instance, Catwoman is wearing the dress and hairstyle she had in her first appearance in Batman #1.

△ DR. MIDNIGHT III

“I wanted to do something completely different with this character,” Ross says. “Since Infinity Inc. had reinvented him as a female, and Red Robin’s costume looked a lot like the original version of Dr. Midnight, I decided to go in a different direction and play up his smoke bombs.” The new Midnight consists of only the mask and cape, with black smoke billowing from under it. Ross took a similar approach to Dr. Fate. “They both exist as voids with stuff flowing out of their capes,” he explains. “As with Red Tornado and Dr. Fate, I would expect Dr. Midnight to be known only by his last name, which sums up his character.”

For a full-blown, jam-packed article on Kingdom Come, including writer Mark Waid’s thoughts on the characters, come back next issue. And if that ain’t enough, these two words should do the trick: full color.

△ RED TORNADO

Ross deconstructed this hero back to one of his several origins, in which he embodied a living tornado. “He’s the physical manifestation without the shell,” he explains. “But he retains the image of the body, with the cloak and tattered boots.” The red and purple color scheme pays homage to the original 1940s Red Tornado, rather than the later red/blue/yellow version. He also created a new, younger Red Tornado, a female with long red hair, who serves as a protégé.

Craig Shutt, who also exposed the world of Kane in this issue, is a kinda-powerful hero who tries not to interfere in routine matters.
"I wanted to get as far away from comics in college as I could," Alex Ross told a group of slightly intimidated teenagers, hanging on his every word. "I wanted to learn other art styles. But when I got out of school, I realized how much I loved comics."

The walls of the small, quaint Four Color Images gallery in New York City vouched for Ross' words. Hanging on the walls were many brilliantly detailed 18.5-by-12-inch Kingdom Come paintings by Ross, being sold for prices ranging from $500 to $5,000.

Groups of fans packed the tiny non-air-conditioned gallery in early September, making it a veritable hotbox. But Ross didn't seem to mind the heat as he stood there, sipping a cold soft drink. After all, this was his day in the sun.

Four Color Images hosted the Kingdom Come showing, kicking off a month-long exhibit. It began with an artist's reception Sept. 5, followed by an artist signing Sept. 7. Riding the wave of the tremendously popular four-issue mini-series, Ross' artwork sold at an incredibly brisk pace.

Within 10 days of the gallery opening, only 70 or so pieces remained unpurchased from the approximately 140 pieces on sale.

Ross' collaborator on the project—writer Mark Waid—also attended the gallery opening. There he sat with project editor Dan Raspler, wiping his brow and laughing as Raspler recalled the intense creative process. "If you think that Alex is intense," Raspler said, "working with Mark doubled that intensity."

While fans and comic creators participated in the social atmosphere of the gallery, it did not overshadow the general fixation on the artwork. Murmurs were heard throughout the gallery about the detail, the realistic nature and the time placed into each painting. One man remained completely transfixed, staring at page 35 of Kingdom Come #4 for 20 minutes, examining every face in the United Nations crowd while a single drop of sweat ran down his face. The sweat droplet didn't affect him as it dripped off his chin, hitting the floor. It was a night of amazing sights.

Some members of the crowd were stunned by the price tags on the paintings, but most didn't seem to notice. Four Color Images was selling the artwork for fees of $500 for an interior page to $5,000 for the two-piece T-shirt design painting. Ross noted one page wasn't for sale—a scene in issue #2 in which the Spectre tells Norman McCay of the three main heroes. On that page (18), Ross recreates the very first cover appearances of Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman. "That piece has significance with comic history," said Ross.

And so, it appears, does Ross' work. —Matthew Senreich
At right: Ross poses near the Wizard #57 cover, a piece priced at $3,500.

Below: The exhibit’s display case.

Above: The original four issues containing the exhibit’s artwork. At right: Ross shows the Africa-like temperature as he chats with fans.

Original art from the first issue.
Wizard casts the Kingdom Come movie!

Casting Call

With a tense story and realistic art style, it makes perfect sense to do a movie based on Kingdom Come. Since Alex Ross painted these heroes to look like regular folks, it'd be a cinch to cast. So we did.

First of all, we'd have a big budget and we'd get those ILM special effects gurus to create the Flash's speed effects and the monstrous Hawkman. As for the rest of the casting... well, whaddaya think?

SUPERMAN

Robert Urich ("Lazarus Man") is beefy enough to play the aging Man of Steel. Slick his hair back and you've got Clark Kent.

By a bunch of Wizard staffers
WONDER WOMAN
Lynda Carter, who played the heroine in the 1970s TV show, is still hot as hell and can easily pick up the golden lasso of our favorite Amazon. Heck, she's got a lotta practice.

BATMAN
Gregory Peck ("Other People's Money") looks like he was actually the base model for the much-older Bruce Wayne.

CAPTAIN MARVEL
Ken Wahl ("Witewing") has the slicked hair, the narrow eyes and the chiseled face of the World's Mightiest Mortal. Plus, he looks diabolical enough to do Cap proud.

AQUAMAN
Besides looking just like Arthur, Richard Harris ("The Field") has the regal look to him that befits the king of the seven seas.

GREEN LANTERN
Robert Conrad ("Wild Wild West") still looks like he can fight evil with the best of 'em. Give him a power ring and the guy's unstoppable.
**POWER GIRL**

Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith has the, um, build for this brickhouse of a heroine. Of course, she'll apparently have to lose some weight for the role...

**OLIVER QUEEN**

Sean Connery ("The Rock") can pull off being the gruff bowman—the type of character he seems right for. All he has to do is hide that accent of his.

**THE SPECTRE**

A pro at being a cryptic character, Leonard Nimoy ("Star Trek") can work similar magic as the guy who enacts the wrath of God.

**MAGOG**

As the hero-gone-overboard, Richard Burgi ("The Sentinel") has that edge in his eyes that makes him look like he could ace the Joker in a heartbeat.

**REVEREND NORMAN MCCAY**

Christopher Plummer ("Star Trek VI") can say that: "Holee bejeezus, I'm talking to the Spectre" look like few others. Plus, he's a good actor and can pull off being the narrator of this story.

**LEX LUTHOR**

Geez, this rendition of Lex screams hardass. And if there's one thing Laurence Tierney ("Reservoir Dogs") has proven, he can be one. And hey, he's bald, which is always a plus.
SUPERENEMIES What the new breed of superfolk that pops up in the future, but they're hardly heroes

Mark Waid and Alex Ross end the DC world as we know it in *Kingdom Come*

By Craig Shutt
ALEX ROSS LOVES TO PAINT SUPERHEROES. And there’s no doubt that his latest project Kingdom Come is about superheroes. “Kingdom Come requires a future filled with superheroes,” Ross explains. “By the time this story takes place, they’ve become a significant proportion of the population.”

Written by Mark Waid, the four-issue Kingdom Come mini-series depicts his and Ross’ vision of the DC Universe some 20 years in the future. And that future begins in May.

To achieve the look of their future world, Ross redesigned “just about everybody who has had any nominal importance in DC’s history,” he says. He aged some of them, passed on redesigned costumes to new candidates, and sprinkled in a hefty share of sons and daughters. He also created a totally new generation of young, upcoming heroes.

That superheroic oversaturation, however, doesn’t mean readers will need a scoreboard to keep track of everyone, stresses Waid. “We don’t want to disappoint anyone, but when you’ve got 900 superheroes walking around, you can’t give them all speaking parts, or it becomes a cacophony,” he says. “We swore we’d make this book as reader-friendly as possible, so people who have no familiarity with most of these characters would love it too. If you know the characters, it’s a bonus to try to figure out their backstory and where they’ve been. But if you don’t know them, you won’t be lost.”

Ross agrees. “We’re focusing on a small main cast and a few supporting characters. The readers will have to come up with their own guesses for why I thought most of these guys got to where they are. I’m hoping this is palatable to kids and adults both. It may be too intellectual for small kids, but they’ll be able to follow it and get out of it whatever they want, and parents won’t have to hide it from them.”

THE KEY EVENT preceding the story in these four 48-page books came when Superman retired. “Some years earlier, Superman threw up his hands and said, ‘I’m done,’” Waid explains. “When he does that, the others ask themselves what hope is for them to accomplish anything. Superman starts a giant chain reaction that leads to some of the older heroes retiring, others deciding to look out for themselves and a few continuing to fight the good fight.”

Into that vacuum came a new group of younger, harsher heroes. “They’re the type who have no regard for the people they’re protecting,” Waid explains. “They throw buses at each other and don’t think about the consequences.”

Kingdom Come opens with the Spectre, God’s angel of judgment, receiving a vision of a coming apocalypse. That ultimately will result in a war among and between the heroes. “The actual war is the climax to the book,” Waid
says. "The main story deals with how events build to that. To help the Spectre understand these developments, I co-opted a minister, Norman McCay, to interpret them in human terms. The story is seen through McCay's eyes, as he tries to make sense of the vast throng of superheroes preparing for what is to come."

"This is mostly Superman's story," Waid says. "His fatal flaw is that he doesn't realize how important he is to the world and the other heroes. It's a necessary flaw, because if he knew, he'd have a swollen head. What makes him Superman is his innocence, his belief that he's just a farm boy from Kansas."

Though Waid and Ross are keeping it a secret as to why Superman returns from retirement, he nonetheless reappears by gathering an army of older superheroes. "He's not really good at it," Waid states. "He's not really a world leader and doesn't think in that scope. He's not stupid, but he becomes frustrated because there's nothing to punch. Superman is a smart man, he's not a clever man."

But Batman is. And he didn't retire. "Batman starts to marshal his own forces, for his own purposes," Waid relates. "That ultimately will put him at odds with Superman."

Ross sees a basic distinction between the two DC icons. "Batman, to me, is about five years older than Superman," he says. "He has a father figure role with Robin and should give off a sense of being older and wiser. He's the smartest superhero, the essence of thinking. Superman is powerful, but the 'super' applies to every aspect of his life. He's always trying to do the right thing, not just physically. He's the best, the kindest, the most giving, and he's trying to be the smartest. But it's not the kind of smart that Batman is. I wanted to play off that distinction between being noble and smart and being clever." Ross laughs. "But not even Batman is clever enough to see the end of this story coming."

The other key figure in the book is DC's third icon, Wonder Woman. "Wonder Woman was the toughest nut for me to crack," admits Waid. "Not only wasn't I a big fan of hers as I was of Superman and Batman as a kid, but I just couldn't understand her. She preaches love and peace, but she goes around punching people. As [Kingdom Come editor] Dan Raspler says, she's not from Paradise Island, she's from Paradox Island."

Ultimately, though, he finally understood the Amazon's outlook and motivations. "Once I got to the scene where I did get the handle on her—and I won't say where that is—it all came together. Wonder Woman is one of the most complex characters in the book, with her own distinct story to tell."

WAIID BEGAN telling these stories in April 1994, when Raspler faxed him seven single-spaced pages from Ross' original story proposal. Coming off of Marvel, Ross' acclaimed four-part series with writer Kurt Busiek that examined the Marvel Universe's early days, Ross mapped out some thoughts on where the DC Universe ultimately might wind up.

These notes—about 40 pages in all—represented only a framework onto which a deeper story was constructed. "There was a beginning point and an end point, but it wasn't a story," Waid says. "Alex had a general idea and a lot of cool scenes he wanted to paint. We've kept pretty close to what he set down, but we've added a lot to the middle."

Ross agrees. "I had point A and point Z, but points B through Y were up for grabs," he says. "That was fine, because I didn't want Mark to just script my ideas. That would have been a hollow experience. From our first meeting, I could see I was in good hands. Mark brought a depth to the story by adding subplots and fleshing out how things progressed. I created a lot of great moments, but he made it all work."

Ross then laughs. "But he'll tell you he got a wallop- ing amount of input from me, more than I could have hoped for. I'm sure it's more than he's ever gotten on a project and a lot more than he wanted."

Waid doesn't deny it. Early on, he traveled to Ross' Chicago studio, where they spent a weekend hashing out details. It took more to make this work than just swapping the heroes back and forth between Superman and Batman's teams, he notes. "Alex knew Superman retired and then returned, but he didn't know why," Waid says. "We had to answer that first, because I found it almost impossible to believe Superman would ever retire. We bounced it back and forth over and over and over, and we still are to this day."

Indeed, in mid-February, Waid still had the final six pages of the series to script, and Ross estimated he was about three months from finishing his paintings. Neither is rushing it. "I have it all in my head, but the ending's not on paper yet," admits Waid. "Giving a good sense of closure to a 180-page story is something I want to really take my time with so I do it right." Ross was using that lag time to perfect his hero-d Laden covers and paint portions of the sagging ending war, he says. "Painting fight scenes with hundreds of characters takes a lot more time than a normal page."

CHARACTER DESIGNS generated no conflicts, Ross notes, because Waid left that up to his co-creator. "Mark mostly worked with what I created, but we both generally agreed on how most of the characters worked." In a few cases, such as Green Arrow and the Black Canary, Waid played up their roles because their sketches were so cool. "Captain Comet is another one who I've always loved," Waid adds. "And I loved Alex's rendition of him."

They both agree that their favorite character was Superman, but each has his own preferred supporting player. For Waid, Deadman wins the nod, as the writer reimagined him to the wise-cracking guy he'd been up till the 1980s. "Deadman has a very small but important role, and he was the most fun," he says. "I didn't realize that I love Deadman as much as I do until I wrote this. He comes along at just the right point in the story. When I was writing him, I found out something new about him, and he has one of my favorite lines."

Ross has a soft spot for Nightstar, the daughter of Nightwing and Starfire. Not only did he create a heroine who could exist in current continuity, but he based her on a design he originated when he was 11 years old. "Her look flowed out of those memories, and it made sense to use them here," he explains. "She has roots in my own personal history." He was.
that everybody has his own perspective, and nobody is totally wrong.

**THE ROLES OF GOOD AND EVIL** and the notion of who truly serves humanity stand at the center of the book, the creators say. The god-like nature of several of the older heroes, including Spectre, the older Flash, the older Hawkman, Fas, Dr. Mid-Nite III and the Red Tornado, emphasizes that. "The older heroes have divorced themselves from humanity in many ways," explains Waid. "They have to examine their roles and their place in society.

Ross has said that while Marvel in some ways reflected the wonder that readers felt as a superhero universe grew before their eyes, *Kingdom Come* offers a scenario for how a superhero universe winds up. He doesn’t deny that he wanted to use the book to explore some of his thoughts on where the comics industry stands today.

"The current state of comics seems to me to be gangs fighting gangs," he says. "DC, Marvel and Image all have people fighting without much reason to be doing it. DC versus Marvel is a perfect example of that. In *Kingdom Come*, we’re pointing out in a way what would happen if this continued in a world of real, living superheroes."

"We started this with one joke: What if the Image Universe invaded the DC Universe?" But that was simply a starting point, and a short-hand way of saying it. It applies to almost any superhero created after about 1972. I think the older DC heroes were more concerned with ordinary people. The new breed makes things into a big world Wrestling Federation match between superheroes, and they don’t seem to care who’s in the middle."

As for his next superhero book, Ross has some ideas. "I still have lots of projects I’d like to do with DC, and certainly there are some I could imagine doing with Marvel after things settle down," he says. "There’s no end to the ideas I have for stuff, both independent or part of the superhero genre. They may be single-character focuses, though, because I’m not sure I have another multi-character extravaganza in me."

Waid can understand that. "If I had been up to me, this story would have been Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman, and nobody else," he laughs. "They were the most complex and the most fun to write." That's not the version we'll be seeing, of course. Because Alex Ross loves to paint superheroes.

Craig Shutt, who reported on the Analogam Universe in issue #56, would really like to see another Alex Ross-painted superhero project.

**KINGDOM CAME**

Once *Kingdom Come* ends in August, Alex Ross will begin work on two 48-page books for Vertigo about Uncle Sam. "They'll be my interpretation of Uncle Sam the icon," he explains, not the former Quality Comics character now being revamped in *The Spectre*. Written by Steve Darnell, the project will take Ross about nine months to complete, and it figures to appear late in 1997. "So much has been said with Marvels, and so much more will be said with *Kingdom Come*, that I need to get away from the superhero genre for a little bit."

But that won’t last. He’s set his eye on contributing a major project, a graphic novel or something even bigger, to Superman’s 60th anniversary in 1998. "I’ve been thinking about it a lot already," he says. "I’m extremely interested in the character, mostly because of the time I’ve been able to spend with him on *Kingdom Come*. If there’s anyone I want to come back to, it’s him."
“AND WHEN HE CRIED, SEVEN THUNDERS UTTERED THEIR VOICES.”

KINGDOM COME

MARK WAID ♦ ALEX ROSS
FOUR-ISSUE PRESTIGE MINISERIES
MAY 1996

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THE DREAMER.
THE THUNDER.
THE BAT.
THE EAGLE.
THE ANGEL.

WHOSE WILL BE DONE?

KINGDOM COME
MARK WAID • ALEX ROSS
FOUR-ISSUE PRESTIGE MINISERIES
BEGINNING MAY 1996

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WHOSE WILL BE DONE?

KINGDOM COME

MAY 1996
THY WILL BE DONE

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT KINGDOM COME BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

BY CRAIG KOSTELECKY

IT'S THOSE LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE IT FUN.

Sure, Kingdom Come has a neat premise—old guard superheroes versus the newer, more violent heroes. Yeah, it has a fantastic writer in Mark Waid and a fabulous painter in Alex Ross. But a great deal of the appeal of Kingdom Come is the amount of detail put into it, both visually and conceptually. It's a hoot when you see Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids in the background of a panel.

It's cool when you find out what the eagle and bat on the first page of #1 really symbolize.

So we went to the source—Waid and Ross—to dig up as much info as we could on the less obvious stuff in the four-issue experience. And here's hoping your next reading of Kingdom Come can be even more enjoyable than the first!
WHO ARE THESE GUYS?

First things first. Since it was never explained in the series, let’s go over who all these people are. (Our thanks go out to Skybox for helping us out on this one. Props: Go out and buy the chock-full-o’-stuff Kingdom Come Extra trading card set. You’ll be glad you did.)

GO TO PAGE 88 FOR THE ANSWERS.
WHO ARE THESE GUYS?
LET'S GET IT ON...

1. Blue Devil II (an alter-ego, his title doesn’t come from the newsworthy)
2. Shiva the Destroyer (our armed defender of India, based on the Hindu god)
3. Judomaster II (powerful bodybuilder of the decade)
4. Buddha (a serious amount of China 5.
5. Van Bok (a super-powered man)
6. Macio (the nuclear-powered lizard)
7. Mr. Terrific II (super-powered version of the old comic, with the same understanding of his predecessor’s name)
8. Tasker (shaped more as a woman)
9. Nightstar (son of the late Denver and the future Nightwing)
10. Dungeon Banshee (a descendant of Nightwing’s allies)
11. Pinwheel (a superhero, leather-clad leader of a city)
12. Cathedral (fairy version of the wandering)
13. Stars apop (super-powered Star-Spangled Kid with a cosmic red and black, now his flag on his shirt is upside-down in issue #2)
14. Monotaur (Classical Greek myth, named for the future)
15. Black Mongol (random character of the decade)
16. Kabuki Komando (the fourth world’s)
17. Huntress III (aeromaniac of the decade)
18. H.H.I. (a secret society with anippo’s destruction)
19. Trixie (a porcine, a super-powered woman)
20. Captain Atom (a super-powered woman)
21. Mapo (a super-powered woman)
22. The Spectra (the super-version of the Spectra)
23. Tokyo Rose (japanese martial arts assassin)
24. Starman (a super-powered man)
25. Joker’s Daughter (aeromaniac of the decade)
26. Wonder Woman (a super-powered woman)
27. Green Lantern (aeromaniac of the decade)
28. Hawkman (a super-powered man)
29. Red Tornado III (aeromaniac of the decade)
30. Living Doll (a super-powered woman)
31. Saremath (a super-powered woman)
32. Stealth II (aeromaniac of the decade)
33. Calavera II (aeromaniac of the decade)
34. Genn-Mon (aeromaniac of the decade)
35. Spider-Man (aeromaniac of the decade)

1. Original Red Tornado (aeromaniac of the decade)
2. Hawkman (aeromaniac of the decade)
3. Lady Marvel (former Mary Jane, considerer of the power of Shazam)
4. King Black (former Captain Marvel, aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
5. Alexia Strange (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
6. Human Bomb (considerer of the power of Shazam)
7. Midnight (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
8. White (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
9. Captain Comet (former Lobster, initiator of the first superhero of the Silver Age)
10. Bulletman (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
11. Brainiac’s Daughter (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
12. Busboy (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
13. Bulletman (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
14. Starman II (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
15. Golden Guardian (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
16. Sandman III (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
17. Golden Boy (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
18. Spitfire (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
19. Atom-Smasher (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
20. Avila (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
21. Tornado (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
22. Newman (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
23. Atlas (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
24. Atom-Smasher (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
25. Mystery Man (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
26. Thunder (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
27. Red Arrow (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
28. Wonder Woman (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
29. Superman (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
30. Power Woman (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
31. Green Lantern (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)
32. Green Lantern (aConsiderer of the power of Shazam)

KINGDOM COME #1

[NOTE TO READER: We’re counting the title page as page one, and every issue’s first page with art will be page three.]

Page 3 (for right)
The quotes on the first few pages of the next few issues are taken from Revelations, the part of the Bible that talks about the end of the world. Not exactly the best news for our heroes.

The first vision experienced by Wesley Dodds, aka the Golden Age Sandman, is that of an eagle in a virile fight with a bat. Initially, many thought this represented a battle — real or ideological — between Batman and Superman (a vision, it is revealed that this represents a battle — real or ideological — between Batman and Wonder Woman. "I won" a misinterpretation we did not foresee, but one that delighted me," says writer Mark Waid in the trading card set. "It made Wonder Woman's later role more of a surprise."
Page 8 (below)

In the last couple panels of this page is the cover of The Daily Planet.
The picture on the cover shows the UN building which was designed after the Hall of Justice from the Hanna-Barbera cartoon, "The Super Friends."

Page 9 (at left)

panel 1

In the first panel, McKay walks by a damaged yellow car whose owner looks suspiciously like Non, one of the three Kryptonian Phantom Zone Villains from the movie "Superman 2."

panel 2

McKay walks by a graffiti-covered wall with the words "Who Watches the Watchmen?" of course, in reference to Alan Moore's acclaimed 1985-86 mini-series from DC.

panel 3

The statue of Lady Justice has crashed into the antique shop 'Knight's Kast' owned by Jack Knight, star of DC's current Kamome series. Also, a pointer of alternative/academic performer, Bipol, is on a wall that McKay passes. The image is from the cover of her album "Debut."

panel 4

As McKay continues his walk, he passes a window with several items on display including three books. These books are: "Alternative Gospels" by John Law, "Behind the Mask" by Joss Whedon and Under the Mask by Holiss Mason. Under the Mask was an autobio-

craphy of the original K. O. D. L. N. A. T. E. from the Watchmen mini-series. The other two are curiously inaccurate, but in one respect you can get an "Eleven"-"Nine" mini-series like Kingdom Come. Behind the Mask was actually written by Jonathan Law (aka, the All-Star Squadron's Larluxus) as seen in the Golden Age mini-series, while Alternative Gospels is actually Alternative Gospels taken from All-Star Squadron.

Page 10 (at right)

McKay decides to patronize his local Planet Krypton restaurant. Of course, this is in reference to Superman's home planet. It also pokes fun of the restaurant chain of Planet Hollywood—and just like Planet Hollywood glamorizes the movie-making industry, Planet Krypton glamorizes the image of superheros. Above the entrance to Planet Krypton is Hanna-Barbera-esque cartoon images of Batman, Green Lantern, Plastic Man, Wonder Woman, Flash, Lobo and Marvin of "Super Friends" fame.

Page 11 (far right)

Inside Planet Krypton are superheros memorabilia and employees dressed like superheros. Among the memorabilia is Green Arrow's bow and boxing glove crowns. Batman's buttoring, replicas of the Golden Age Batplane and the ship that brought the infant Kal El to Earth. On the big screen is DC's Suicide Squad characters Sugar and Spike. In display is Batman's costume from the 1966 TV series just as it is on display at Planet Hollywood in Chicago. At the front counter is an aging Beatrix DeCosta, a.k.a. Fire, asking to see fellow ex-JLMer and manager of Planet Krypton, Booster Gold.
Page 12, panel 2 (left)
A sign on the side of a building has the name Siegel, in reference to the late Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel. The series was also dedicated to Siegel, along with his Superman co-conspirator Joe Shuster.

Page 16 (above)
Manitous is posting a car with the license plate number 2617, this is the license plate number to the car behind the Beatles on the cover of their "Abbey Road" album.

Pages 20-21 (at left)
The naked and almost Spectre is...out of touch with the man he once was." Vaid says. He says the Spectre needs McCoy to witness the upcoming apocalypse and the Spectre is there to pass judgment, not to stop the destruction. "The Spectre is very much God's terrible wrath. One can see this aspect in his eyes: If you look closely, you will see a tiny skull (You'll see the skull in Spectre's eyes if you look close enough.)

The stained glass window the Spectre walks through depicts the Agony in the Garden, where Jesus said, "Not my will, but your will be done." This ties into the series title: "Whose will be done?" Ironically, Ross says this was coincidental, since his model was a window in his dad's church which just happened to be visually interesting.

Page 24 (at left)
Kal-El lifts a tractor, in the background among other animals is a cat, a horse, a dog and a grinning monkey. All are tributes to the Legion of Super-Pets, which were respectively Snoopy the Supercat, Comet the Superhorse, Krypto the Superdog and Beppo the Supermonkey.

Page 29, panel 1 (below)
Mogag and his Justice Battalion take on a weakened and frightened Parasite. Besides Mogag and the amalgamated Metal Men in the guise of Ally, the Battalion includes (counterclockwise from left): Nightshade, Peacemaker, Peter Cannon (Thunderbolt), Livewires, and Captain Atom, all former Charlton Comics heroes. Ross admits that this is a kind of "tribute to Charlton."

Page 29, panel 2 (above)
Mogag is shown up close. "I designed him to represent everything we dislike about modern anti-heroes — all those kill-first, talk-later types," Ross says in the comic book set. "But he wound up looking so cool and possessing such depth that we ended up liking him anyway." Note that Mogag's appearance is similar to Marvel's Cable, white hair, metallic arm and opaque, scarred eye.

According to Vaid, the name "Mogag" comes from the Bible's Book of Revelations, where Mogag and Gig are emissaries of Satan on Earth. Each has a stylized questioning finger, "What is there a character named Gig?"
Page 33 (far left)
Keystone City is a staple of the Flash. The Flash is Barry Allen, but his costume is a blend of key elements of all three Flashes. This Flash also incorporates the energy and speed force of his body like the current Flash.

Page 34 (left)
The new Hawkgirl is a nod to the Golden Age Hawkgirl. Essentially, she is the spirit of the Golden Age Hawkgirl in the body of the new Hawkgirl, which is merged with the mystical hawk nature. Like the original Hawkgirl (aka, the heroine of the comic book), there are several legendary myths about her. In fact, Hawkgirl is Hawkgirl in his original character sketch. However, this Hawkgirl has forsaken his fighting traditions and taken on a new role.

Page 35 (left)
Alex Ross originally wanted to call the Flash Lantern of Kingdom Come "The Green Knight," for obvious reasons. This is a two-part, two-issue mini-series, but it's still a great read. Barry Allen is depicted in the story as a hero for the first time since his death in Crisis on Infinite Earths.

Page 37-39 (above and right)
Hey, hey, hey!—those twerks ain't no ordinary criminals! That's Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids going on a crime spree in the city of Gotham. (Wow, those kids should know better.)

Page 42, panel 2 (above)
Within the crack for even more DC Comics staff artists.

Page 45 (above)
The text in the captions and word balloons is throwbacks to the opening credits of the 1960s "Adventures of Superman" TV show.
Page 46 (at left)
Superman returns. "This is one of my favorite moments in the series," Waid says in the card set. "And it was also the moment I realized it was truly a Superman story."

Superman's costume has been altered in homage to the 1940s Siegel and Shuster comics. Not only has the yellow in the "S" symbol changed to black (as has his belt); the "S" itself is now angular and rigid. Also, there is no longer a yellow "S" on his cape as will be seen later. The blue and red in his costume have been dulled and darkened. All of this was done intentionally by Ross to emphasize Superman's more gritty, darker attitude and look to match the storyline.

This full-page panel represents Superman's detachment from his humanity, since he is in essence, "looking down" upon those he just saved.

Page 47, panel 1 (at right)
As Norman McKay looks up at the second coming of Superman, he is surrounded by DC staff artists and Björk, who makes another appearance in the crowd.

Panel 2 (far right)
Another vision comes to McKay. While the crowd cheers Superman's return, McKay sees it as a sure sign that the apocalypse will be coming. McKay says he has never been more impressed with the amount of things people caught in the series, but was also surprised that a number of fans didn't understand that the coming of Superman was not a good thing—but a harbinger of the upcoming apocalypse.

KINGDOM COME #2

Page 9 (at left) Rendering the mental-powered Braintrust unconscious is Red Robin (a.k.a. Dick Grayson). Red Robin's costume is an amalgamation of Batman's costume from the recent films and his original Robin costume. Grayson had retired after the death of Starlein, but returned at the behest of Superman (Faulkner later confirmed that Supes had hoped to use Red Robin's support as a bargaining chip to get Batman to join his Justice League).

Page 11 (below) The Justice League, having defeated the Pseudopatriots, heads to the United Nations to make an announcement. Once again, the UN building has taken the form of the Hall of Justice from the "Super Friends" cartoon.

Page 13, panel 1 (above) Horning his way through the media circus is Phil Sheldon, the protagonist from Kurt Busiek and Ross' popular Marvel mini-series from 1993.

Page 15, panel 3 (at right) Note that the hands on Wayne Manor's grandfather clock are minutes before "the eleventh hour," alluding to the anticipated final confrontation in issue #4.

Wizard: TGTG #65
Page 16, panel 1 (left) This is the reader's first glimpse of Bruce Wayne, wearing a sort of exoskeleton which came as the result of a rigorous lifestyle fight crime. "As Max and I envisioned it, even though this guy had one of the most perfect bodies on Earth he put it through so much abuse over the years that it just broke down and shattered!"

Fans might take note that Wayne's chase scene is similar to that of Dark Victory's from "Star Wars."

"Batman's job, we decided," Wald says in the card set, "would be to keep the supervillains away from Superman—and vice versa. They are his problem and his clone."

Panel 3 (below) In the lower right screen on Batman's console is the face of Red Rive. The girl that bedeviled the Dark Knight during his silver age comics.

Panel 4

Batman also has a team of notchumans because for his crimefighting activities, as shown on the TV screens. Most of these characters are the offspring of many of the old guards. Vaid makes an interesting observation: "The original Teen Titans hang with Superman while the kids of the Titans are with Batman. It's a 'generational' thing."

Adds Ross: "It was more natural for the kids to be rebellious. In teenagers, it's much cooler to hang with Batman than Superman. Batman's philosophy of acting freely was much more attractive to the younger generation."

Page 19, panel 2 (at right)

Batman's allies are former allies Ted Kord (Blue Beetle), Dinah Lance (Black Canary) and Oliver Queen (Green Arrow). All of whom are non-powered and share Batman's concerns about the proliferation of notchumans. Wald describes Kord's importance as being that he is "a thinker" and "a complete nerd" but lends technical support to Batman and assisted him with the design of the robotic Bat-Knight. D. Queen, Vaid states, "He's the bitter, cynical reactionary that he always was, but he's the voice of conscience."

Panel 4

Batman also has a team of notchumans because for his crimefighting activities, as shown on the TV screens. Most of these characters are the offspring of many of the old guardians. Vaid makes an interesting observation: "The original Teen Titans hang with Superman while the kids of the Titans are with Batman. It's a 'generational' thing."

Adds Ross: "It was more natural for the kids to be rebellious. In teenagers, it's much cooler to hang with Batman than Superman. Batman's philosophy of acting freely was much more attractive to the younger generation."

Page 20, panel 2 (above)

Ross pays tribute to several comic covers of the Golden Age. Batman is seen swinging from rooftops with a criminal locked under one arm, as depicted in "Detective Comics" #32. Superman is shown holding a car as seen on the cover of "Action Comics" #1. A house-snatching Wonder Woman is shown on the cover of "Wonder Woman" #1.

Page 21, panel 2

The Justice League is shown fighting those who would become members. This included the previously mentioned Phoebe, Starman VII, Brainiac's Daughter (at one point known as ITC — listed on a poster in "AC" #1, page 12.), a tribute to the band of the same name, whose recorded songs could be "That's Really Super, Supergirl" and "Brainiac's Daughter" and Red Tornado III. Starman VII is actually former Legion of Super-Heroes member Stanley transplanted to the past. Brainiac's Daughter is not only the daughter of Brainiac, but also the offspring of Supergirl. Interestingly, in an old DC continuity, Brainiac's Friend Superwoman had a thing for each other. The human Red Tornado III is said to be the successor to Red Tornado II, who now simply goes by the name Tornado.
THE NIGHTCLUB SCENE IS FULL OF CAMEOS FROM THE DC UNIVERSE AND BEYOND.

Page 20 (at left), panel 1. An older and overweight Luchador has a drink with "teammates" Will Deck II from E.T.H.E.R. One (he is drinking DC beer). Also seen are Ultra the Multi-Allen, the motorcycle guy from the Village People, two members of the Blackhawk: Solomon Grundy on a bouncer. Shadow Lass in a costume originally worn by the X-Men's Storm. Filling above the crowd is Ross' creation, Demon Damsel.

Panels 2-3. At the far left (inset) is Brother Power who is getting his finger broken by Watchmen's Rorschach. The joker here, according to Ross, is that "Brother Power doesn't have any bones to break."

Rock star Steve Miller, in the same cheap Halloween mask that he wears on the cover of his album "The Joker," falls for the Human Bomb's "pull my finger joke." (the Human Bomb is drinking DC beer, in reference to Quality Comics, his original comic company). Behind him, again is Ultra the Multi-Allen and Zan of "Super Friends" as a waiter.

The Specter and Ray and Ray of the Hood continue to witness the events of that lead them to the apocalyptic. On the right of the panel is another of Ross' creation, Pinwheel, an old and laddling Creeper and a fully skeletal Deadman.

Page 29 (below), panel 1. Many are shocked at Superman's party-crashing. Characters of note include (left to right): the female Blackhawk, a shape-shifting Darla (like Dianetous of the Legion of Super-Heroes), John Steel and Emma Peel from the TV show "The Avengers," and N. Scarlet, a Golden Age Fawcett comics hero who Ross describes as a "working class hero" and a "pre-Savage Dragon."

Page 29 (at right), panel 2. The bartenders are the Weather Wizard and Captain Cold. Ross points out that behind him is a picture of the two old villains with Captain Boomerang. All three members of the Silver Age Flash's Rogues Gallery. To the right of that photo is an autographed photo of the Flash. Ross has mentioned the three villains are the proprietors of the bar. And while the Weather Wizard and Captain Cold run the bar, Captain Boomerang is more of an old favored patron.

Page 30, panel 1 (below) At the table is the Grim Ghost, a Golden Age hero, a teen and drunken Marvin from "Super Friends" mugging off to the Man of Steel (Marvin's had a few too many '60s beers, in reference to Ronin Barber). Behind them are the members of the Village People looking like they've been historically enhanced since their last tour. On the right is Virman Vundabar all the way from Apokolips, from Smokey, Dr. Sado and Bane-Man.

Page 31 (below), panel 2. From left: Cesar the Summabulist from the German film "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," a Betty Page-like Phantom Lady I, Pinwheel, the silhouette is Ross creation Nowhere Man.

Panel 3. In the background: Swamp Thing (with trench coat). Sherlock Holmes, the Shadow, the Question, Rorschach, Oblivion.
Superman and Wonder Woman stand over the unconscious bodies of several German nationalists metamutants. The most powerful of which is Von Bock, Ross’s favorite of the characters he created for the series, who brings to mind the motifs of a heavy industrial German band by the name of Leibach. On Von Bock’s right arm is “liebe,” the German word for love, and on his left arm is “hass,” German for hate.

Reminiscent of King Arthur of the British legends, Ross gives Aquaman (also a “King Arthur,” if you think about it) a regal look from centuries past complete with throne and armor. Also,Void says he came up with this royal Aquaman over three years ago and paired him with Dolphin not knowing that writer Peter David was planning the same thing when he started with the current Aquaman series.

Among the prisoners in this frame is The Fool and Goblin Lord (modeled after Columbia and Riff-Raff, A/k/a Wisteria from “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”), Big Barda (though he’s a guard, not a prisoner), Blue (of Red, White and Blue, Spade, Commando, and Broadcast.

After Von Bock is sent flying by Captain Comet, he is helped out by Takashi Komando on his left, and on his right is tie-dyed hero Terry Leibach. Leibach is the writer/artist of Zorro, which is printed on his T-shirt. Von Bock says to Comet in German, “no threat, outsider,” Takashi Komando says in Japanese, “he’s heavier than he looks.”

Page 34

Page 35

Page 36

Page 37

Page 38

Page 39

Page 40

Page 41

Page 5

Page 6

Page 7

Page 8

Page 9

Page 10

Page 11
Pages 12-14 (above and right) McCoy and the Spectre begin in on a cosmic conversation on
the fate of Earth. The cosmic beings include Phantom Stranger, Shazam, Gamboth the last
Guardian, Highfather of the New Gods, and Az. McCoy then enters a conversation with Deathman. Deathman’s skeletal appearance signifies, according to Ross, Boston Brand’s “acceptance of his fate.”

Page 21, panel 2 (at left) In a war room, designed intentionally by Ross to look
like the one seen in “Dr. Strangelove,” the
Mankind Liberation Front discusses ways of putting the kibosh on Superman.

Page 22, panel 1 It’s interesting to note
that all the children of the original Teen Titans
have switched gender. Robin. Kid Flash. Aqualad
and Speedy all had daughters, while Wonder Girl
had a son.

Panel 3 If you look closely, there is
intimate relationship between Roi of
Kuffenath and Nightstar as seen in this
panel by the intense gaze they share.
(On page 24, panels 4 and 5, they’re holding
hands.) It’s ironic that though Batman and Robin no longer
see eye to eye, their children are most
interested in each other.

Page 23 (above and right) A psychological wreck, the Martian Manhunter scours telepathically for information concerning Captain Marvel.
The Martian Manhunter’s mental state is a compromise in AC. According to Ross, he wanted to include this important character in the DC Universe.
However, his psychological problems prevents a “third Superman” in the final battle, which might have complicated the plot.
Page 25, panel 3 (below)
The former members of the Feen Tora group gather once again to discuss the wisdom of throwing a bunch of psychic metahumans in the same prison. Of course, their former leader Robin leads this conversation.

Note that they are practically fearful of Superman, a further indication of his obvious personality changes. Quite a role reversal for the Man of Steel.

Also, the navigational star chart in the center of the floor is similar to the one used on the TV show "Lost in Space."

Page 27 (above) As McCoy explains his presence to Superman, Hawkgirl, Power Woman, Flash, Wonder Woman and Atom Smasher, other heroes look on. On the level above there are Jack Kirby's Atlas, Green Lantern, Bulletman and Bulletgirl and the Marvel Family of King Marvel, Lady Marvel and their son Whiz.

King Marvel is a cross between Captain Marvel Jr. and Elvis Presley. There is a theory that Elvis as a child had read Captain Marvel Jr. comics, which could certainly be true since his creation was at the time the King was just an adolescent. Ross believes that Elvis later redesigned his '50s and '60s jump suit via the short cape and the collar after his childhood hero.

Also, on the upper level is the Tornado, formerly the JLA's Red Tornado, his protégé Red Tornado II and the Golden Age comic's "Mr. Hurricane," Red Tornado. However, this time he seems more robotic then comic.

Page 39 (at left) In panels 1-3 (and on the following page, panel 5), standing behind Red Robin are Mike Nesmith, Mickey Dolenz, Davy Jones and Peter Tork — collectively known as the '60s rock group The Monkees. They are shown in their Monkees costumes, similar to those once worn on their TV show. Snapper Eal's former hip monkey to the JLA appears in panel 2. They continue to appear in the battle at the Guldag in issue #4. Tragically, none of the Monkees survive the battle.

Page 39, panel 4 (below) There are robotic versions of the Beatles in their "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" uniforms standing above Superman and Wonder Woman as they kiss. On the right is a female Martian Manhunter. (Jann Jannson had a daughter at one time and Ross says that while his daughter is no longer around, this female Martian Manhunter is a clone of her.)

Page 41 (above) Note that despite Batman's reluctance to help, he is catching up with the Guldag's blueprints, as seen on his monitor. Pretty sneaky, that Batguy is, eh?

Page 46, panel 1 (at right) Besides the DC heroes and the Monkees, one can also spot tiny renditions of Spider-Man, Thor, Captain America, G I Joe and the Avengers. Strange in the crowd of heroes rushing to meet the onslaught of the anti-heroes.
KINGDOM COME #4

Page 10 (below and right) On the door of Secretary Wyrmwood's office is a symbol very similar to the old Justice League of America's logo.

Incidentally, Ross designed Wyrmwood after F.B.I. Director Skinner from 'The X-Files.' His name, however, comes from the Bible's Revelations. "Wyrmwood is the name of the star that falls to Earth," says Waid, "and clearly, in our story, the star is the bomb."

Page 11, panel 1 (above) On the right side is a cyborg version of the cowgirl Vigilante and below him, lying on the ground is the female Martian Manhunter.

Page 16, panel 1 (at left) Batman and Wonder Woman begin their battle, both physical and ideological, as foreshadowed in the opening pages of issue #1 (below). Actman confronts her with the fact that she is seeking redemption through violence since losing her status with her sister Amazons. As Waid states, "Batman's job is to expose the truth about people," just as Batman did in his previous conversations with Superman.

Page 19, panel 3 (at right) This Green Lantern still has the weakness to wood as proven by the fact that the Green Arrow can still get his arrows through B.'s armor.

Page 21 (below) The nuclear bombs resemble the matrix chamber that brought Superman to Earth.

Page 29, panel 5 Just before the bomb goes off, the New God harbinger of death, the Black Racer, appears behind the Blue Beetle. Panel 6

Alex Ross assures us that Avia, Scott Free and Big Barda "Boom Tubes" it out of the destruction.
Page 30 (below) By calling on lightning, Captain Marvel detonates the nuclear bomb high above the battlefield, but not high enough. The mushroom cloud is in the shape of a cross symbolizing God’s wrath.

Page 32 (at left) Superman, in the midst of the destruction, is surrounded by the remains of the dead. Among the known dead are the Blue Beetle, Creeper, Stealth II, Wildcat III, King Crimson, Golden Guardian, Hokiman II, Neer Shang, 656, Catwoman II, Phobius, Maxx Smasher, Sandman III, Allyn, Ruckulus, Green Arrow (to the left of Robotman II, in the same position he was in right before the bomb hit), Red Arrow and both Black Canaries (II and III).

Page 33, panel 5 (at right) We also see Hawkman dead, but alive we see Fate, Magog, Roy Green Lantern, Jade, Iris and the Flash. (Thunder is also seen on the next page. Batman, Wonder Woman, Tokyo Rose, Masato and Joker’s Daughter are also seen a few pages later.)

Page 35 (at left) An angry Superman is about to tear down the UK in a series of mistakes that could have made this even a bigger tragedy. Superman wrote his own part. Waid says, “I didn’t know [why he did what he did] until the very end of issue four when he was about to tear everything down. Superman made all the wrong decisions in the story. I must have screwed up as a writer. No matter what I did, Superman makes the wrong choices. Then I realized Superman made the wrong choices because he abandoned his humanity. Once I realized that, things were crystal clear.”

Pages 37-39 (at right) Superman’s anger is abated thanks to Norman McCoy. Redemption has been achieved by Superman forgiving himself of things he had no control over. “Redemption is the driving force of this whole series,” says Mark Waid.

Page 43, panel 1 (at far right) Now held on Paradise Island, Masato, Tokyo Rose, Magog, Joker’s daughter, Swayzika, Thunder and Tris are the last of five inmates to survive the destruction of the Splug. Of all the new breed of heroes, these few can gain redemption — rather than dying like Von Boch and his ilk.

Panel 4 (at right) Once again, the old JLA logo is seen incorporated into the UK symbol. We also see Alan Scott representing New Or as a human and not a superhuman.

Page 44 (above) Superman buries the dead in the Kansas wasteland. To keep him company is Luthor.

It’s ironic that, like Magog in issue #2, Superman is trying to ‘fix’ Kansas, furthering parallels between the two heroes. He is now back where he started — Kansas, on a real farm as opposed to his Fortress of Solitude — bringing his story full circle by linking him with his human roots once again.

Page 47, panel 4 (above) McCoy’s faith is renewed at the story’s conclusion. And he’s not the only one. In the front pew at McCoy’s church, on a live feed, the Spectres are in tribute to the creators of Superman. In the second pew are Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.

THE SEQUEL

With Kingdom Come’s proven success, can there be a sequel? In fact, the creators say, “We wore we wouldn’t do it anyway.” Waid says, “But we have stumbled on an idea that would be terrific.” The idea? A Kingdom Come “prequel” titled Kingdom, an ongoing series to premiere next summer involving both Waid and Ross. Waid says he’s set to write it while Ross will consult and is slated to contribute covers.

Set in DC continuity, says Waid, “it will follow Superman, Batman and current DC players, but the focus will be on the birth and rise of Magog and the other heroes who have appeared in Kingdom Come. We saw how they ended up, now we’ll see how they begin.”

Craig Kaestendick’s head is still spinning from researching this article. So is the Wizard staff’s.
“Kingdom Come is a celebration of the heroic ideal...

It’s the story of good men and women who willingly put their lives on the line to wring order from chaos.” — Mark Waid
Magog was originally intended to reflect everything we hated about current superhero costume design. (Kinds like it now.) Giving him a gold metal motif and huge ram horns was intended to give a sense of pagan idolatry like a golden calf.

"The lesson they teach is simple, if too often forgotten: right makes might."
"I defy you to find anything inherently grim and gritty about a man who soars through the air like an eagle. There is nothing harsh, nothing fierce, about that sort of grace and lyricism."

Norman McCay is just simply what my dad looks like, a figure who might well have been around for every age of the superhero.
“Superman and Batman and Wonder Woman have stood the test of time without armor, without bazookas, without veined biceps the size of cannons.”

Nukloid - I made this one up when I was 11. Be kind.

Nightshade was my lead super-chick character I designed when I was 11. That just happened to fit the combo of two main (married) DC stars.
"They have survived—they are important—because they are a reflection of our dreams, not our nightmares."

"Red" Robin is how Young Robin might have been intended to replace Batman. His chest symbol is a compromise of the original "R" into a bird-head silhouette. His color scheme is exactly that of the Robin bird, a black body and red breast.
“Super-heroes were created to represent the best in all of us. We should aspire to match their nobility, not their ability to shoot big chrome guns.”

ARTHUR & DOLPHIN

I always wanted to play off the fact that Aquaman was King of Atlantis and his name is Arthur.

I saw the obvious pairing between him and Dolphin before it came up in current chronology.
RETAIL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE SOON:

T-SHIRT WITH TOMORROW'S DC HEROES IN A STAINED-GLASS-STYLE PAINTING.

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KINGDOM COME