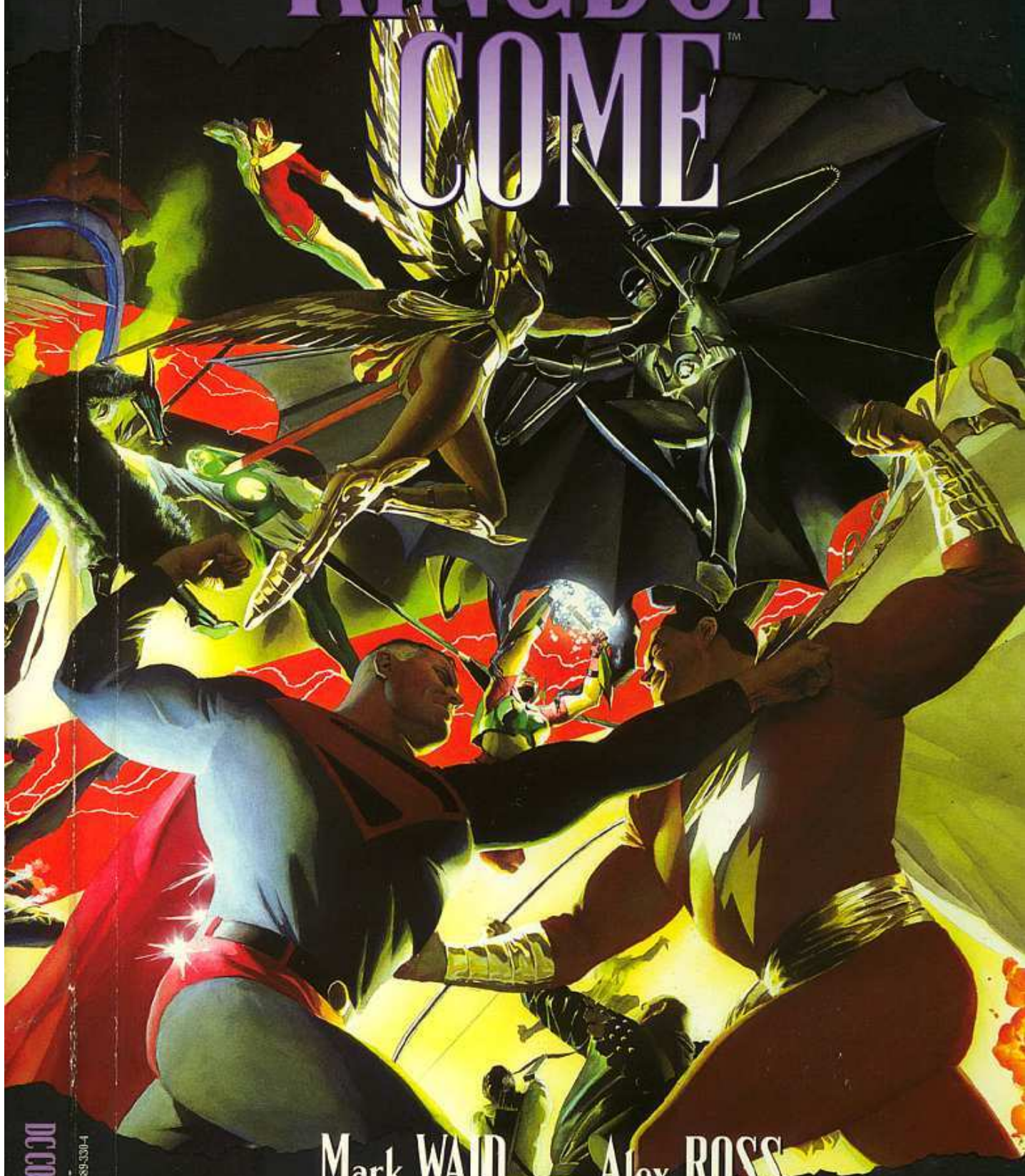


KINGDOM COME



# KINGDOM COME™



Mark WAID     Alex ROSS

DC COMICS

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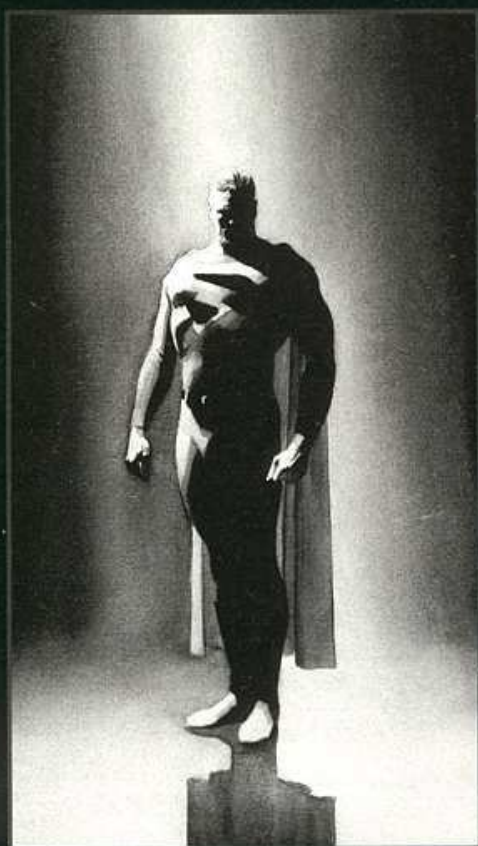
KINGDOM COME



DC COMICS



# KINGDOM COME™



*Dedicated to*  
**CHRISTOPHER REEVE**  
*who makes us believe  
that a man can fly.*



# KINGDO





# IM COME™



Mark WAID Alex ROSS  
with Todd Klein



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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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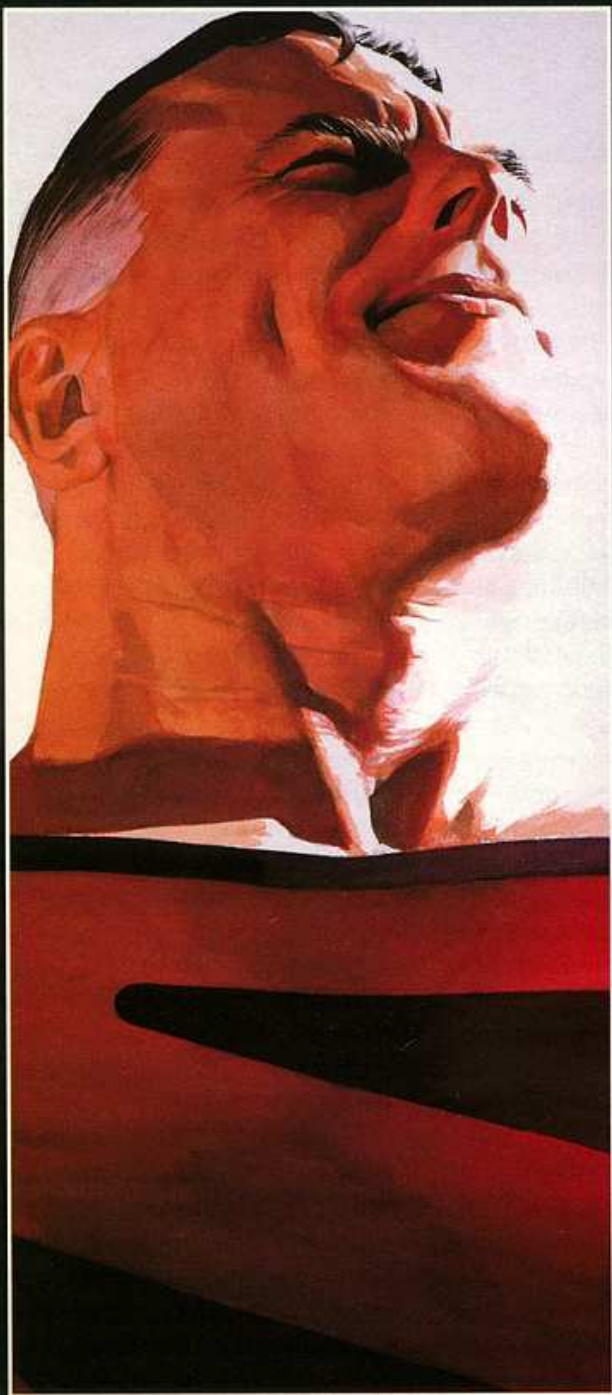
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# THE NEW BARDS

*An Introduction by  
Elliot S. Maggin*

**I**n 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 strung 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 McCay, 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 of 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—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 carpools 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 there about our common ground: our mutual love for super-heroes 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.

**T**oday 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

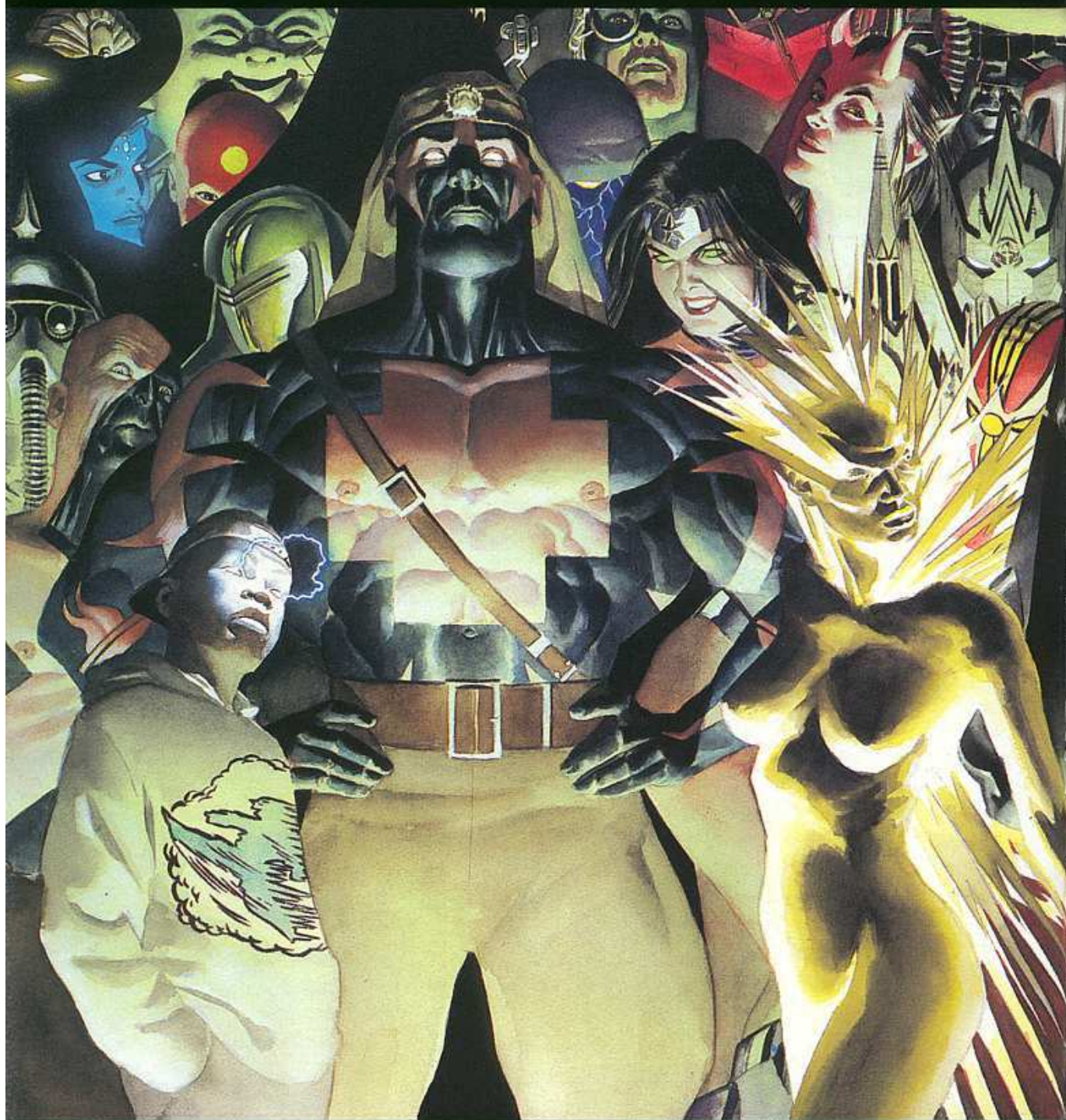
realization that this distinction is false. As clearly as another hero, Mahatma Gandhi, asserted that he is a Hindu as well as a Muslim—as well as a Christian, a Jew or a Buddhist if that becomes appropriate—so do we learn here that the most ordinary among us are heroes, and the most colorful and vivid 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?

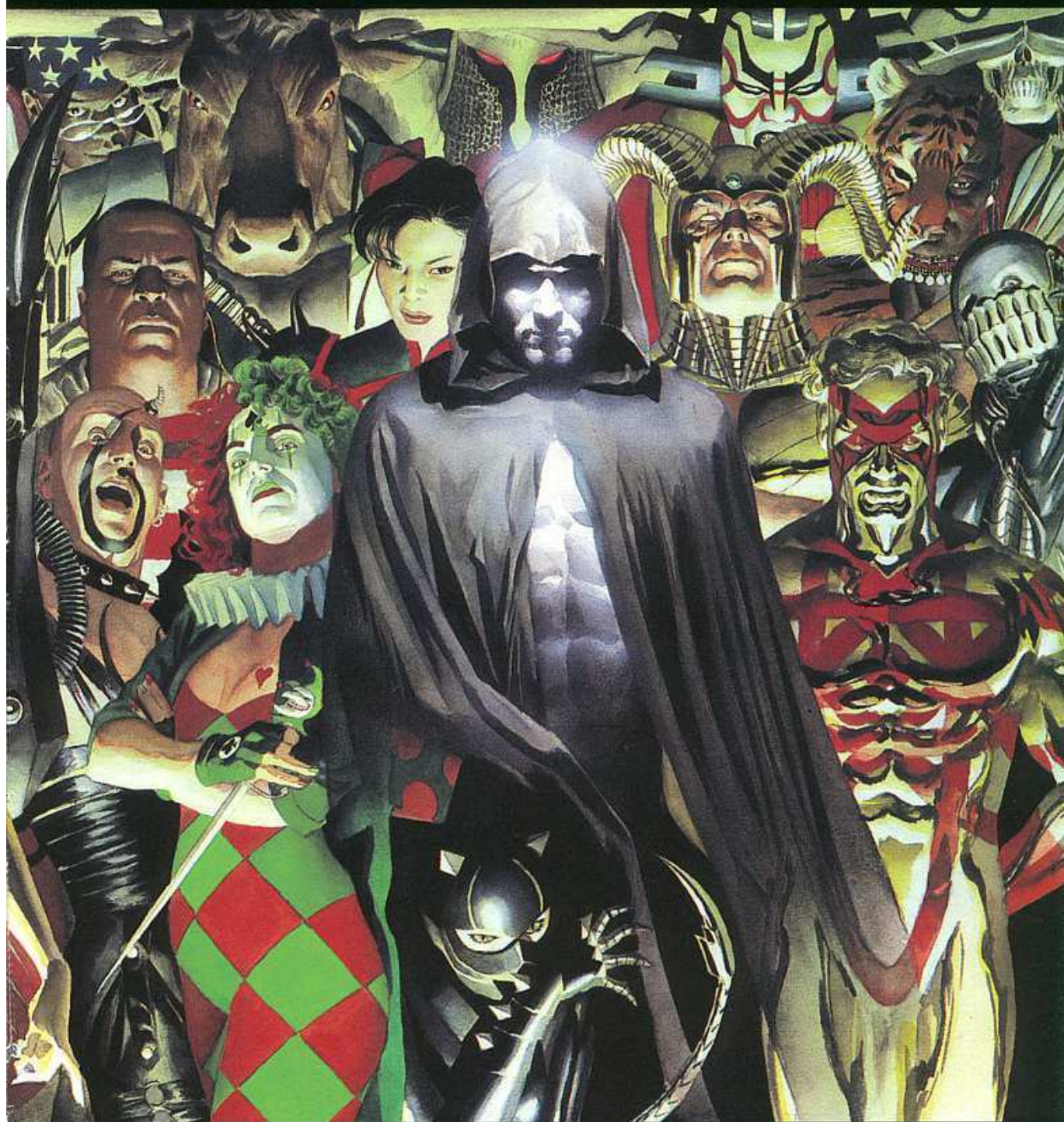
**Elliot S! Maggin**  
*Where the Wind Hits Heavy*  
*New Year's, 1997*





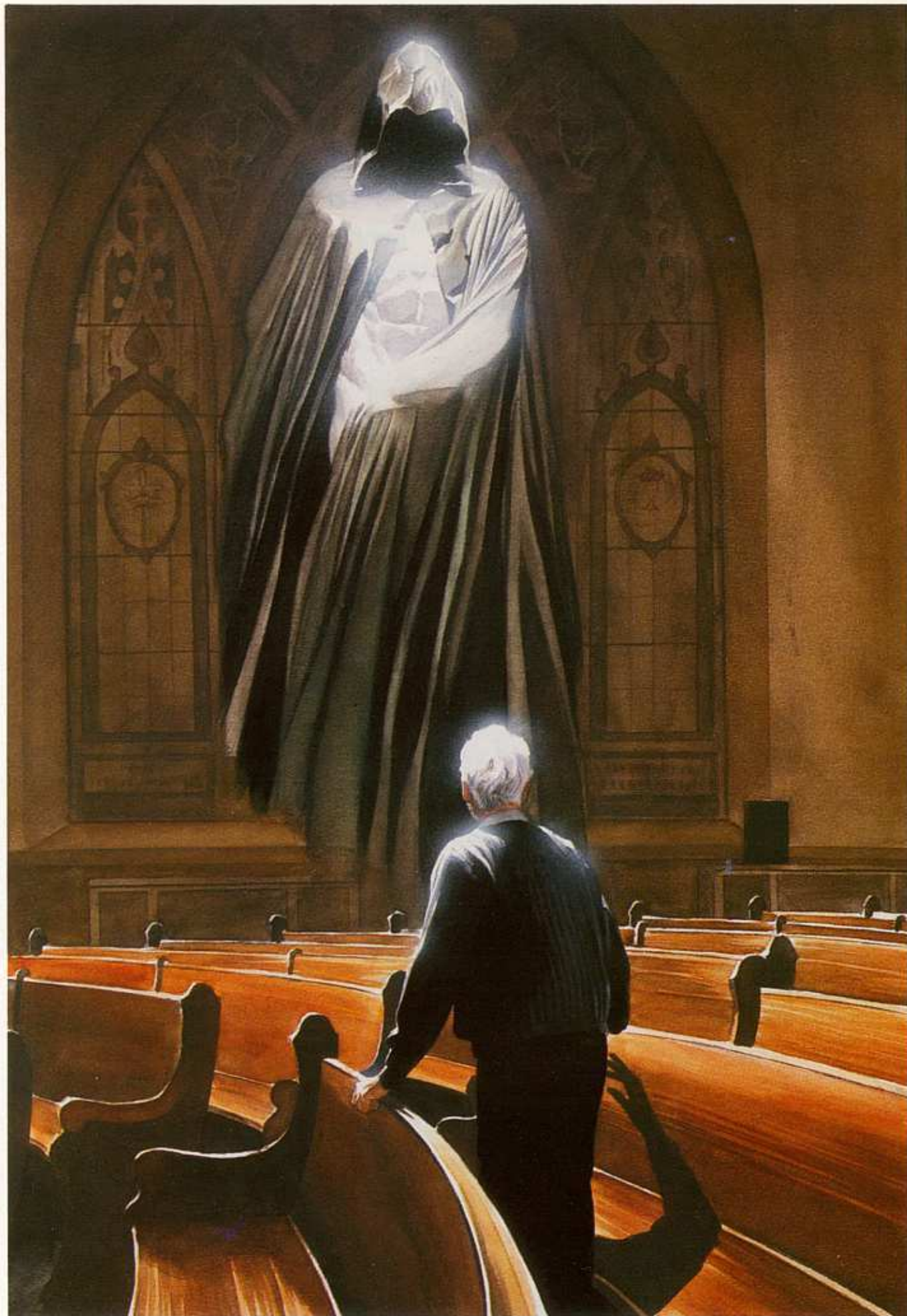


# CHAPTER ONE

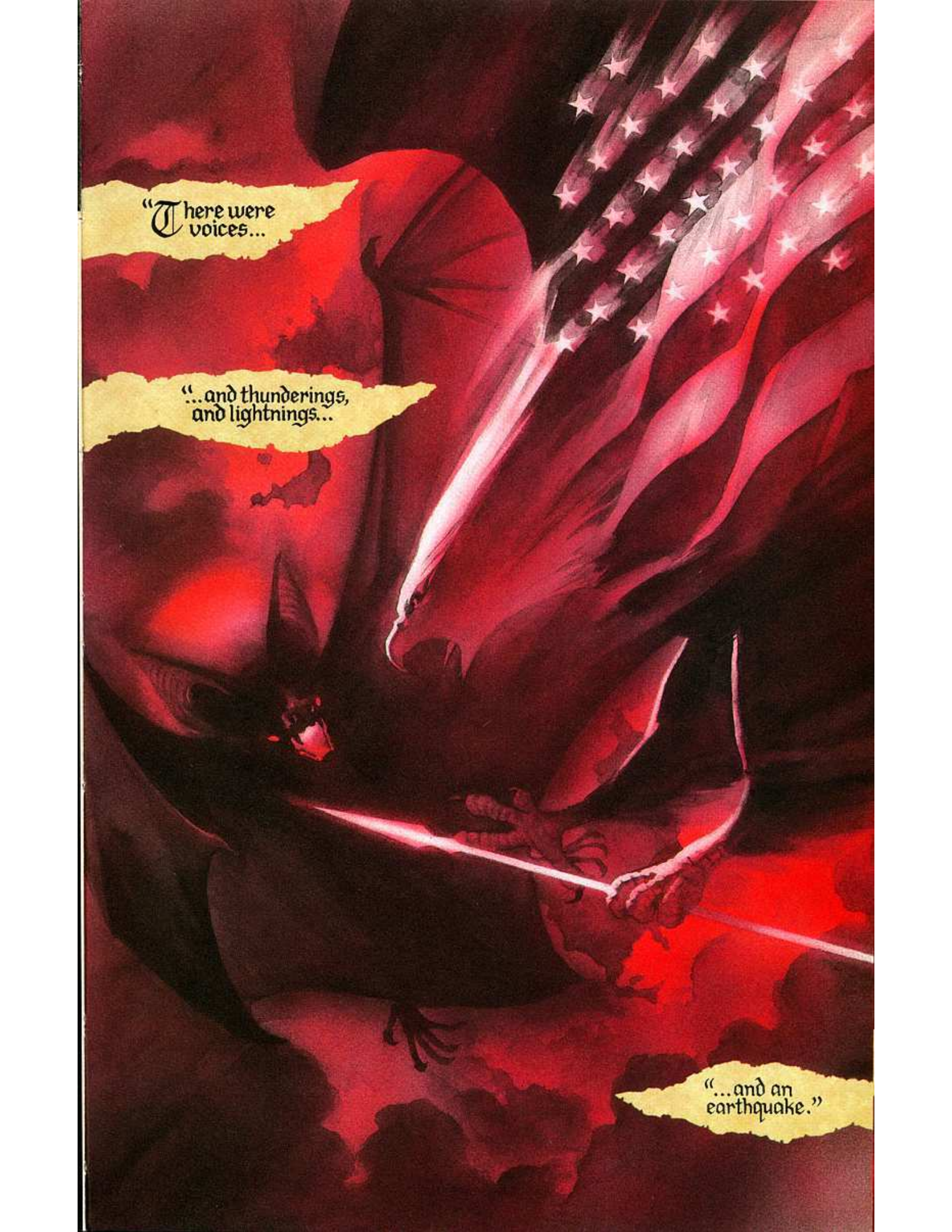


Strange Visitor









"There were  
voices..."

"...and thunderings,  
and lightnings..."

"...and an  
earthquake."

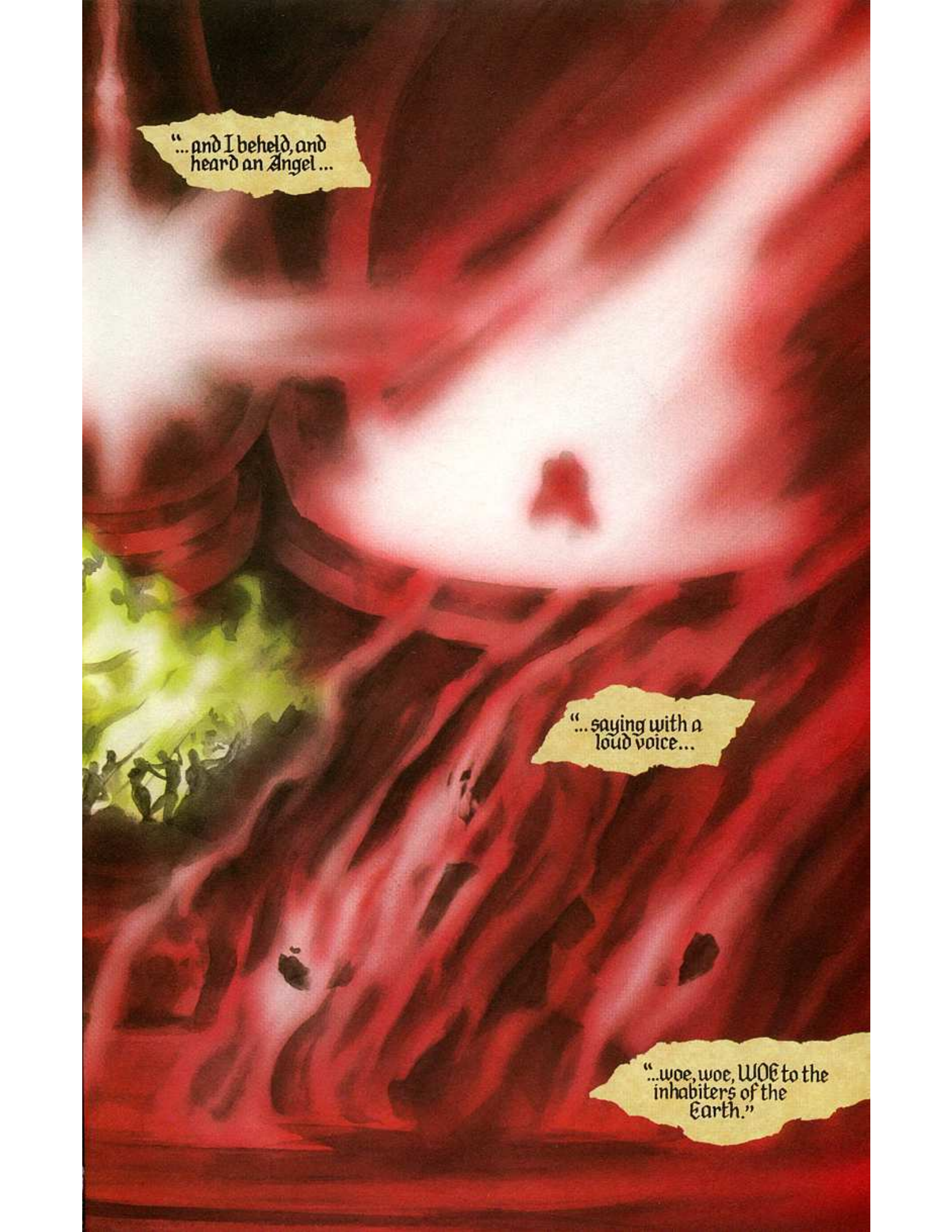


"And there followed  
hail and fire mingled  
with blood.

"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  
inhabiters of the  
Earth."





IT'S *~kaff~* IN THE  
REVELATION OF SAINT  
JOHN! ALL OF IT!

I CAN  
GO ON...THERE'S  
MORE...!

THAT'S  
ENOUGH,  
WESLEY.



I SEE THINGS,  
NORMAN! DIVINE  
PROPHECIES!

NIGHTMARES,  
WESLEY. YOU'VE HAD  
THEM BEFORE. THAT'S  
WHY YOU'RE HERE--

NOT  
NIGHTMARES,  
PASTOR!



VISIONS!



WESLEY,  
THEY'RE  
NOT--

"SEVEN  
THUNDERS WILL  
UTTER THEIR VOICES!  
AND IT WAS GIVEN UNTO  
HIM TO MAKE WAR  
WITH THE SAINTS!"

BABYLON FALLS,  
NORMAN! BE THE ONE  
WHO LISTENS TO ME!



*~kaff~*

THE SANDS RUN OUT...AND I CAN  
DO NOTHING BUT WAIT IN MY OWN FILTH  
FOR SLEEP TO FINALLY CLAIM ME!  
SOMEONE MUST ACT!



Ah, JEEZ...  
MR.  
DODDS...  
DOC-  
TOR...

WESLEY,  
PLEASE...TAKE  
COMFORT. THERE  
IS PEACE  
AWAITING--

*~kaff~*  
*~kaff~*

FOR ME.  
NOT *~kaff~* FOR  
YOU.







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. Ellen, 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 she put it?... his glory days.

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

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

# DAILY PLANET

## U.N. Enacts More Metahuman Censures

### Will Censures Curb Metahuman Violence?




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.

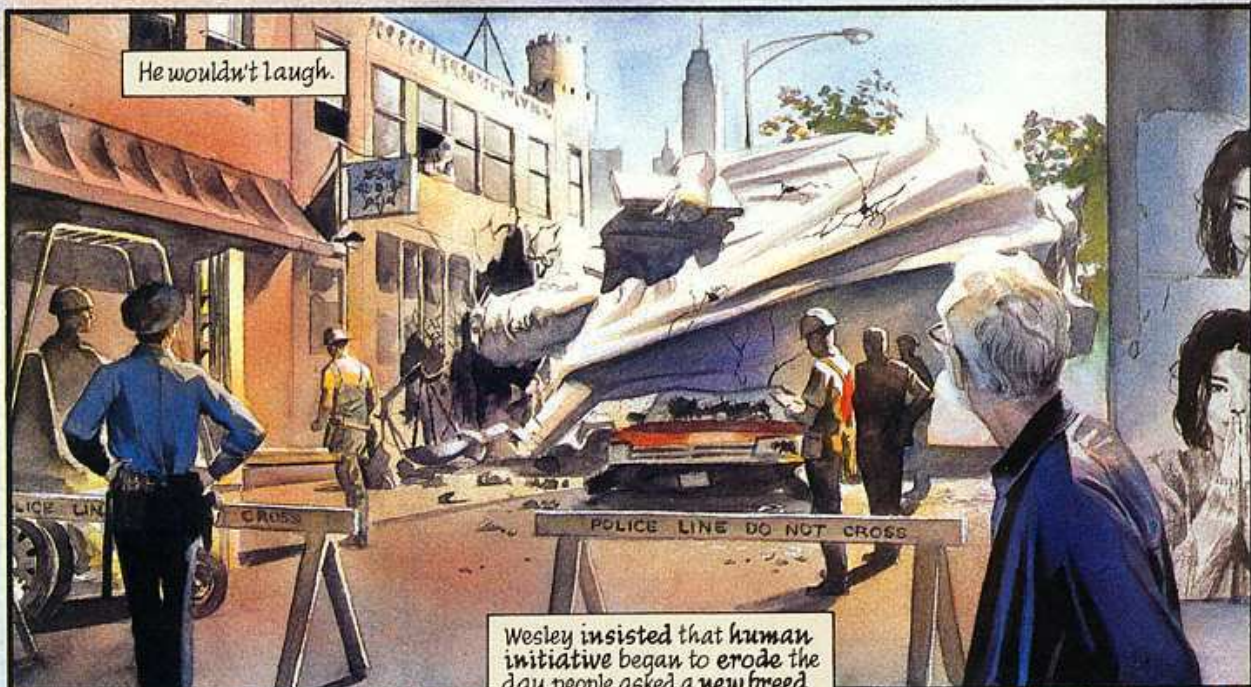
Sometimes, he'd ambush complete strangers and ask them how much they missed the concept of human achievement.



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 grouching 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.





He mocked their worth,  
these newcomers...and  
spoke instead of legends  
gone.

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?









The Sandman had gone to his grave without one grain of faith in the future.

LIQUORS LOUNGE

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 every-day folk.

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



According to the word of God, the meek would someday 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.





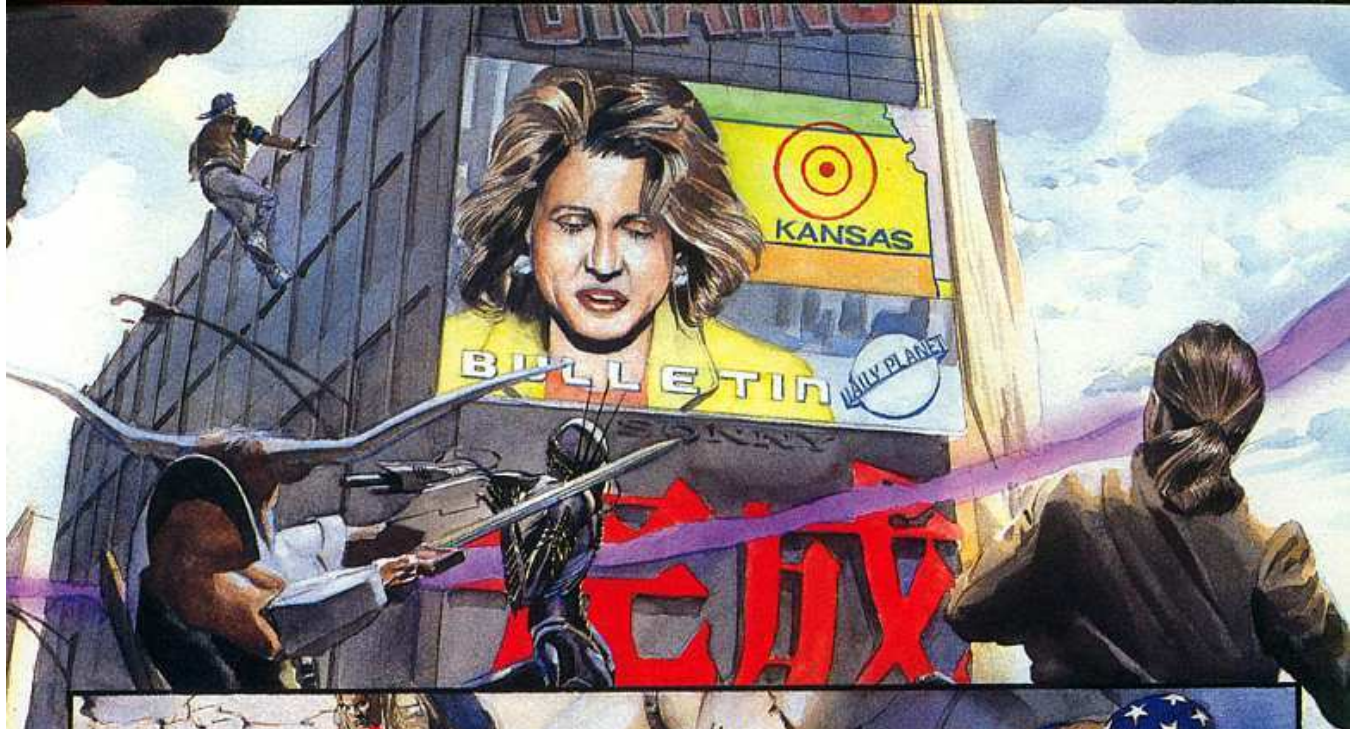
I tell myself that  
this, too, shall pass...

...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.





"AND THERE FOLLOWED HAIL  
AND FIRE MINGLED WITH  
BLOOD..."



"... AND THE  
THIRD PART OF THE  
TREES WAS BURNT  
UP..."

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

"AND HE  
OPENED THE  
BOTTOMLESS  
PIT..."



"... AND THE  
SUN AND THE  
AIR WERE  
DARKENED!"

"FEAR GOD--AND GIVE  
GLORY TO HIM--FOR THE HOUR  
OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME!  
HE..."



...HE...

FORGIVE  
ME. THIS... ISN'T  
WHAT I WANTED  
TO...

FORGIVE  
ME.



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 superhumans, the end is near...and the Word of God, so very far...





...away...





I HAVE  
NEED OF YOU,  
NORMAN  
MCCAY.

AND NOW THE  
VISIONS TALK TO  
ME. I HAVE GONE  
MAD...

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...?

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



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 SEEKS  
JUSTICE.

BUT I DON'T...



YOU  
WILL.





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

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



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

COME WITH ME.

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




FOR WHAT?



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 AVERT THIS CATASTROPHE?

THAT IS NOT MY TASK.

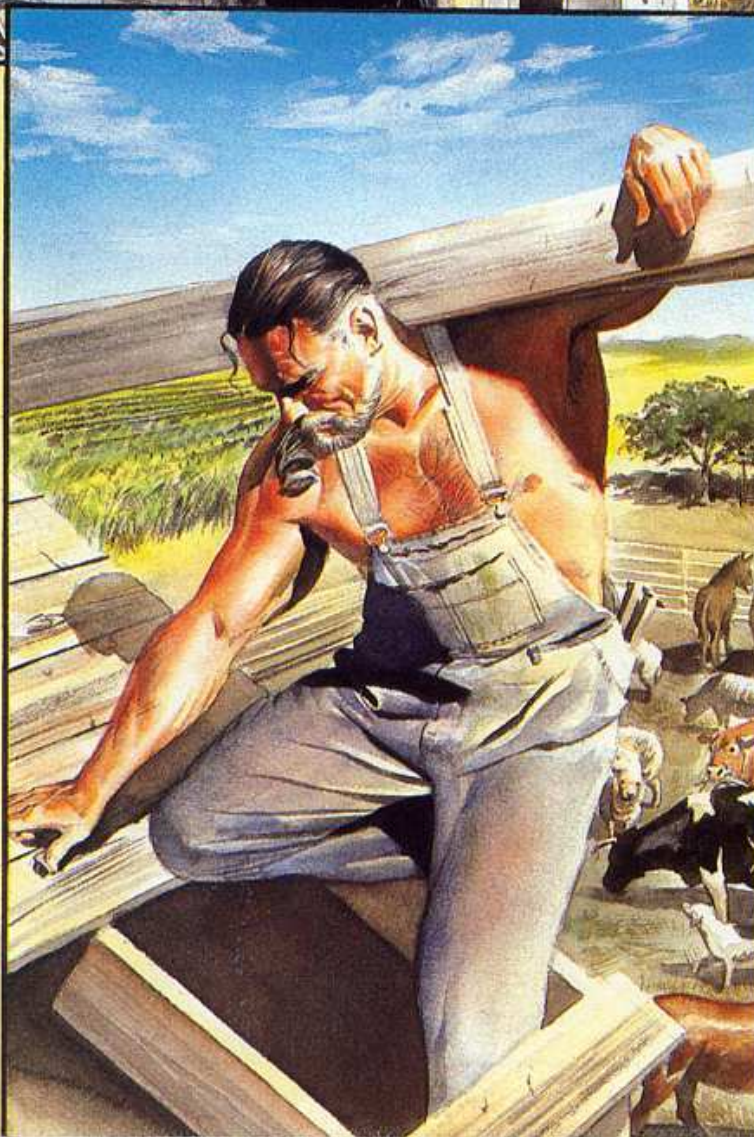


ONCE, EARTH BOASTED OTHER SAVIORS WHO MIGHT HAVE STEMMED THE TIDE OF DESTRUCTION. BUT AS YOU WILL SEE, THEY ARE NO LONGER THE SOLUTION.

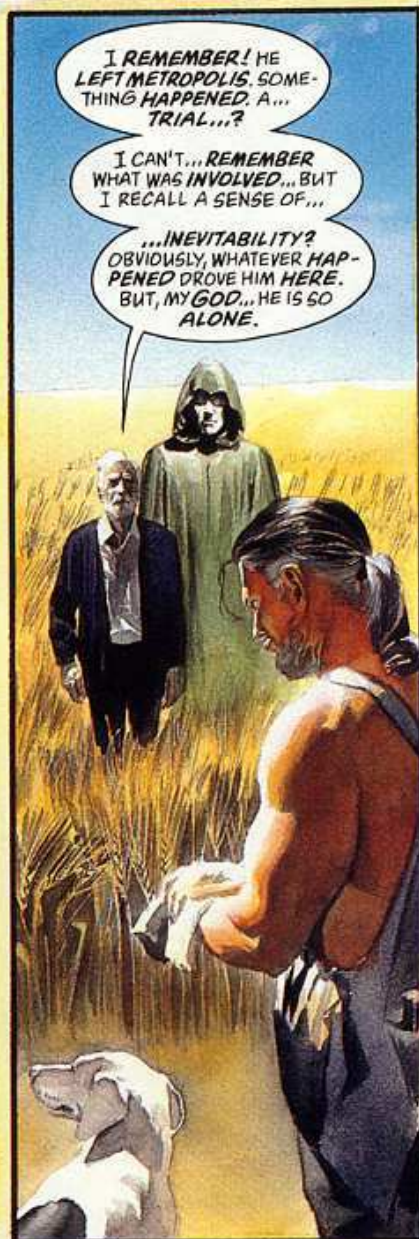
THEY ARE, IN MANY WAYS...

...THE PROBLEM.

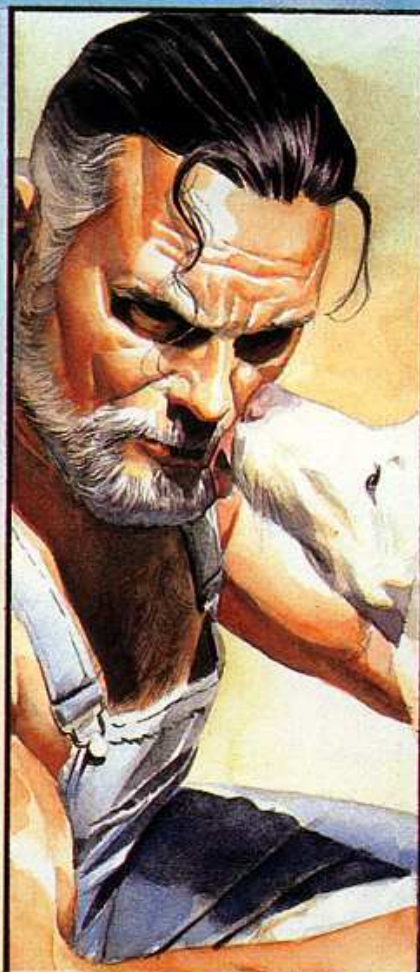




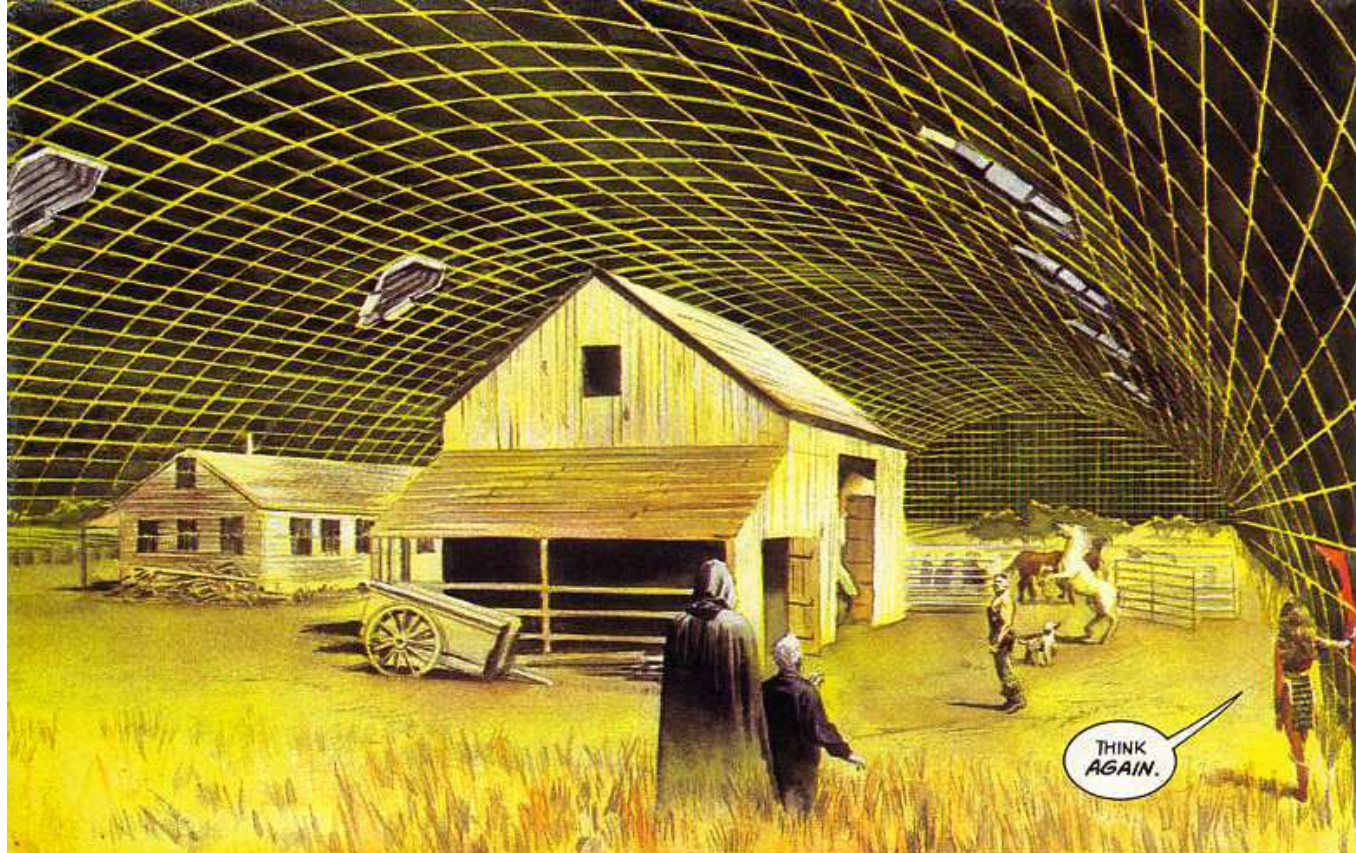












YOU'RE  
SPOOKING THE  
ANIMALS.

AT LEAST I  
PROVOKED A  
REACTION IN  
SOMETHING.

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



KAL,  
HE'S OUT OF  
CONTROL.

I TRIED TO  
TELL THEM THAT  
TEN YEARS  
AGO.

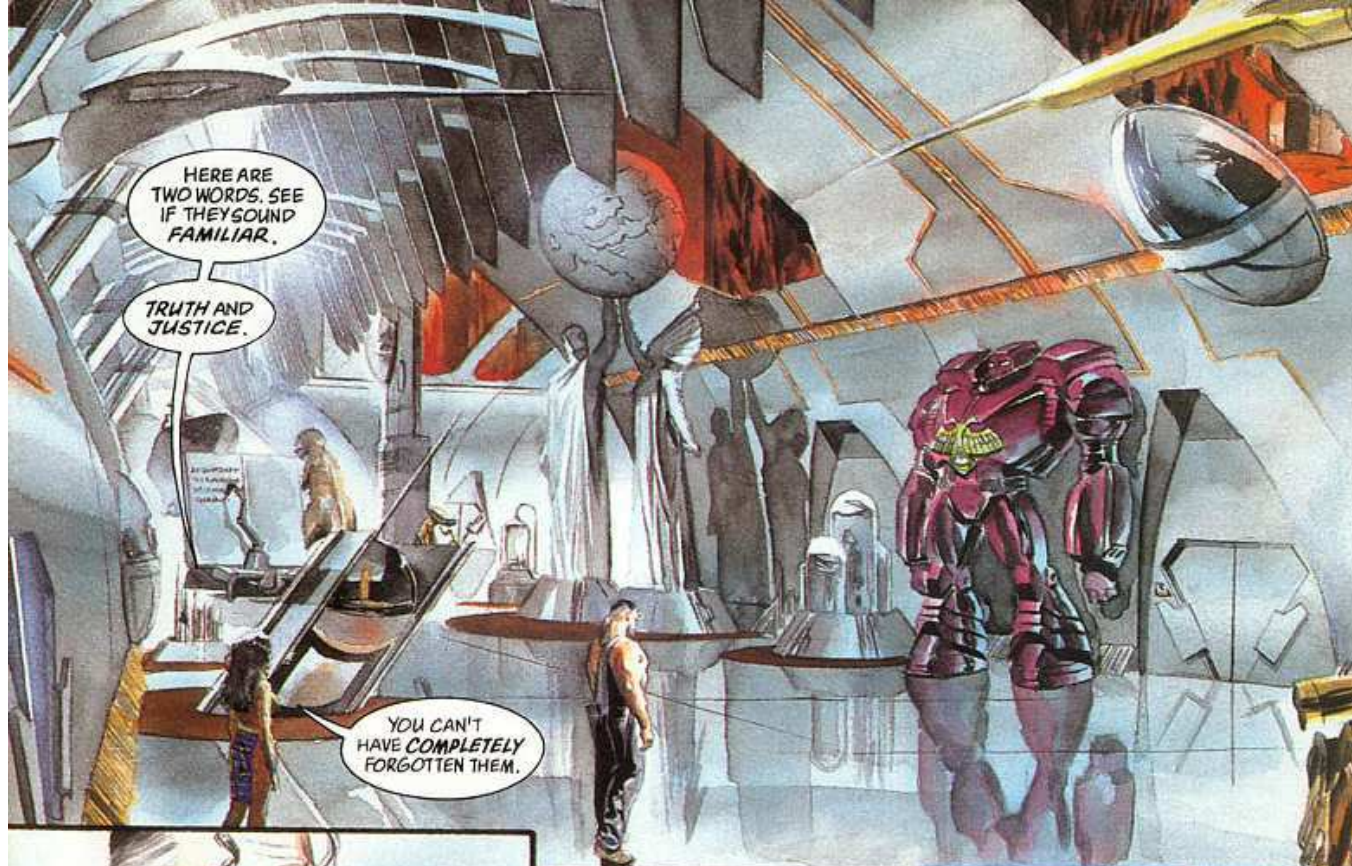
AND THEY DIDN'T  
LISTEN. I KNOW.  
STOP PUNISHING  
THEM.



I'M NOT  
INTERESTED.

I SEE.  
DO YOU LIVE  
IN **NOTHING**  
BUT LIES?





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.



ON.



ECOLOGICAL  
DISASTER

...PARALIZADO  
POR LA NOTICIA DE  
MAGOG...

WIR HABEN  
GELERNT DAß MAGOG  
UNS GEFÄHRDET  
HAT--

...FEROCE  
BRUTALITÀ DI  
MAGOG...

미국의  
비극적인  
이야기

INCONCEIVABLE  
TRAGEDY STRUCK--

...EL MUNDO  
FUE SHOCKEADO  
POR HORRIBLES  
ACTOS...

...AMÉRICAIN AU  
NOM DE MAGOG...

MAGOG...





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

BATTLE RAGED TO THE WHEATFIELDS OF KANSAS

WITNESSES CHARACTERIZED THE PARASITE AS FEARFUL

LEAVE ME ALONE! LEAVE ME ALONE!

CLAIM HIS PLEAS FOR MERCY WERE IGNORED

SPECULATE THAT TRAGEDY MIGHT HAVE BEEN AVERTED HAD MAGOG RELENDED

EN LIAISON DIRECTE PAR SATELLITE



WKCY-TV NEWS 4

ONLOOKERS STAGGERED--AND YET, NOT SURPRISED--BY THE SAVAGERY OF MAGOG'S ATTACK

MAGOG--ONE OF THE NEW BREED OF HEROES, KNOWN TO MANY AS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERMAN'S FAREWELL TO METR

FILE PHOTO



PARASITE OBVIOUSLY PANICKED BY THE BEATING

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

WHAT'S HE--?

LIVE 11:26 AM



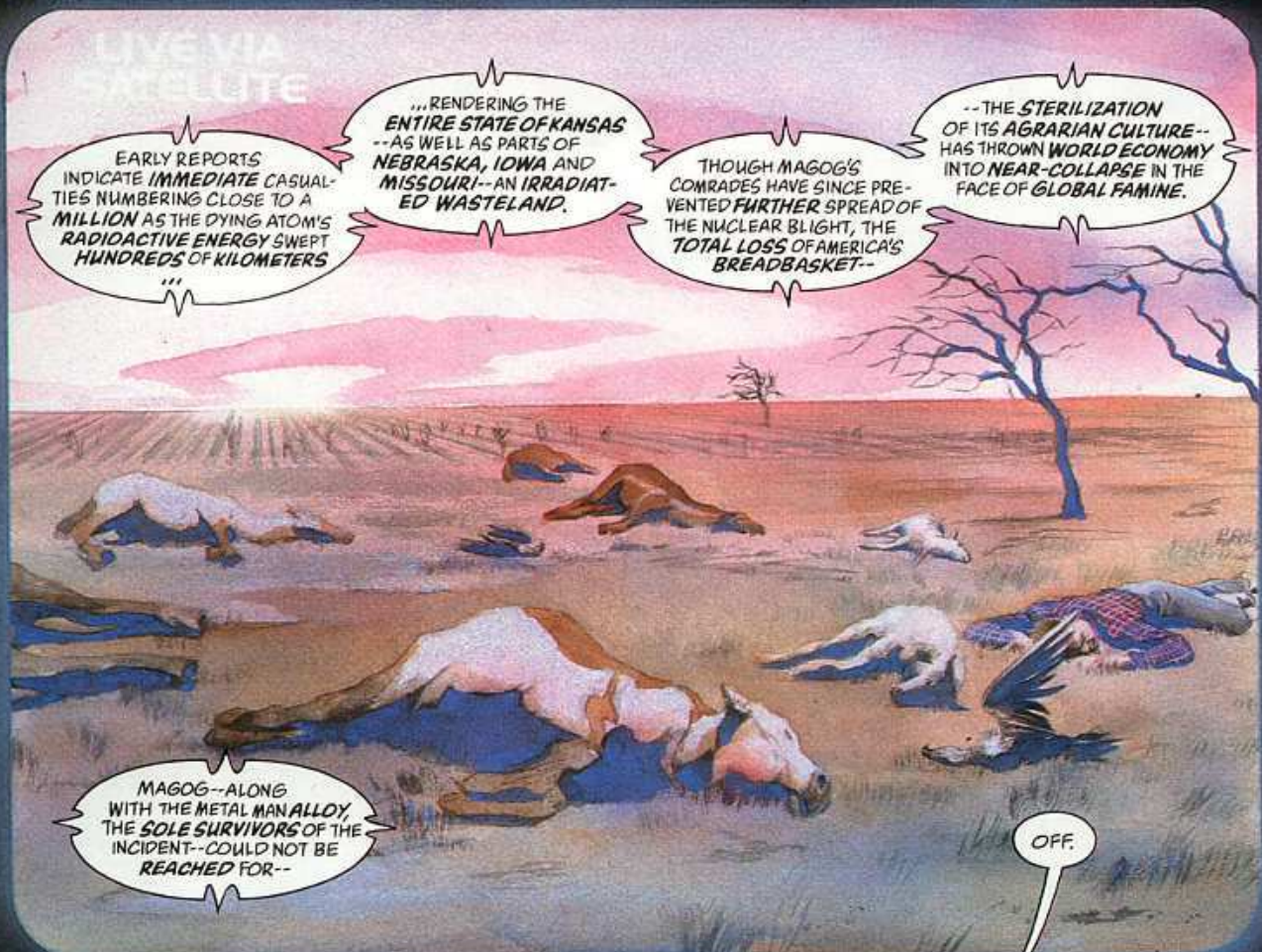
OH, MY GOD! THE PARASITE HAS SPLIT CAPTAIN ATOM OPEN!

HE'S SPLIT HIM OPE--

LIVE 11:26 AM

E QUELLA FU LA FINE.





LIVE VIA SATELLITE

EARLY REPORTS INDICATE IMMEDIATE CASUALTIES NUMBERING CLOSE TO A MILLION AS THE DYING ATOM'S RADIOACTIVE ENERGY SWEEPED HUNDREDS OF KILOMETERS

...RENDERING THE ENTIRE STATE OF KANSAS --AS WELL AS PARTS OF NEBRASKA, IOWA AND MISSOURI--AN IRRADIATED WASTELAND.

THOUGH MAGOG'S COMRADES HAVE SINCE PREVENTED FURTHER SPREAD OF THE NUCLEAR BLIGHT, THE TOTAL LOSS OF AMERICA'S BREADBASKET--

--THE STERILIZATION OF ITS AGRARIAN CULTURE-- HAS THROWN WORLD ECONOMY INTO NEAR-COLLAPSE IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL FAMINE.

MAGOG--ALONG WITH THE METAL MAN ALLOY, THE SOLE SURVIVORS OF THE INCIDENT--COULD NOT BE REACHED FOR--

OFF.

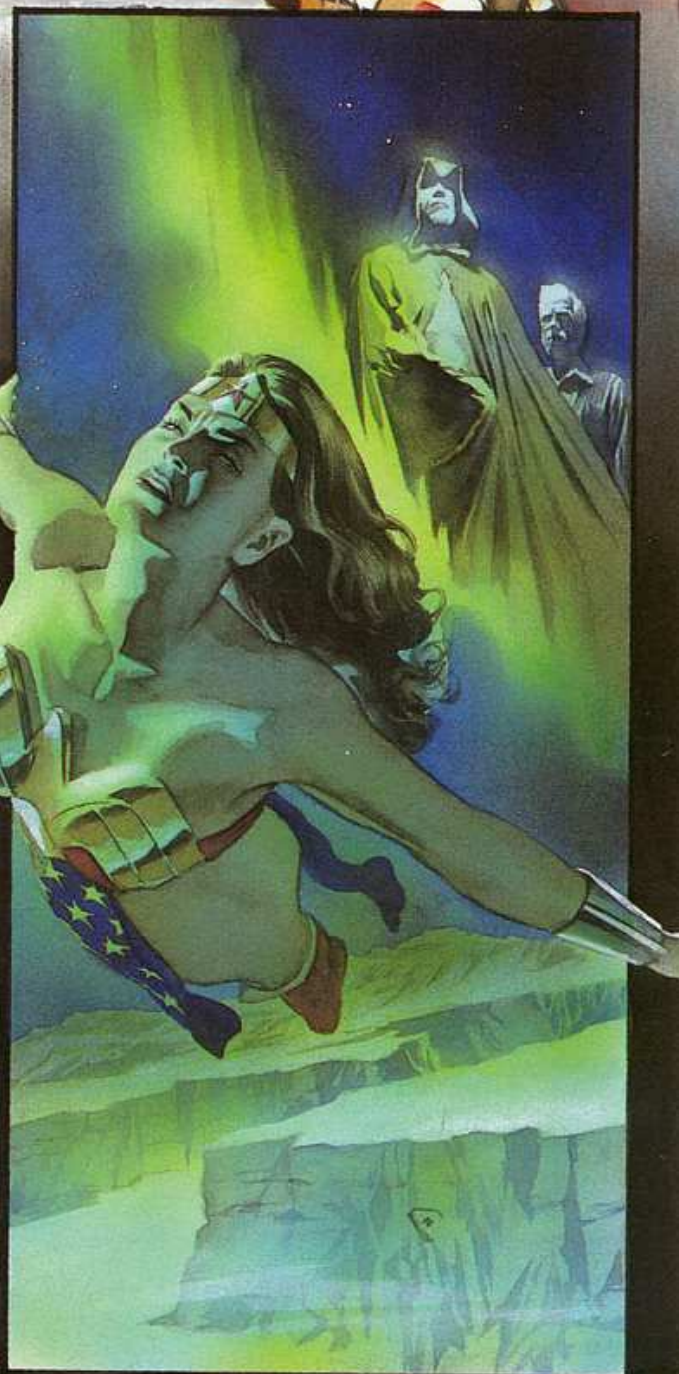


KAL, PLEASE. OUR GENERATION TAKES ITS LEAD FROM YOU. WE ALWAYS HAVE.

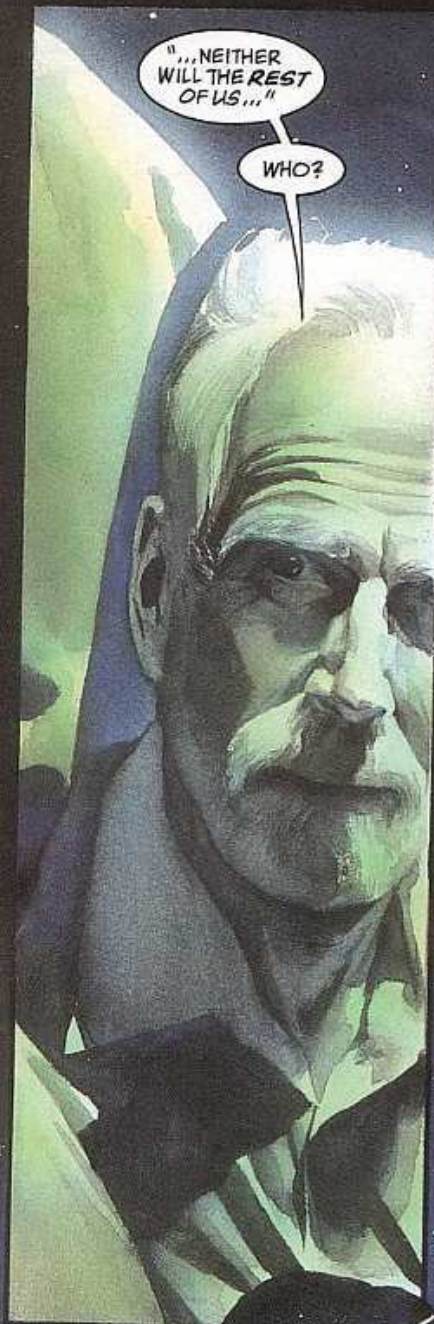
YOU MUST FACE THIS. IF YOU DON'T, NEITHER WILL THE REST OF US...AND IT JUST GOES ON.

KAL?









"...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 RE-  
TIRED.

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



"...THOUGH  
IN SOME MOST  
CLANDESTINE  
WAYS.





"IN THE TIME OF SUPERMAN'S ABSENCE,  
KEYSTONE CITY HAS BECOME A UTOPIA--  
A PROTECTORATE RELENTLESSLY PATROLLED  
BY A GALE FORCE OF 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 RIGHTS  
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 JUSTLY, 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 NIGHTSKY LIKE A  
VERDANT STAR.

"THERE, 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, CUED 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."

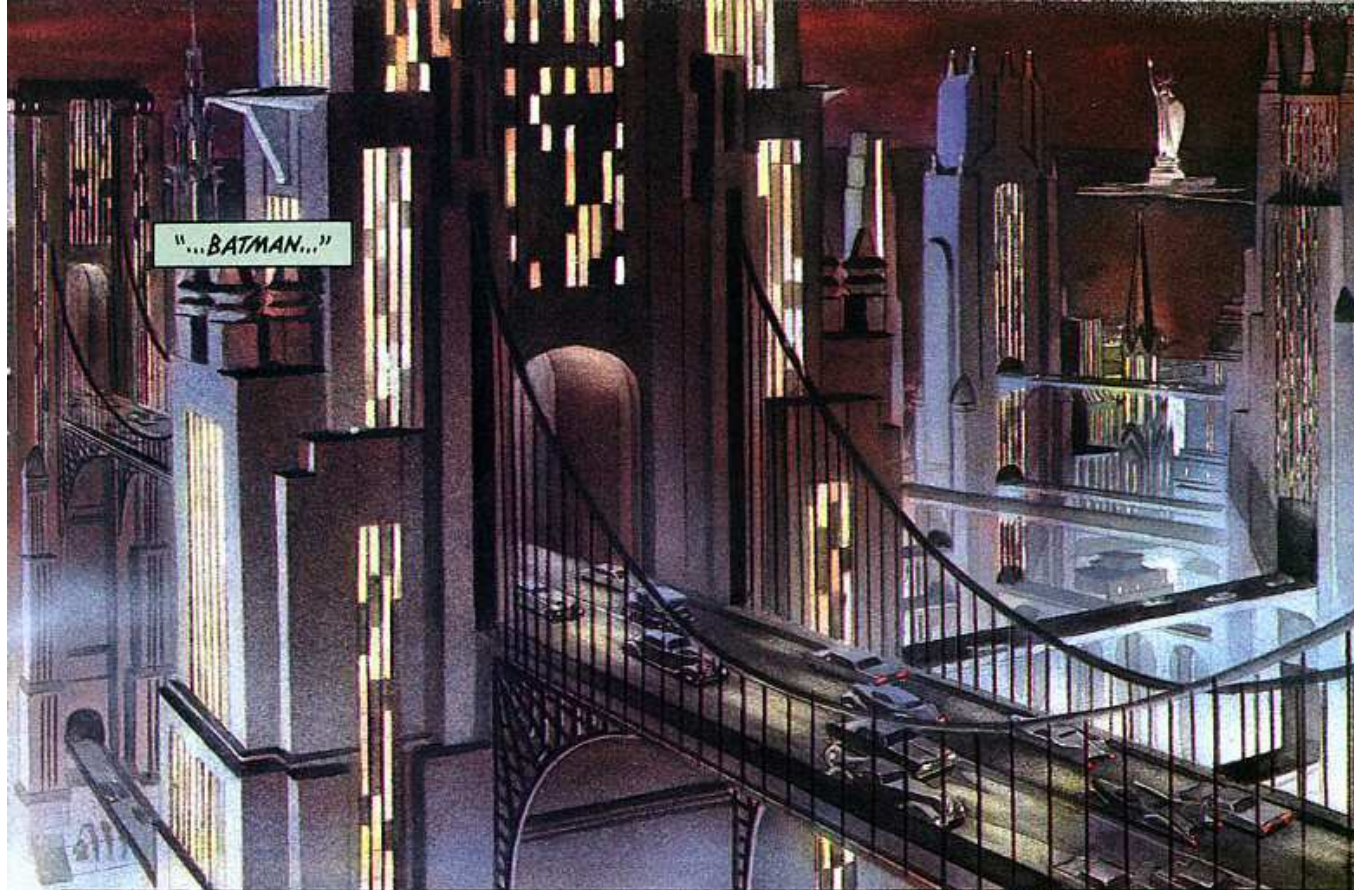
"THEY HAVE LEFT HUMANITY TO ITS OWN FATE."

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

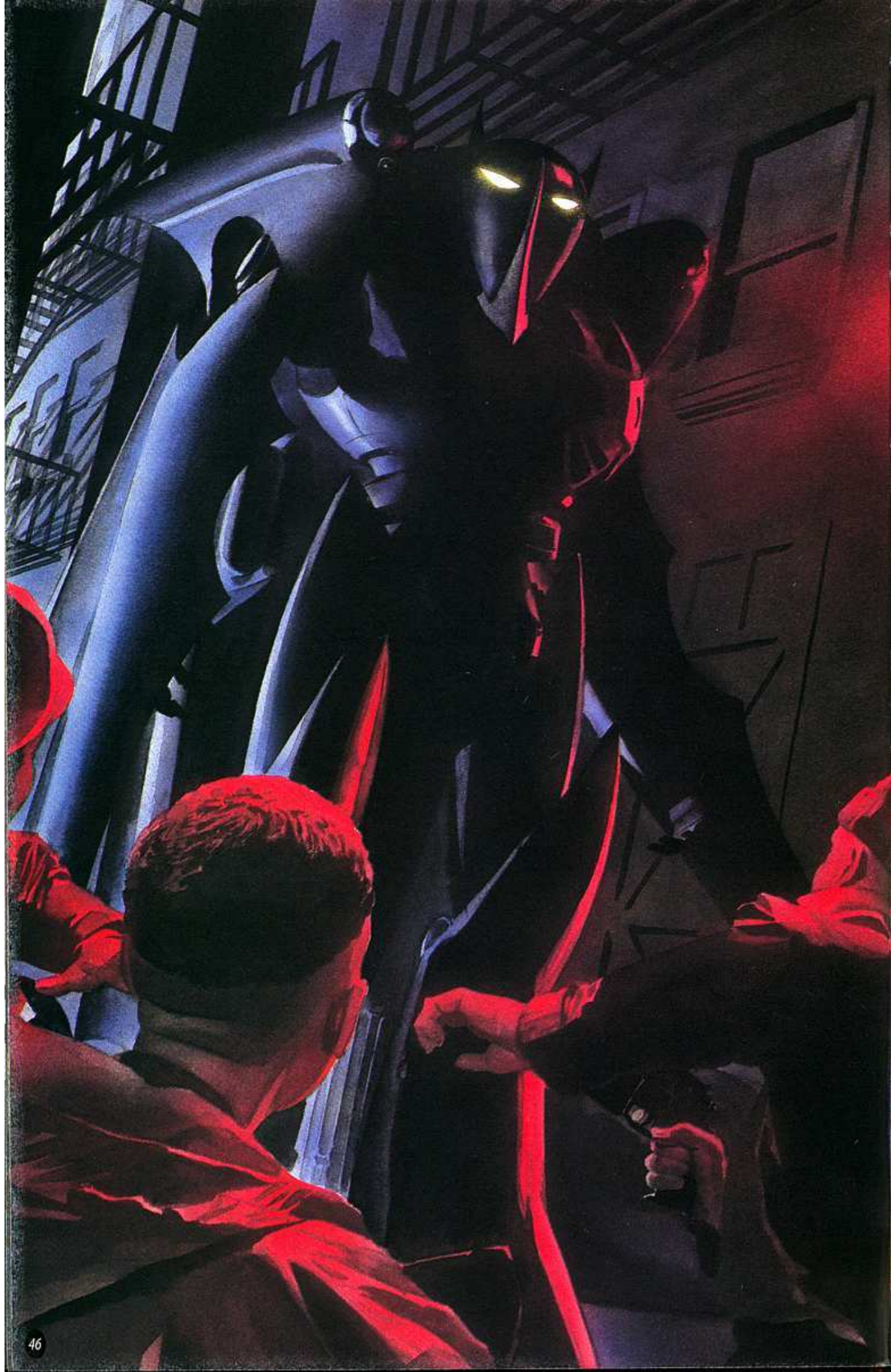
WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE BATMAN?

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 MESSENGER 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 COULD SAVE US WON'T?



"AND THE THIRD PART OF THE TREES WAS BURNT UP... AND ALL GREEN GRASS WAS BURNT UP!"

"AND THE SUN AND THE AIR WERE DARKENED!"

THAT'S WHAT WESLEY SAW! THE DESTRUCTION OF KANSAS WAS TRULY THE BEGINNING OF THE END...



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

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 RE-  
SPONSIBILITY!

NOW THEY  
HAVEN'T EVEN  
THAT!



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



WONDER WOMAN  
WAS RIGHT! THE MAD-  
NESS WILL GO ON--







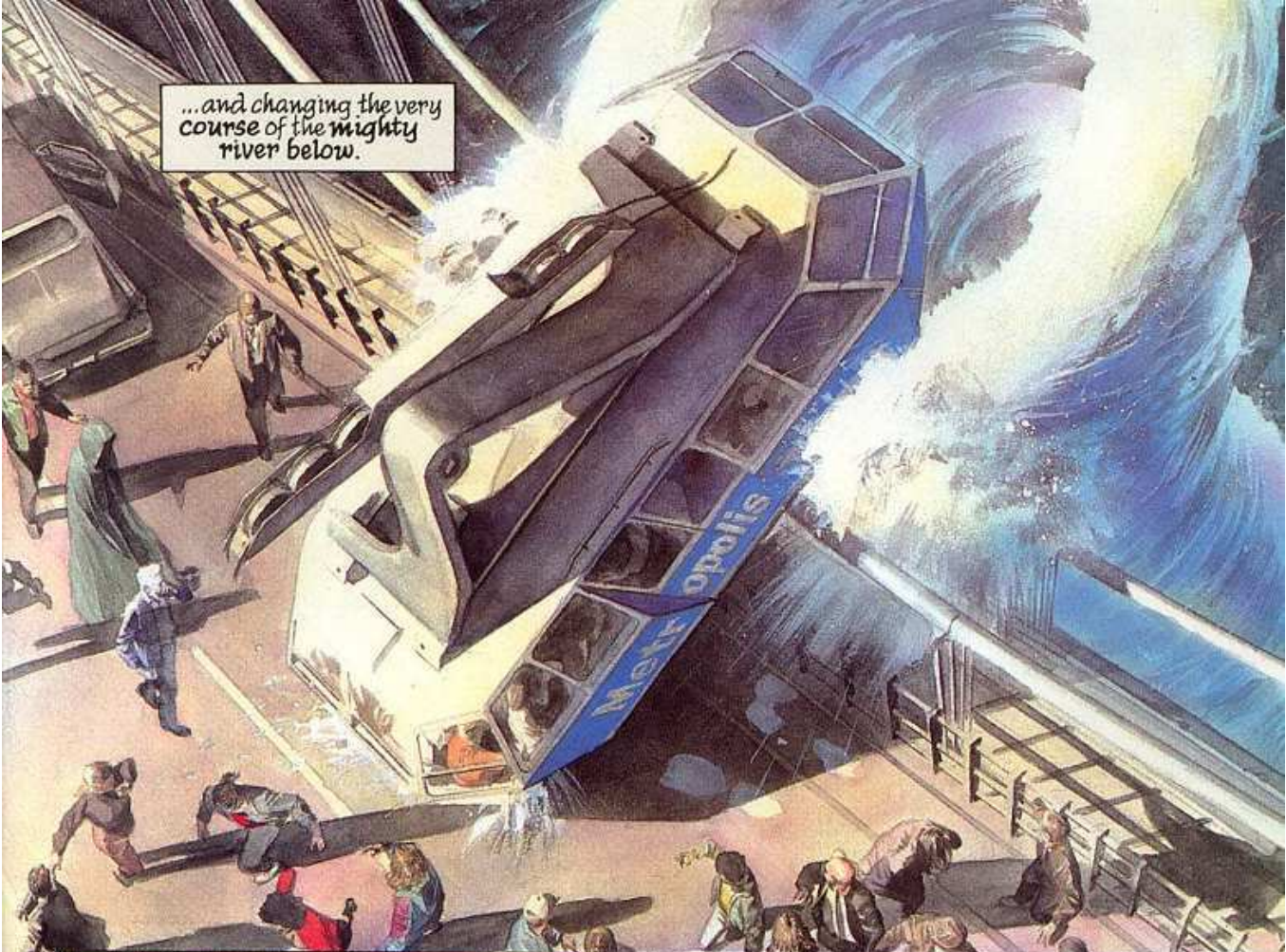
And suddenly...

...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.

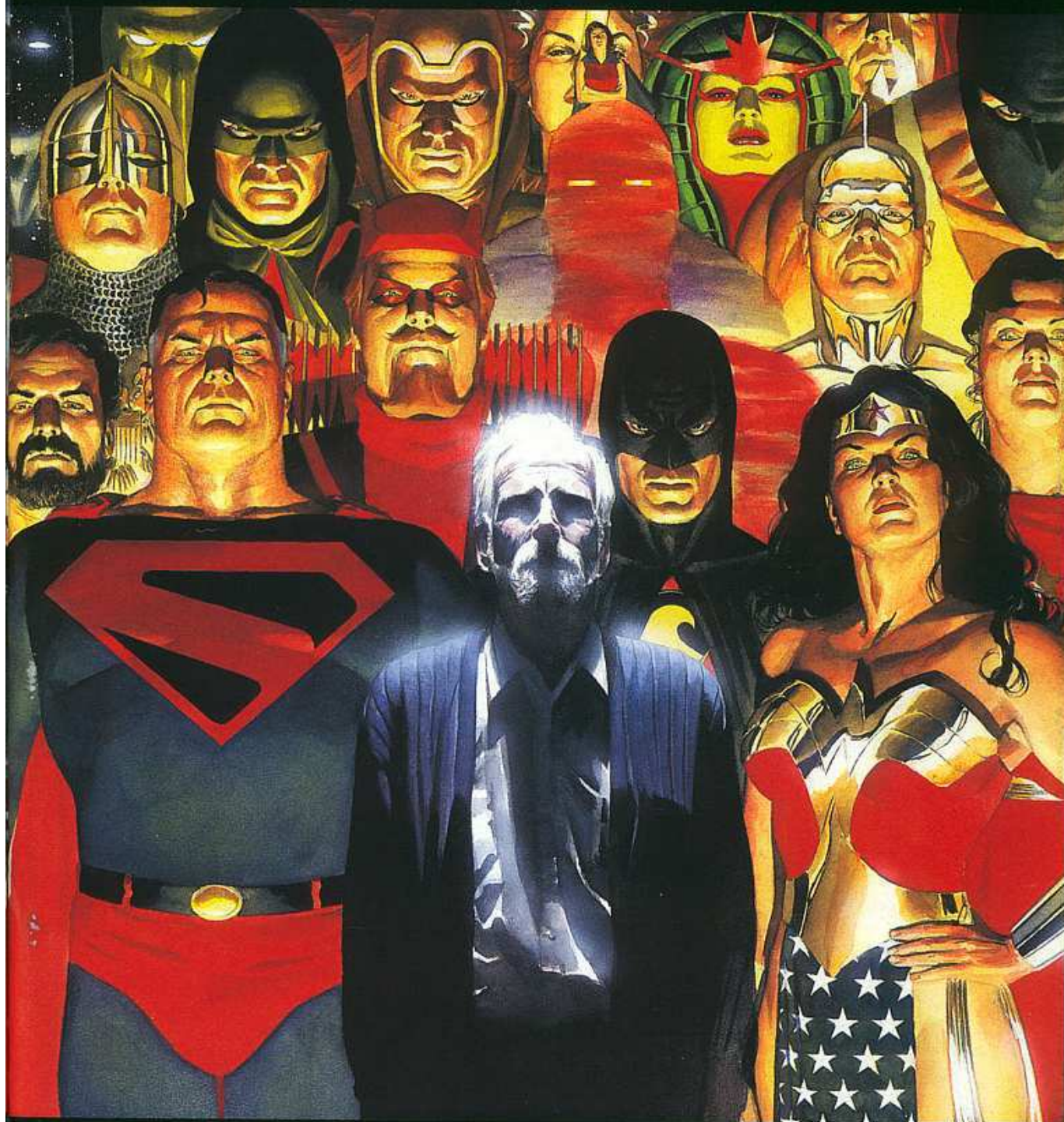
It's just begun...







# CHAPTER TWO

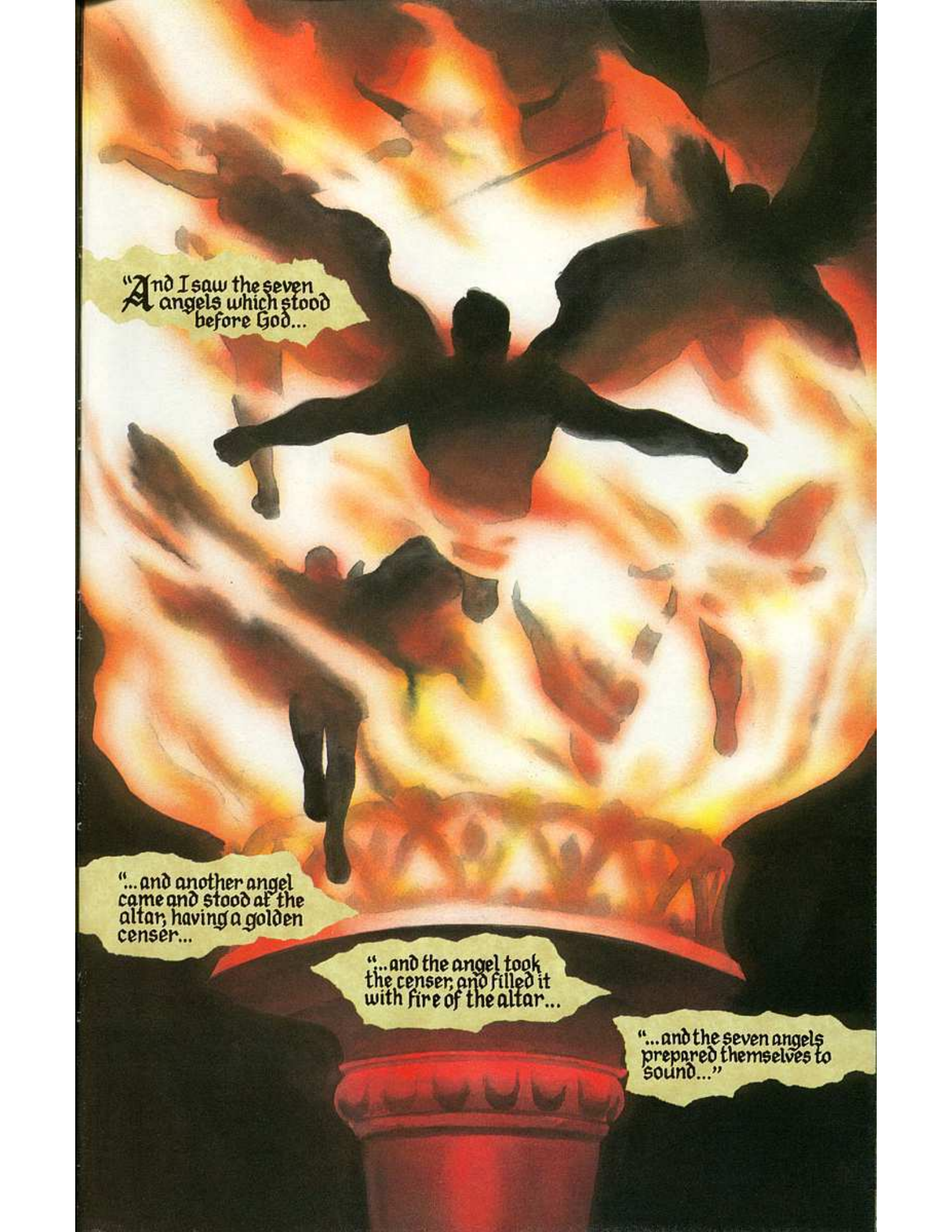


Truth and Justice









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...





"...to sound..."



...angels...

...no...I'm  
with the  
angel...

...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, NORMAN MCCRY,  
WE MOVE FREELY 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...

WERE  
YOU...?







THIS  
IS  
MY  
COUNTRY!

FOR YEARS,  
THE AMERICOMMANDO  
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 CAMPING  
ON OUR SHORES, BEGGING  
CITIZENSHIP!



YOU  
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 YOUR-  
SELVES ON US!

WELL, NO  
MORE!

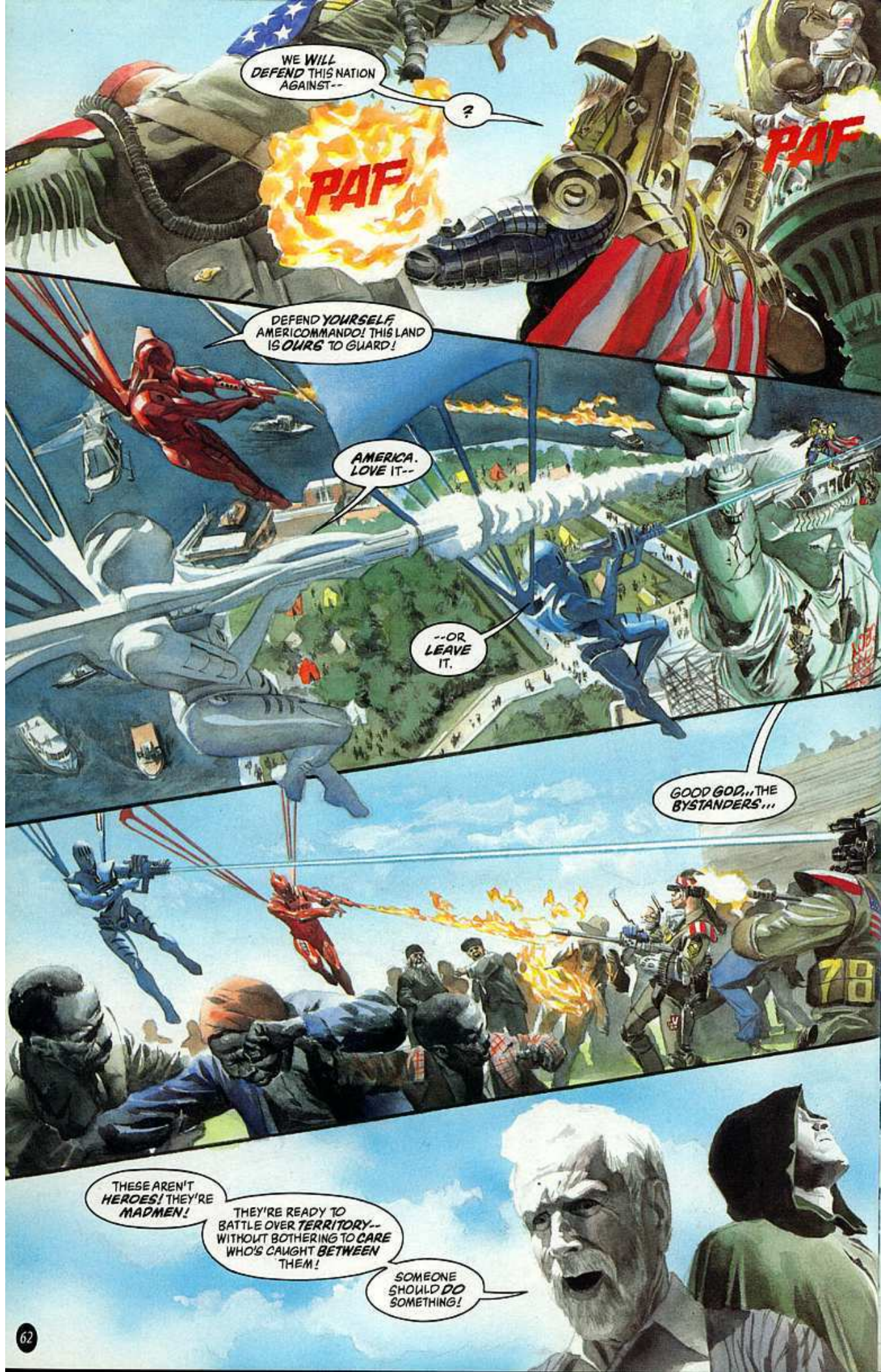


TODAY, THE  
AMERICOMMANDO  
DECLARES WAR ON  
THE WRETCHED  
REFUSE!



AT THE COMMAND  
OF THE BRAINTRUST--  
MY MINUTEMEN WILL  
CLEANSE AMERICA'S  
SHORES!





WE WILL  
DEFEND THIS NATION  
AGAINST--

?

**PAF**

**PAF**

DEFEND YOURSELF,  
AMERICOMMANDO! 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 CARE  
WHO'S CAUGHT BETWEEN  
THEM!

SOMEONE  
SHOULD DO  
SOMETHING!





INDEED.





Angels.

No. Not angels.

Gods themselves.



Superman had returned...  
in doing so, drawing from  
seclusion the titans of  
yesteryear...

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











Over the  
thunder of  
panic, I  
hear names  
unfamiliar.


Hawkman.  
Robin.

The Ray.

They sweep their  
foes aside like  
tenpins--

--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.

REALLY THEM?

SEEN YOU IN YEARS.

YEARS? HELL, A LIFE-TIME.

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN ALL THIS

STORY OF THE CENTURY!

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

WAIT! WAIT!

QUICK! RADIO MIDTOWN AND LET 'EM KNOW...

"...THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE U.N. BUILDING!"





YOU  
HEARD ME!  
HOLD PAGE  
ONE!

SECOND  
COMING OF  
SUPERMAN.

MAKING A  
STATEMENT?

EVERYBODY  
SHUDDUP, WILL YA?  
WHEN THIS GUY  
TALKS--



-- WE LISTEN!

GOOD  
AFTER-  
NOON.

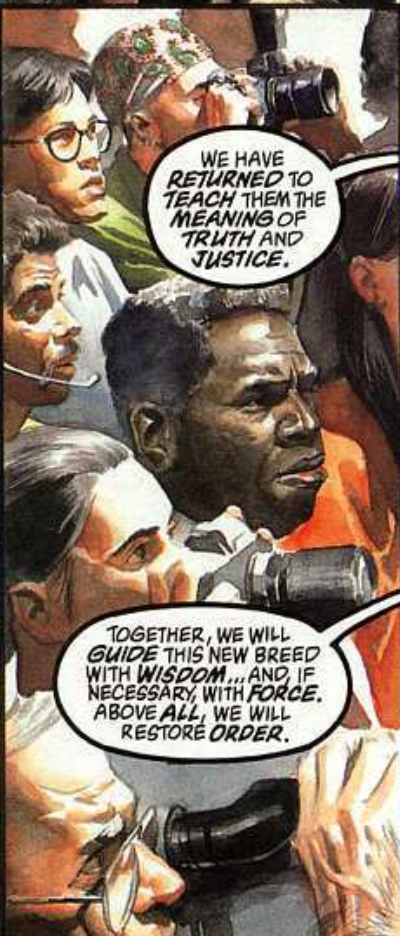
MANY OF YOU  
MAY REMEMBER  
US. WE HAVE BEEN  
AWAY FOR A  
WHILE.

THAT  
WAS OUR  
MISTAKE.

IN OUR ABSENCE, A NEW BREED  
OF METAHUMANS HAS ARISEN... A  
VAST PHALANX OF SELF-STYLED  
"HEROES" UNWILLING TO PRESERVE  
LIFE OR DEFEND THE DEFENSE-  
LESS...



...A LEGION OF  
VIGILANTES WHO HAVE  
PERVERTED THEIR GREAT  
POWERS... WHO HAVE  
FORSWORN THE RE-  
SPONSIBILITIES DUE  
THEM.



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.



WE WILL  
MAKE THINGS  
RIGHT  
AGAIN.









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 HU-  
MANITY'S DESTINY.

THEIR  
SUSPICIONS  
HAVE JUST BEEN  
CONFIRMED.



YOU SAID YOU'RE HERE TO JUDGE  
A COMING EVIL. SUPERMAN IS SOME-  
HOW ENTWINED IN THIS SIN, BUT WHAT  
EXACTLY IS IT?

THE ANSWER TO  
THAT QUESTION REMAINS  
LOCKED IN YOUR PROPHETIC  
DREAMS, MCCAY.

WHAT DO  
YOU SEE? WHAT  
DO YOU HEAR?



A JUMBLE  
OF IMAGES. A  
CACOPHONY OF  
APOCALYPTIC  
VERSE.

IT STILL  
MAKES SO LITTLE  
SENSE...

SUPERMAN  
SAID HIS LEAGUE  
WILL GROW. WHO  
ELSE WILL HE CALL  
TO HIS SIDE?



WE  
SHALL  
SEE...









AFTER ALL...

...YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT HIDING...

DON'T YOU, CLARK?



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 NIGHTS BECAME FREE ONCE GENOSYDE 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.

TWENTY-FIVE AND THIRTY-TWO... RESUME PATROL.



TOO BUSY TO HELP SAVE THE WORLD?  
THE CRISIS AT HAND ISN'T NEW, CLARK. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

OH, I'M SORRY.



PERHAPS I SHOULD ASK MAGOG.



FRICTIONS HAVE BEEN BUILDING TO A 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 KEYS TO EARTH'S KINGDOM. WRESTING CONTROL IS A DELICATE MATTER.

IT REQUIRES FINESSE... AND METICULOUS, CAREFUL PLANNING AGAINST THOSE ENEMIES MORE HIDDEN... BUT IT CAN BE DONE.

WITHOUT, I MIGHT ADD, 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? 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 METHODOICAL THAN YOURS...



...BUT THEY GET RESULTS. YOU USED TO BRAG THAT METROPOLIS WAS A UTOPIA NEXT TO GOTHAM.

NOW WHO HAS THE UTOPIA?



SOME PARADISE. FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, GOTHAM IS NEARLY A POLICE STATE. YOU ALWAYS FAVORED SCARING PEOPLE INTO OBEYING THE LAW, BUT THIS...

YOU'RE WILLING TO TURN ORDINARY CITIZENS INTO A SUPERSTITIOUS, COWARDLY LOT?

THEY'LL FEAR ME MORE THAN THEY'LL TRUST YOU. I DON'T TRUST YOU.

AFTER ALL, YOU LEFT. I STAYED.



WE'RE NOT LIMITED TO GOTHAM, CLARK. WE'VE BUILT A NETWORK THAT EXTENDS FROM HERE ALL THE WAY THROUGH STAR CITY.

"WE"?

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.

> sigh <

LET IT GO, LOVE ...

WHO...?

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

ACTUALLY, OLLIE, GIVEN THE LOW LEVEL OF ROENTGENS INVOLVED, I'D CALCULATE NOTHING INTRINSICALLY HARMFUL ABOUT--

> zzzzzzz <

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

COURSE, IF THEY'RE REALLY AFTER YA, IT AIN'T PARANOIA... IS IT, BATS?

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

SUPERMAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT HE'S REALLY UP AGAINST.

FORTUNATELY...

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

YOU SOUND AS IF YOU HAVE A PLAN.

> pfft <

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.

OTHERWORLDLY...?

OF COURSE.  
SUPERMAN IS AN  
ALIEN.

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!

MY  
CAR!!!

DIANA...?

DIANA...  
TAKE A  
BREATH.

THEY'RE NOT  
EVIL...THEY'RE JUST  
MISGUIDED.

HOW BADLY? IF  
THEY WANT TO ACT LIKE  
WARRIORS... I'LL  
SHOW THEM WAR.

YOU'RE RIGHT.  
THEY SEEM TO HAVE  
LEARNED LITTLE  
REGARD FOR HUMAN  
LIFE...

...AND THERE  
IS NOTHING MORE  
SACRED THAN  
THAT.















WHICH BRINGS US TO OUR NEW PROBLEM.

THE RESURFACED **JUSTICE LEAGUE**... AND HOW THEIR **UNTIMELY ARRIVAL** HAS TURNED OUR **TEN-YEAR AGENDA** INTO A **TEN-DAY STRATEM.**

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 **EXACERBATING** IT.

AND IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE **NOTHING** TO FEAR FROM THE **LEAGUE**?

NOT EVEN FROM **...SUPERMAN?**

HE WILL NOT **TOUCH** ME! HE WILL **NOT!** HE...

...HE...

...HE CANNOT. IN FACT, I'VE GOT THE MOST... **MARVELOUS** ANTI-SUPERMAN PLAN.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOY?

ABSOLUTELY, MR. LUTHOR.

WHO--?

THE **CAPTAIN OF THE LIGHTNING** AND THE **THUNDER**.

COME. WE HAVE SPENT TOO MUCH TIME **WALLOWING** IN **SIN**.













OOOOH. I'M SHAKIN'.

AIN'T IT PAST YOUR BEDTIME, GRAMPA? WHAT DOES THE "S" STAND FOR? SENILE?

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.

Revelation.

Armageddon.

Superman's troops soon 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.

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

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



Many do not.

Clearly, each rebellion further frustrates him.

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?



Meanwhile, those closest to Superman begin to whisper another question.

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

...if he's looking.

IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY.

WHAT?

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

WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FIGHT THIS HARD.

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, KAL.

WE DO WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.

AND YET, WE'RE ENDING UP WITH MORE CAPTIVES THAN CONVERTS.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THOSE WHO REFUSE TO SEE THE LIGHT?

I HAVE A SUGGESTION. FOLLOW ME...





QUITE THE KINGDOM, ARTHUR... AN ARCHITECTURE WORTHY OF PARADISE ISLAND.

EVERY BIT AS BEAUTIFUL AS ANY PLACE ABOVE THE SEA.

MORE.

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



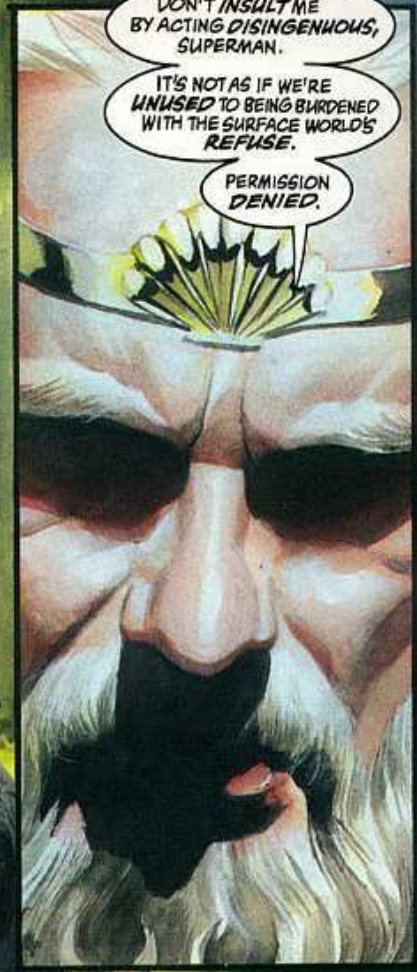
WOULD THAT THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAD FARED SO WELL, ARTHUR. BUT TIMES ABOVE HAVE GROWN HARD AND HARSH.

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...

...FOR REBELLIOUS METAHUMANS.



WHAT?



DON'T INSULT ME BY ACTING DISINGENUOUS, SUPERMAN.

IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE UNUSED TO BEING BURDENED WITH THE SURFACE WORLD'S REFUSE.

PERMISSION DENIED.





A FAINT INVITATION. THOUGH I MISS THE CAMARADERIE, YOU KNOW I WAS NEVER COMFORTABLE BEING YOUR "AQUAMAN."

ARTHUR, IF YOU COULD ONLY SEE THE TROUBLE WE'RE IN UP THERE...

JOIN US. STAND AT OUR SIDE AS YOU DID IN YOUR YOUTH.

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.

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES YOU CANNOT EVEN DREAM OF.



YOU, PRINCESS, SURELY UNDERSTAND HOW UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN.

I... NO LONGER HAVE MY ROYAL STATION, ARTHUR.



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.

THEY STRIPPED ME OF MY ROYALTY AND OF MY HERITAGE.

I AM NO LONGER WELCOME ON PARADISE ISLAND.



I... AM SORRY. BUT THAT HAS NO BEARING ON MY DECISION.

THEN RESUME YOUR SOLITUDE, ARTHUR. RELISH YOUR WORLD...

...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 TO CROSS IT. 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...

NOT ANGER, KAL.



PASSION.

»koff«



Umm... 'SCUSE US... BUT WE THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO KNOW.

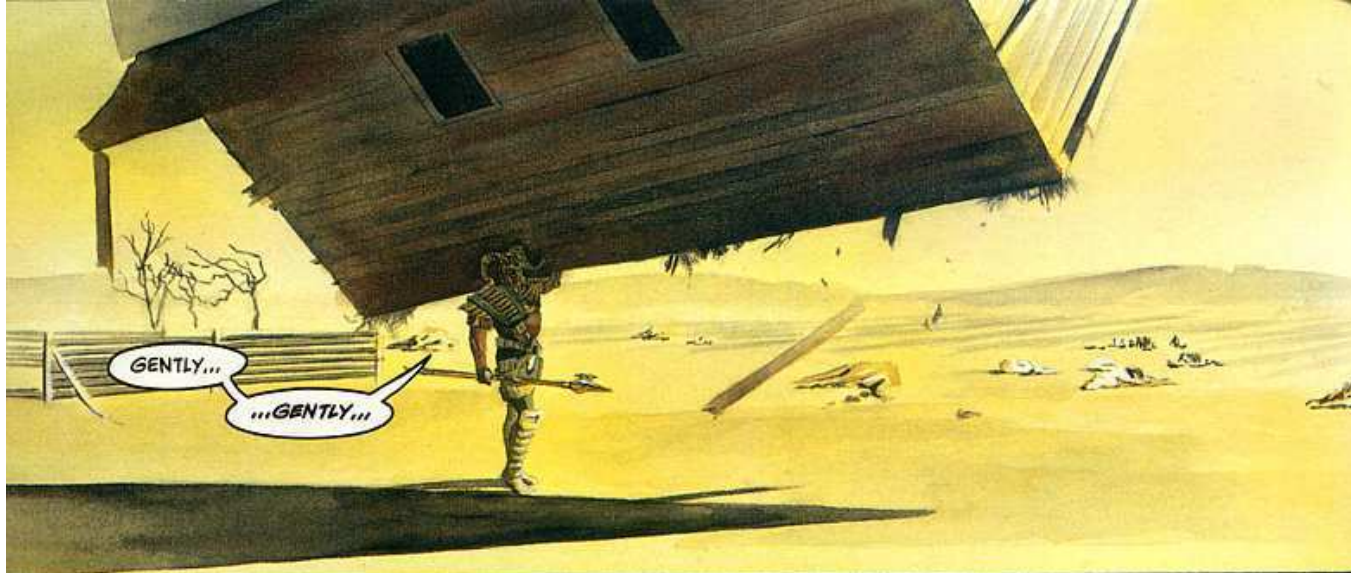
KNOW WHAT?



IT'S MAGOG, SUPERMAN.

WE'VE FOUND HIM...









WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK IN KANSAS, MAGOG?

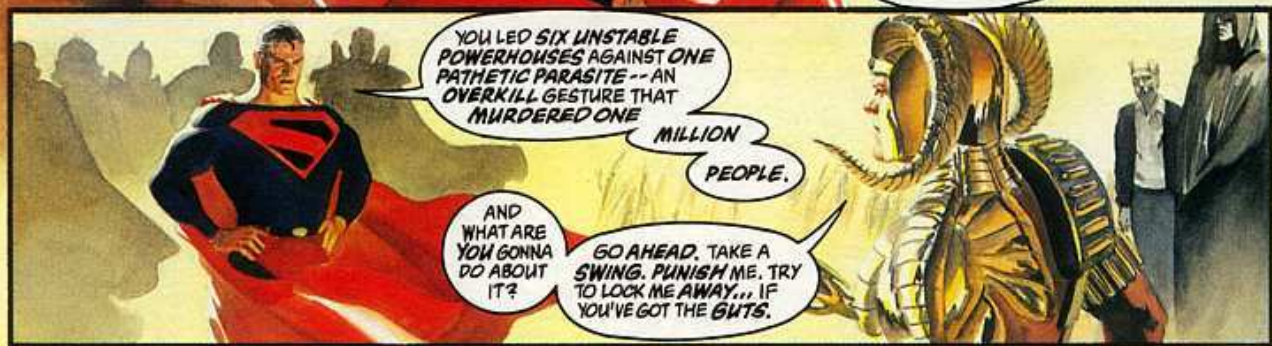


I SAW THE NEWS FOOTAGE OF YOUR LAST MISSION... AND BELIEVE ME, IT WILL BE YOUR LAST.

WELL, WELL. LOOK WHO IT IS. THE METROPOLIS MILQUETOAST.

I NEVER LEFT, BLUE BOY.

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D GO THIS FAR OVER THE TOP.



YOU LED SIX UNSTABLE POWERHOUSES AGAINST ONE PATHETIC PARASITE -- AN OVERKILL GESTURE THAT MURDERED ONE

MILLION PEOPLE.

AND WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

GO AHEAD. TAKE A SWING. PUNISH ME. TRY TO LOCK ME AWAY... IF YOU'VE GOT THE GUTS.



I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, MAGOG.



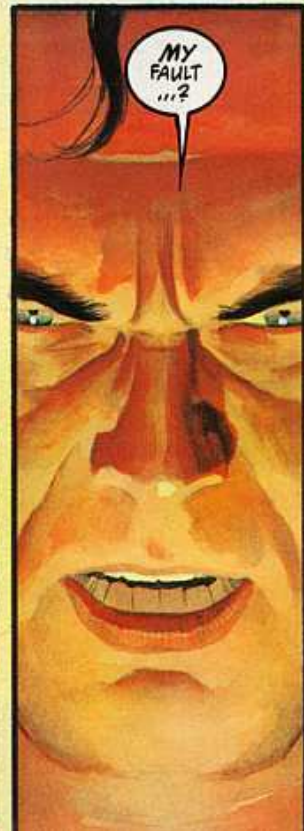
OH, GET OUTTA TOWN.

NO. WAIT. YOU ALREADY DID THAT.



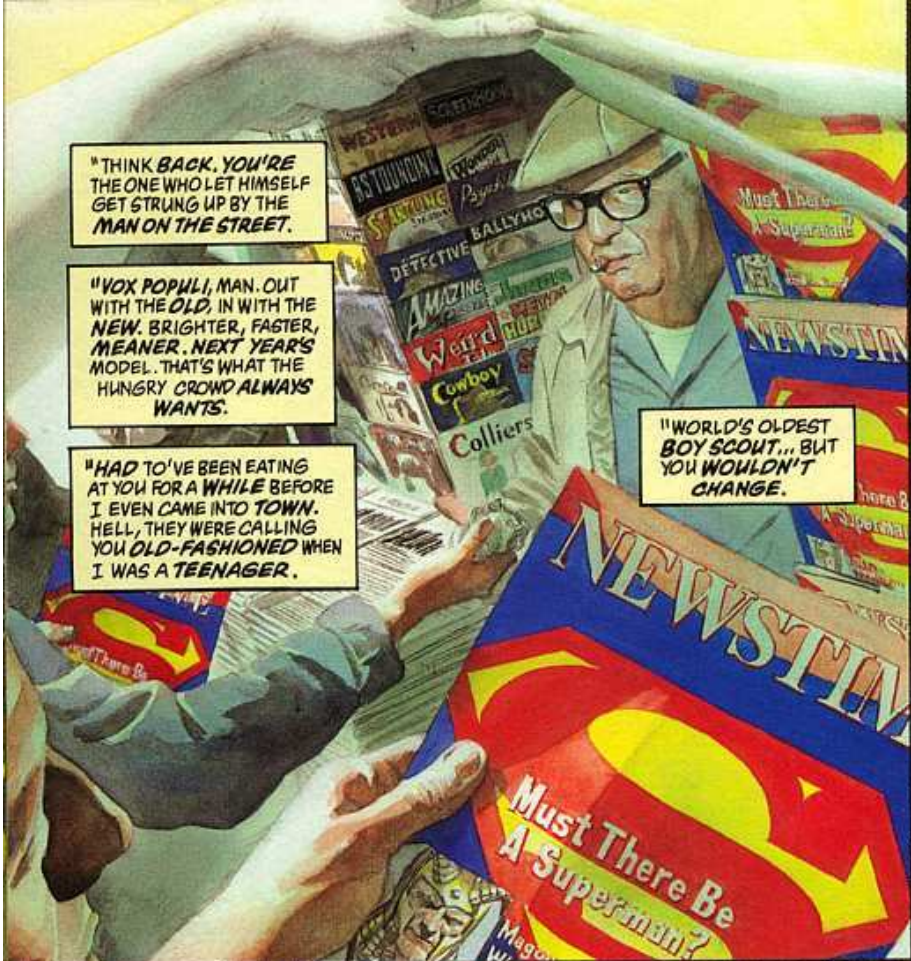
ACTUALLY, YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE BLAMING ME.

THIS WAS YOUR FAULT.



MY FAULT ...?






"THINK BACK. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LET HIMSELF GET STRUNG UP BY THE MAN ON THE STREET."

"VOX POPULI, MAN. OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW. BRIGHTER, FASTER, MEANER. NEXT YEAR'S MODEL. THAT'S WHAT THE HUNGRY CROWD ALWAYS WANTS."


"HAD TO'VE BEEN EATING AT YOU FOR A WHILE BEFORE I EVEN CAME INTO TOWN. HELL, THEY WERE CALLING YOU OLD-FASHIONED WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER."

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



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


"REMEMBER? THE DAILY PLANET ASKED IF THAT'S WHY THE JOKER GOT SO MANY NOTCHES ON HIS BELT WHEN HE BLEW 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."



"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 BOY'S DRAGGING ME IN FOR HAVING STONES HE DOESN'T."

"TIMES ARE TOUGH. JOKER'D BEEN DESERVING WORSE THAN 'CUFFS FOR YEARS. SO I TOOK IT ON MYSELF TO LAY HIM DOWN. I CAN'T BE JUDGED FOR THAT."

"AND I WAS RIGHT."

"I WAS A HERO."

# PLANET MAGOG ACQUITTED

## D.A.: "Justice Done"

Ronald Troupe  
EXCLUSIVE TO THE PLANET

METROPOLIS -- Following a week-long trial that polarized law-enforcement officials nationwide, the verdict in the Magog Case yesterday was a unanimous not-guilty verdict, acquitting Magog of any role in the death of the Joker. District Attorney Bill Henderson, a longtime associate and member of the Metropolis Police Department, announced the verdict as a "travesty of justice. Murder is murder." Henderson's remarks seem to be dampened by the cacophony of cheers sent up by police officers and citizens. More than one city has characterized Magog's

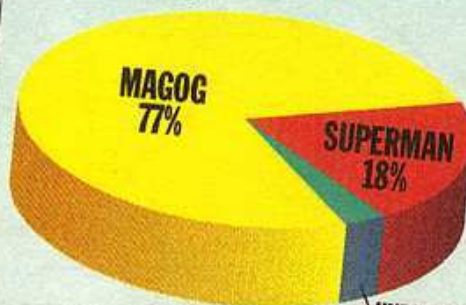
in these dangerous times."

According to James Cambridge, 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 days of the Prankster and the Toyman are long past. Super-powered criminals routinely prey upon Metropolis, creating havoc and ruin with each footfall. If extreme measures save lives, then perhaps Superman should learn to adapt to the times. Perhaps his outdated methods and codes should be modernized while he still has a Metropolis to defend.

"Failing that, perhaps he should consider leaving Metropolis in the hands of those who will better

### METROPOLIS MARVEL?

Random Metropolitans tell us who best defends their future:



ABOVE: Superman, enraged by the verdict



"BUT YOU JUST WOULDN'T TROLL 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."

"I ASKED FOR A TITLE BOUT BETWEEN YOU AND ME..."

"...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 WANT 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?



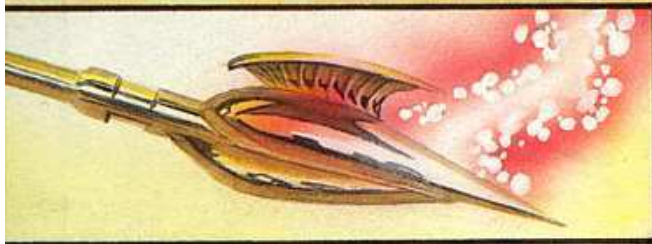
PROUD?



GOD  
DAMN  
YOU!

KRA-KOOM!





PROUD OF  
BEING THE MAN OF  
TOMORROW?



YOUR  
FAULT...YOU  
BASTARD.

THE WORLD  
CHANGED...  
BUT YOU  
WOULDN'T.

SO  
THEY CHOSE  
ME.



THEY CHOSE  
THE MAN WHO  
WOULD KILL  
OVER THE  
MAN WHO  
WOULDN'T...

...AND  
NOW THEY'RE  
DEAD.







"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 **UPROOTING**  
THE MORE **ABERRANT**  
LOWLIES...**EXILING THEM**  
TO SOME **DISTANT**  
**ORB...**

...BUT IT SEEMS  
**UNCONSCIONABLE**  
TO INFLICT SUCH **GRIEVOUS**  
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 DARKSEID 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... USURPED  
DARKSEID'S THRONE. I  
WAS CURIOUS TO SEE  
WHAT YOU'D ACCOM-  
PLISHED IN HIS  
STEAD.

NOT  
MUCH.

FRANKLY, ORION, OF ALL  
THE OLD ALLIES I HAVE ENCOUN-  
TERED, 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**.

IMAGINE 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 CAN NOT **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 **HOMELAND**.



GIVEN THE NATURE OF MY **OWN** STRUGGLE, 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 FEAR'S **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 SLAUGHTERHOUSE IS NOT A HOME! WHEN YOU REACH OUT AND TOUCH FREEDOM--

--YOU TOWER AS TALL AS ORION! HE FEARS 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 BARDIA IN?



KA-KLIK



DON'T SAY "IN." IT'S TOO CONFINING.

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

BOOM



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

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

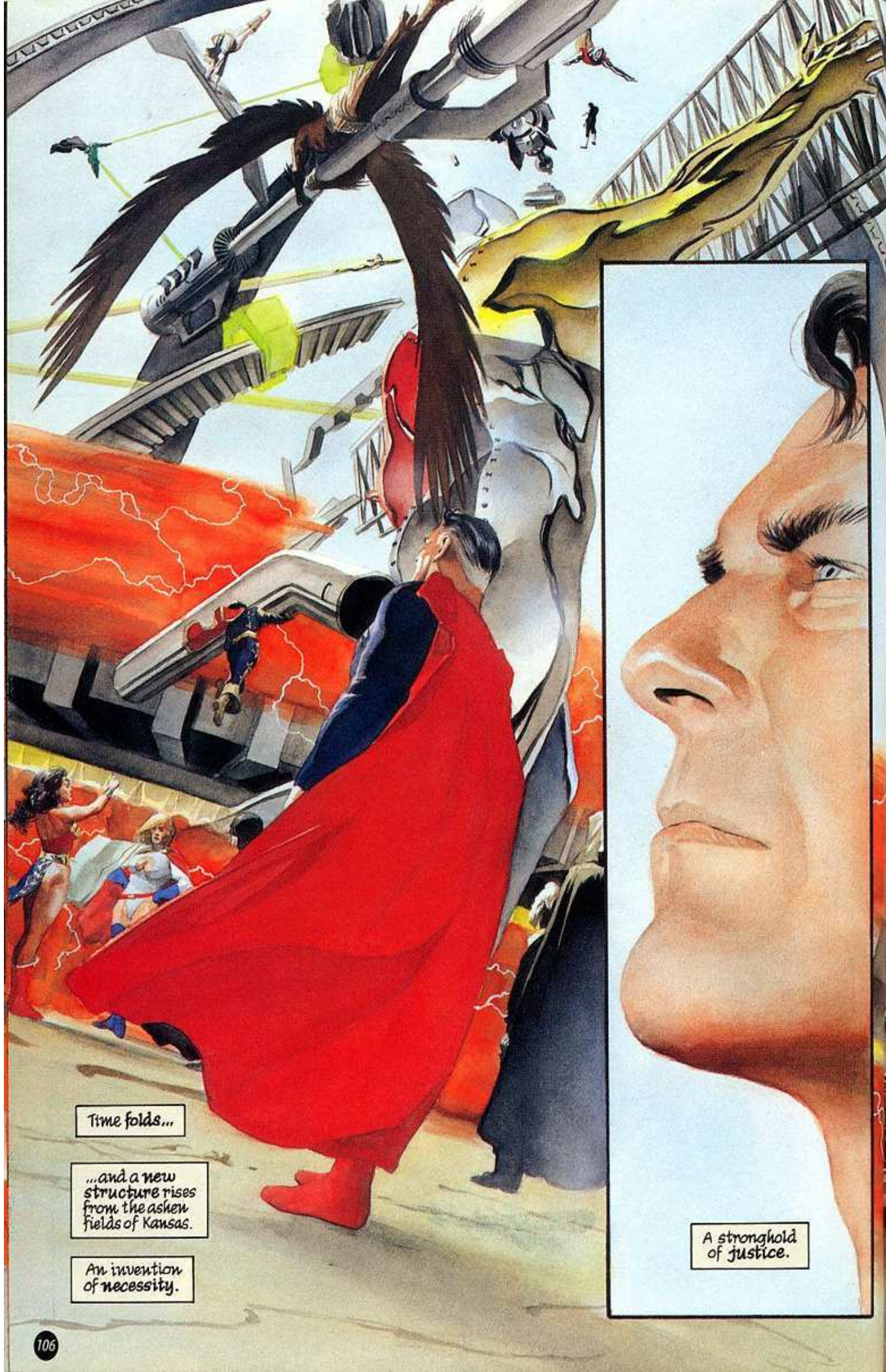
I SEE YOU'VE BEEN RECRUITING.

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.

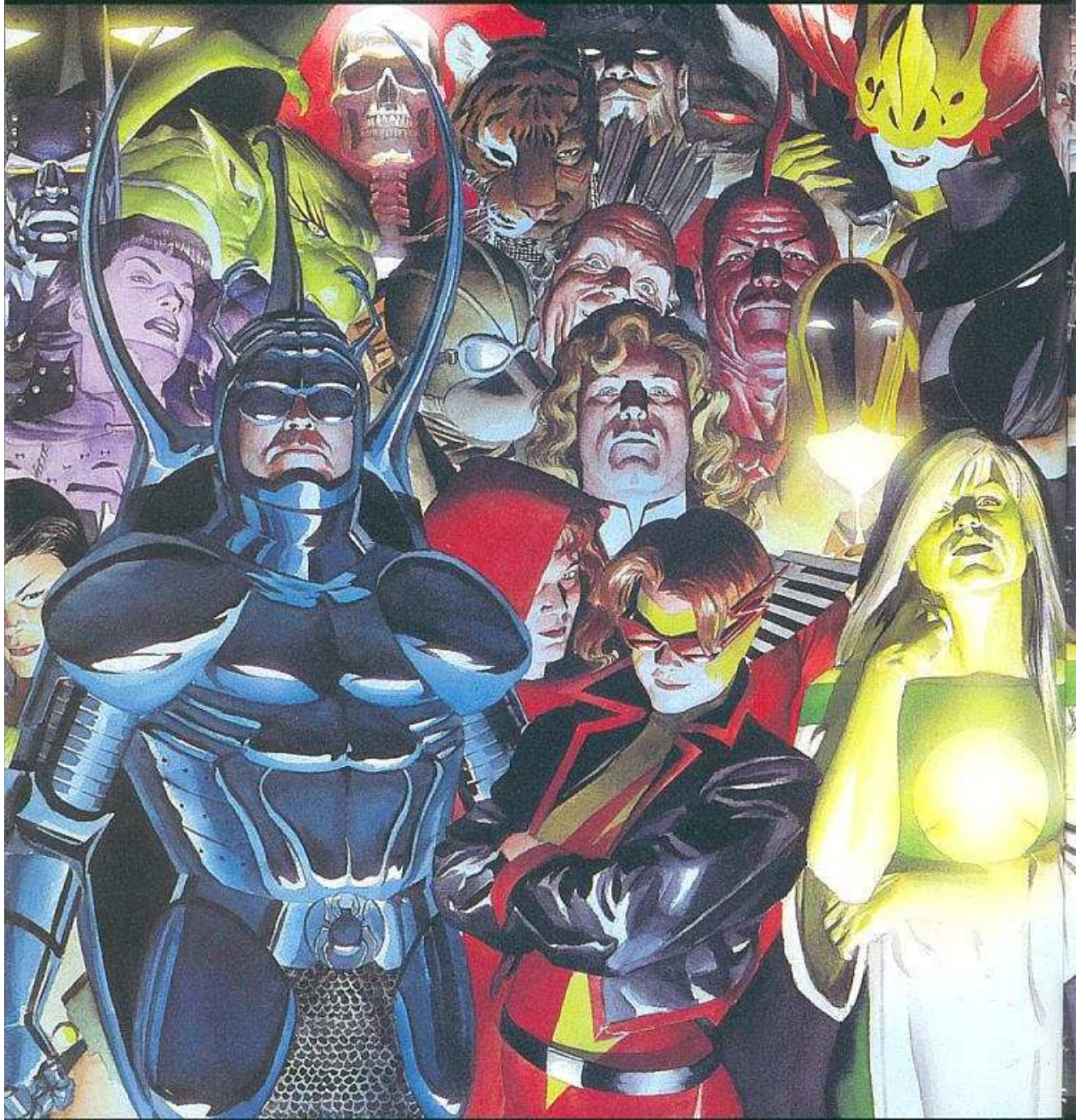
An invention  
of necessity.

A stronghold  
of justice.



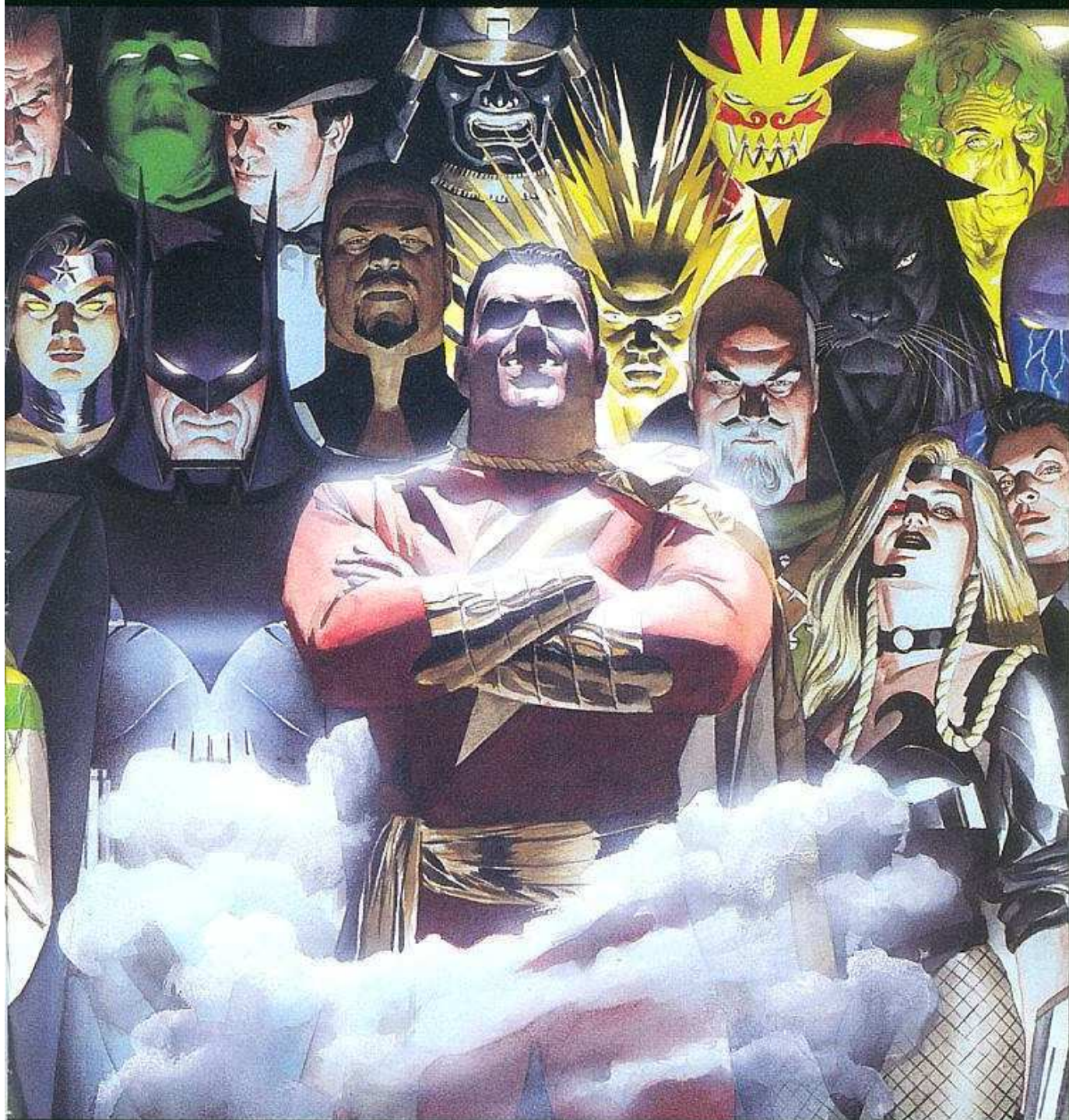








# CHAPTER THREE



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..."







ANOTHER  
VISION?

THEY'RE  
COMING MORE  
AND MORE  
QUICKLY.

DREAMS OF  
ARMAGEDDON.



CERTAINLY, YOU MUST  
SHARE THEM. HOW ELSE  
DO YOU EXPLAIN THE ROAD  
WE WALK?

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



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

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

...INEXORABLY...

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



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.

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.

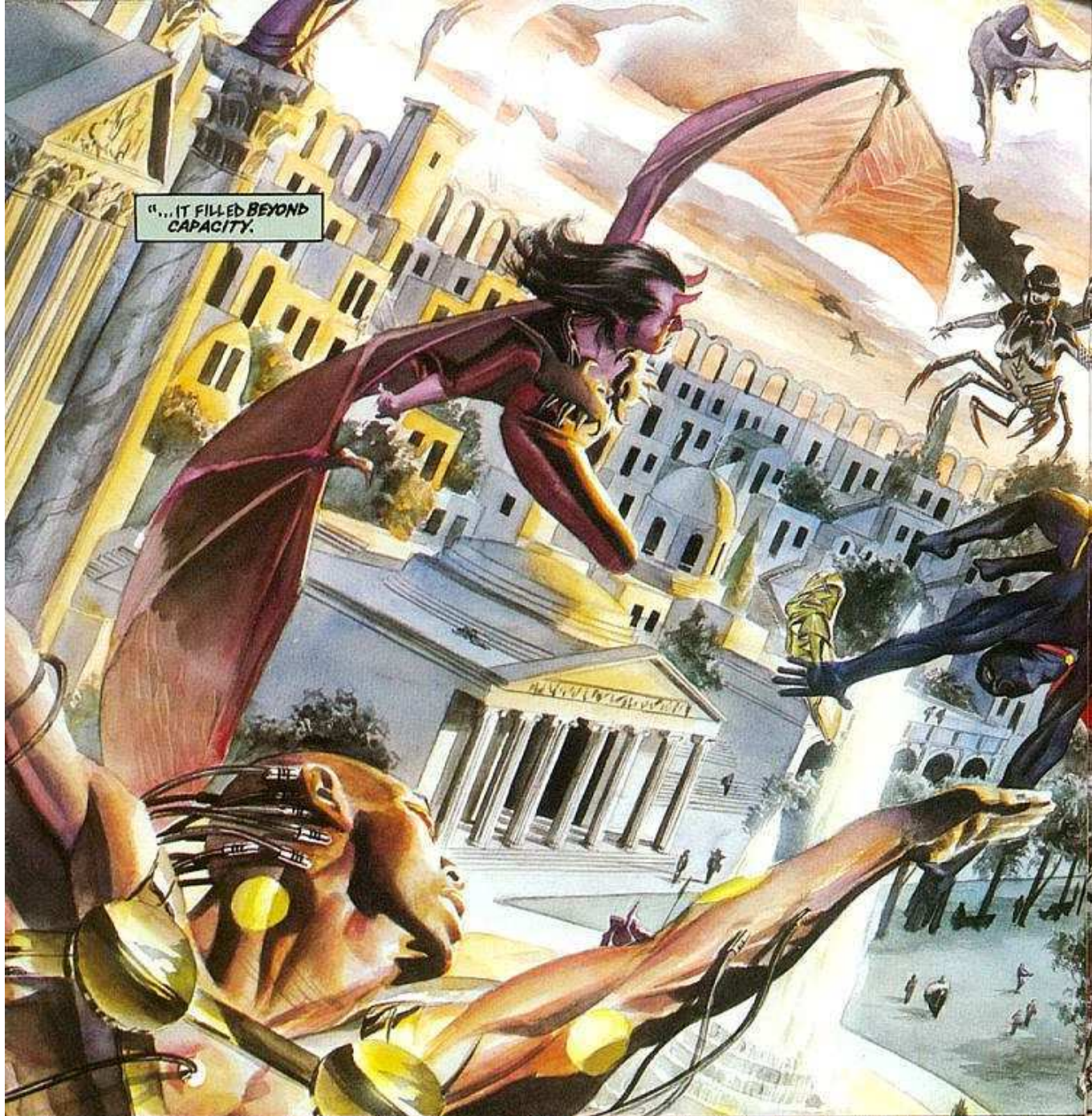
THE GULAG WAS BUILT TO IMPRISON THE DEADLIEST AND MOST UNCONTROLLABLE OF THE SUPERHUMANS.

THANKS TO ITS VAST SIZE, IT WAS INTENDED TO HOUSE PRISONERS FOR MONTHS TO COME.

WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF ITS CONSTRUCTION...



"...IT FILLED BEYOND  
CAPACITY."







"STILL, THE WALLS HOLD...  
THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO  
THE GULAG'S ARCHITECT AND  
WARDEN."



"ONCE THE GREATEST ESCAPE  
ARTIST OF THREE WORLDS,  
SCOTT FREE IS AN UNPARAL-  
LELED MASTER OF BONDS  
AND TRAPS."









PLEASE UNDERSTAND  
OUR INTENT. NONE OF YOU  
ARE HERE FOR PUNISHMENT.  
YOU'RE HERE FOR  
EDUCATION.

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


HOW MANY  
DIFFERENT WAYS  
CAN YOU SPEW  
THAT POLLYANNA  
CRAP?



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

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

WHO BAGGED  
ECLIPSO, HUH? WHO  
TOASTED RA'S ALGHUL?  
GUYS LIKE US, THAT'S  
WHO! WE SAVED LIVES,  
MAN!



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  
?

"MAN OF TOMORROW" MY  
ASS, TRY "MAN OF THE NINETEEN-  
FIFTIES!" TIMES CHANGE... BUT  
HE STILL EXPECTS EVERYONE TO  
LIVE UP TO SOME COBWEBBED  
CODE!



HE STICKS  
US IN HERE JUST  
BECAUSE WE DON'T  
KISS BABIES AND  
SALUTE THE FRIG-  
GIN' FLAG!

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



--AS  
THIS STUPID  
HOLOGRAM!



SORRY  
YOU FEEL  
THAT WAY.

UH-OH...



THAT MUST BE WHY YOU OPENED FIRE  
IN THE MIDDLE OF A HUMAN CROWD. WHY  
YOU THOUGHT IT WAS ACCEPTABLE TO  
PUT IN DANGER AN ENTIRE CABLE CAR FULL  
OF UNARMED CITIZENS.

I'M SURE VON BACH  
WOULD AGREE WITH YOU.  
WE BROUGHT HIM IN FOR  
KILLING OPPONENTS WHO  
HAD ALREADY SUR-  
RENDERED.

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

Tempers  
flare.

Schweinhund!

Conflicts  
escalate.

THOOM!

YOU HAVE A  
LOT TO LEARN,  
VON BACH. GET  
TO IT.

Kein Drohung,  
Kosmonaut!

VON BACH?  
YOU ALL RIGHT,  
MAN?

うん、  
おめえは  
だいじょく!









...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...



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. OVER  
THE MILLENNIA, WE HAVE OFTEN  
LENT OUR GUIDANCE AND WISDOM  
TO THE EARTHLINGS... ONLY TO  
WATCH THEM MARCH PROUDLY  
TOWARDS DISASTER.



GANTHET IS NOT  
WRONG. THE HUMANS  
ARE NOT OUR RESPONSIB-  
ILITY. THEY ARE BUT  
MOTES IN THE COSMOS  
... AN INSIGNIFICANT  
FACTOR IN THE  
GRAND LIFE  
EQUATION.



HOW  
INTERESTING  
THAT YOU INSIST  
UPON THIS. THAT  
YOU ARE ALL SO  
CONCERNED  
WITH HOW  
UNCONCERNED  
YOU SHOULD  
ACT.

TELL ME.  
DO YOU THEN  
DWELL ON  
THE EARTH'S  
PROBLEMS  
BECAUSE YOU  
ARE SO  
COSMICALLY  
BORED... OR  
IS IT JUST  
POSSIBLE...

...THAT YOU  
CONGREGATE IN  
ORDER TO PREVENT  
EACH OTHER FROM  
INTERFERING...?





Clearly, their conversation was not meant for my ears. My senses assaulted, I turn away...



...only to face a dead man.

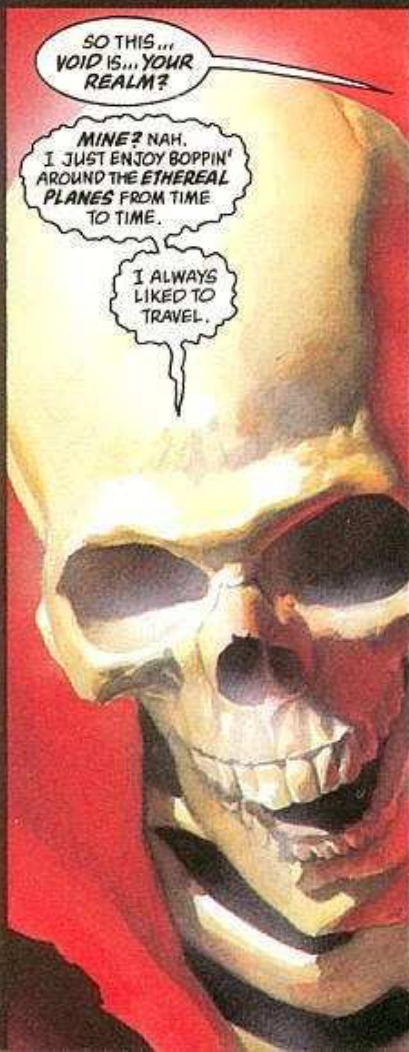
HIYA.



YOU...YOU CAN SEE ME...?

EVEN THOUGH I GOT NO EYES! PRETTY WILD, HUH?

NAME'S BOSTON. I'M A GHOST. NICE TO MEETCHA.



SO THIS... VOID IS... YOUR REALM?

MINE? NAH. I JUST ENJOY BOPPIN' 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. FRANKLY, I CAN'T IMAGINE ANY OF THIS. SINCE SEMINARY, I HAVE BEEN MORE PHILOSOPHER THAN PRIEST.





IN MY CHURCH,  
I PREACHED THAT  
GOD IS NOT A  
PERSON... BUT  
RATHER, A FORCE  
WITH MANY  
NAMES...

...LIKE RAMA  
KUSHNA, F'R  
INSTANCE...

...ONE THAT  
MOTIVATES US TO  
MASTER OUR OWN  
FATE.


I NEVER BELIEVED  
IN THE OLD-WORLD  
NOTION OF ASSIGNING  
A PHYSICAL FACE TO  
THAT FORCE OR ITS  
AGENTS... BUT  
NOW...

TELL ME, IS  
THE SPECTRE  
TRULY AN  
ANGEL?

OH,  
ABSOLUTELY.



AN  
ANGEL OF  
DEATH.



DON'T GET ME  
WRONG. HE ~~USED~~  
BE A NORMAL JOE.  
A COP, AS I  
RECALL.

BUT FROM THE  
MOMENT HE GOT TAPPED  
BY THE BIG G T'BE AN  
AVENGING SPIRIT, HE  
STARTED TO LOSE TOUCH  
WITH HIS HUMAN  
SIDE.

LONG TIME AGO, HE  
WAS A SUPER-HERO HIMSELF.  
SINCE THEN, HE'S GOTTEN  
WEIRDER AND WEIRDER,  
AND NOW... WELL, I'LL TELL  
YOU THE TRUTH...

...YOU CAN'T  
BE SURE WHOSE SIDE  
HE'LL TAKE IN ANY OF  
THIS. CAPICE?



AND  
SPEAK OF THE  
ANGEL...

GOOD TALKIN' WITH  
YA, PADRE. DON'T BE IN ANY  
HURRY, BUT WHEN YOU  
GET TO THE OTHER SIDE  
SOMEDAY...



...LOOK  
ME UP.





...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 HE  
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 APART-  
MENT.



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  
AMAZONS' 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... CAME TO  
SUGGEST THAT I HAD PERHAPS  
FAILED.



THEY  
ACTUALLY  
PUT ME ON  
TRIAL.



I PLED MY CASE...  
BUT IN THE END, THEY  
DECREED 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 ADMIRE YOUR GENTILITY.



IT DIDN'T GET THE JOB DONE.



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?



YOU SAID IT YOURSELF ONCE, CLAR--

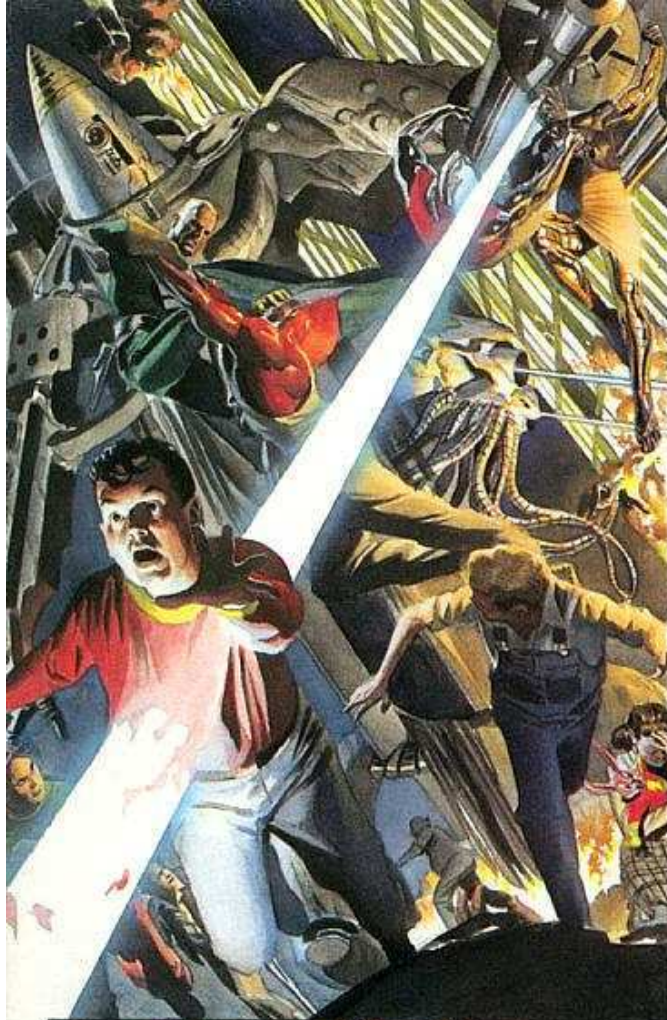
--KAL. WE ARE WARRIORS. WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO WAGE COMBAT.

GIVEN WHO WE ARE, DIANA... GIVEN THE POWER WE POSSESS... WE HAVE A GREATER OBLIGATION TO KEEP THE PEACE.



ONLY THE WEAK SUCCUMB TO BRUTALITY.





THOSE...  
THOSE THINGS NEVER  
HAPPENED.

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  
A VERRRY UGLY  
PLACE.

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

NO!  
NO!

THAT'S  
RI-IGHT.

YOU'LL STAY  
RIGHT WHERE I  
ORDER YOU TO  
STAY.







OUR OLD  
FRIEND *SIVANA*  
SAW TO THAT,  
DIDN'T HE?

HERE.  
LET ME GET  
THAT.



INGENIOUS LITTLE  
BUGGER, *SIVANA* WAS. DO  
YOU SUPPOSE THAT WHEN  
THEY COINED THE TERM "MAD  
SCIENTIST" THEY WERE  
THINKING OF HIM?



I'LL  
BET THEY  
WERE.



WELL, REST  
IN PEACE, *SIVANA*.  
SCIENCE...

...MARCHES  
ON.



THE WORMS  
CRAWL IN... THE  
WORMS CRAWL  
OUT... ♪



SHU...SHA...  
SHAZ...

OH, NO, NO.  
THERE'LL BE NO  
RETREAT.

NOT  
YET.



I STILL HAVE  
A VERY SPECIAL  
JOB FOR YOU...





BATMAN!  
THERE YOU  
ARE!

WELL?  
WHAT DO YOU  
THINK?

I THINK THAT  
YOU AUTHORIZED  
TRIPLE SHIFTS  
WITHOUT TELLING  
ME.



STRENGTH IS IN  
NUMBERS. IT TOOK YOU  
A LONG TIME, BUT YOU  
FINALLY LEARNED THAT.

MAGNIFICENT,  
AREN'T THEY? 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 UN-  
YIELDING LEGION OF  
STEEL SOLDIERS...

I CAN FEEL YOUR  
PULSE THROB FROM HERE,  
LUTHOR. DON'T DOUBLE-  
CROSS ME.

OUR  
OBJECTIVE IS WORLD  
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 MANKIND 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 BIG BLUE'S SPIT-CURL?



SADLY, 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 GUZZLING 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...









I KNOW  
WHAT YOU'RE  
THINKING.  
I DO!

I'M AWARE  
OF THAT, OLD  
FRIEND.



BUT LET'S NOT  
DO THIS TELEPATH-  
ICALLY. 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 PSYCHE THAT  
HE FINALLY, IN ONE TERRI-  
BLE MOMENT, OPENED  
HIS MIND TO THE  
WORLD--

--AND WAS  
FOREVER SHATTERED  
BY ITS THOUGHTS.

HE WAS  
ONCE A MARTIAN  
CHAMPION.



NOW HE  
IS NOT MUCH OF  
ANYTHING.



J'ONN...  
CAN YOU  
VERIFY?

I WUH-WILL  
ATTEMPT...



TOO MUCH  
NOISE! TOO  
MUCH--

SHH.  
SHH. IT'S  
OKAY.



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

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

J'ONN, YOU FOUGHT  
THE GOOD FIGHT LONGER  
THAN ANY OF US.

YOU'VE DONE ALL THAT'S  
EVER BEEN ASKED OF YOU...




...AND TODAY WAS  
NO EXCEPTION.

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

DREAM OF RED  
SANDS AND SILENT  
STARS.





Captain Marvel mills about, his eerie grin carving a swath through Batman's ranks.

No one breathes in his presence. "What is he thinking?" they wonder. "What will he do next?"

MAY I...?

OH!

I MEAN... SURE. HELP...HELP YOURSELF...

To them, he is a shark trawling for prawn.

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 unease accorded only one other.





GERMANY IS  
ALL CLEAR.



CHECK.

AUSTRIA  
LOOKS CLEAR...

...AND  
ITALY.

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



--DROPPED  
A BUILDING  
ON YOU?

PUT POWER WOMAN AND  
ME BOTH INTO BODYCASTS.  
LISTEN...I'M WITH YOU. I  
WAS ALL FOR THE  
GULAG--

-- BUT THROWING VON BACH  
INTO THAT CAULDRON IS LIKE POKING  
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.



SO  
TELL  
HIM.

ME?  
ROY, YOU  
TELL HIM!

LOOK AT  
HIM! CAN'T A  
MAN WITH  
TELESCOPIC  
VISION SEE  
THE WORLD  
AROUND  
HIM?

SHH! 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.

So settled am I  
in my role as a  
spirit...





...that I have forgotten that fact!

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

ANSWER ME, DAMN IT!

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

WELL...?





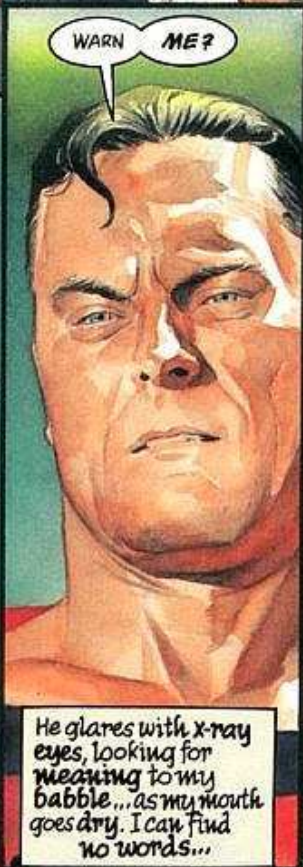
MY NAME...  
IS NORMAN MCCAY...  
AND I'VE BEEN...

...I'M...  
SUPPOSED  
TO...



...THIS ISN'T  
GOING TO... MAKE  
ANY...

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



WARN ME?

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



...save those I myself  
have heard before...

"...AND... THE THIRD  
PART... OF THE TREES  
WAS BURN'T UP..."

"... AND ALL  
GREEN GRASS... WAS  
BURN'T UP..."

"... AND THE  
SUN AND THE AIR  
WERE DARKENED."

"FEAR GOD--  
AND GIVE GLORY  
TO HIM--"



"...FOR THE HOUR  
OF HIS JUDGMENT  
IS COME."



LISTEN TO ME.  
I DON'T KNOW WHO  
YOU ARE... OR WHERE  
YOU'VE COME FROM...  
BUT YOUR WORDS  
ARE MEANING-  
LESS.

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

HOLY  
GOD!





WORD JUST  
CAME IN FROM THE  
GULAG! THERE'S  
A RIOT GOING  
ON!

THE  
PRISONERS  
HAVE GONE  
BERSERK!



THEN  
HERE'S  
WHAT  
WE--

FLASH!  
GREEN LANTERN!  
POWER WOMAN!

TO THE  
GULAG. NOW.  
TAKE CONTROL--

THROUGH  
PEACEFUL  
MEANS--

-- BY WHATEVER  
MEANS NECESSARY.

I WANT A STATUS  
REPORT AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE.



RAY--  
PHOEBUS--BE  
READY TO  
FOLLOW IF  
CALLED...



YOU ARE  
FINISHED  
HERE.

NO. NOT  
QUITE...





WHERE DID THE OLD MAN GO? WHO WAS HE?

I DON'T KNOW.

WHY DID YOU UNDERMINE MY AUTHORITY?



WHY DID I...?

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



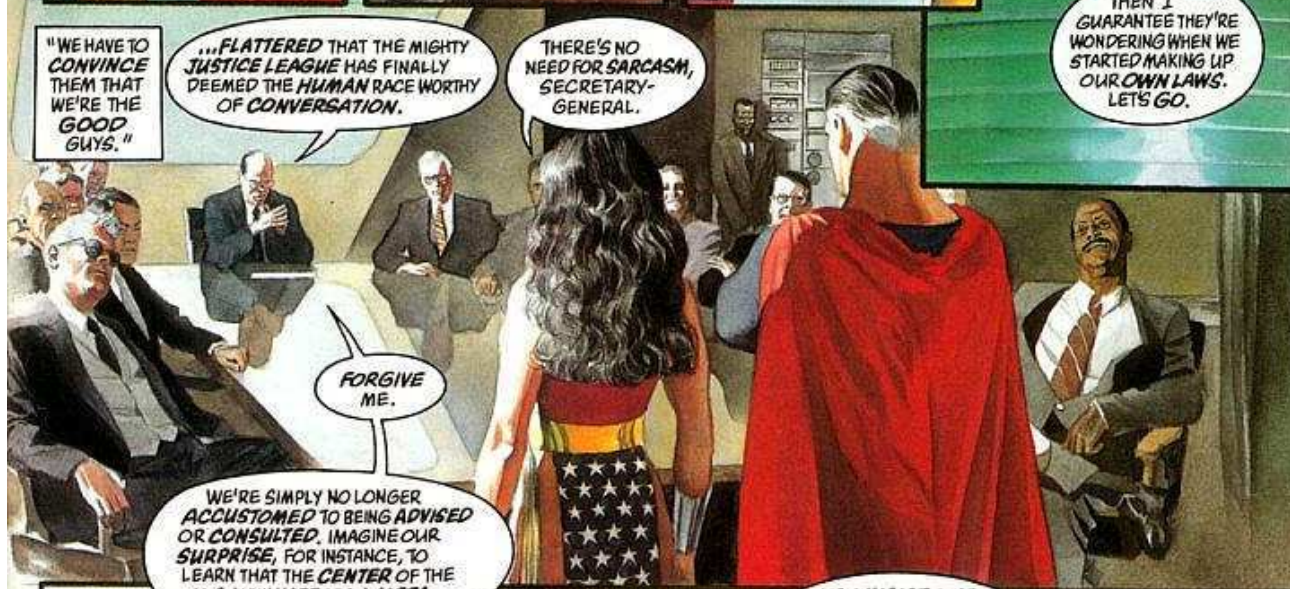
--FROM SOMEONE.

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



THEY CAN'T HELP BUT KNOW ABOUT THE GULAG BY NOW.

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 DEEMED THE HUMAN RACE WORTHY OF CONVERSATION.

THERE'S NO NEED FOR SARCASM, SECRETARY-GENERAL.

FORGIVE ME.

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



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

THAT THOSE INCARCERATED ARE FULLY DOCILE AND EAGER TO ACCLIMATE.

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 REEMERGENCE ENGENDERED IS FAST ERODING.

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

MEANING...?

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



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

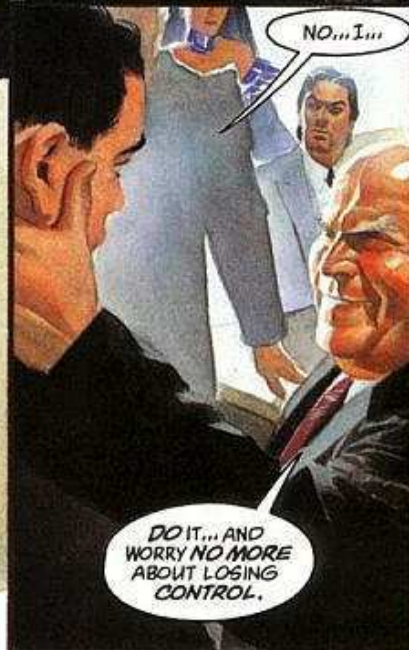
THEY'RE SCARED... AND THEIR FEARS MAY SOON TRUMP OUR SOLUTIONS. WE HAVE TO ACT.

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 MICRON WORSE...

...THE LEAGUE WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE A FINAL, DECISIVE ACTION...







**THWAM!**

HELLO,  
BILLY.

SHUH...  
SSH...

>kaff<

HE--HE'S  
NOT--?

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

I'D SUSPECTED IT FOR A  
WHILE... AND J'ONN'S TELEPATHIC  
PROBE CONFIRMED IT. IT SEEMS  
MARVEL'S DUAL IDENTITIES 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 STEW  
OF SCHIZOPHRENIC  
PSYCHOSES.

B-BUT  
...OUR  
GOALS...

MY ONLY GOAL IN  
ALLYING 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.









NNNNNGH!



AHUH!

AHUH!

AHUH!



KLIK



WHAT THE--?

NO!

NOOOOO--\*



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 SPOKE HIS MAGIC WORD FOR THE LAST TIME...

...AND VANISHED INSIDE A SCARED LITTLE BOY.





THEN LUTHOR  
FOUND YOU. TOOK  
YOU UNDER HIS  
WING.

TOLD YOU THE  
SAME THING THE WORLD  
WAS TELLING YOU... THAT  
SUPER-HEROES WERE  
MONSTERS, TERRIBLE,  
REPULSIVE BEASTS.



AND HE NEVER,  
EVER LET YOU FORGET...  
THAT YOU HAD ONE HIDING  
DEEP DOWN INSIDE  
YOU.



DON'T THINK LIKE  
THAT, BILLY! HE'S TWISTED  
YOUR BRAIN AROUND THAT  
INSANITY! THE WORMS...  
THEY'RE ENGINEERED  
TO SECRETE CERTAIN  
CHEMICALS!

BILLY OR MARVEL...  
EITHER ONE... THEY  
EAT AWAY AT YOUR  
MIND!



THEY'RE DRIVING  
YOU MAD, BILLY! DON'T  
LET THAT HAPPEN! THE  
WORLD DEPENDS ON  
IT! YOU CAN FIGHT--

BILLY,  
LOOK  
OUT!



KSSSSHHH!



AAAAAAH...

BILLY, NO!  
STAY CALM! I  
CAN HELP!

STAY  
CALM!



AAAAAA...

SHA...

SHAZAM!





DAMN IT.



BATMAN!  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT?

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

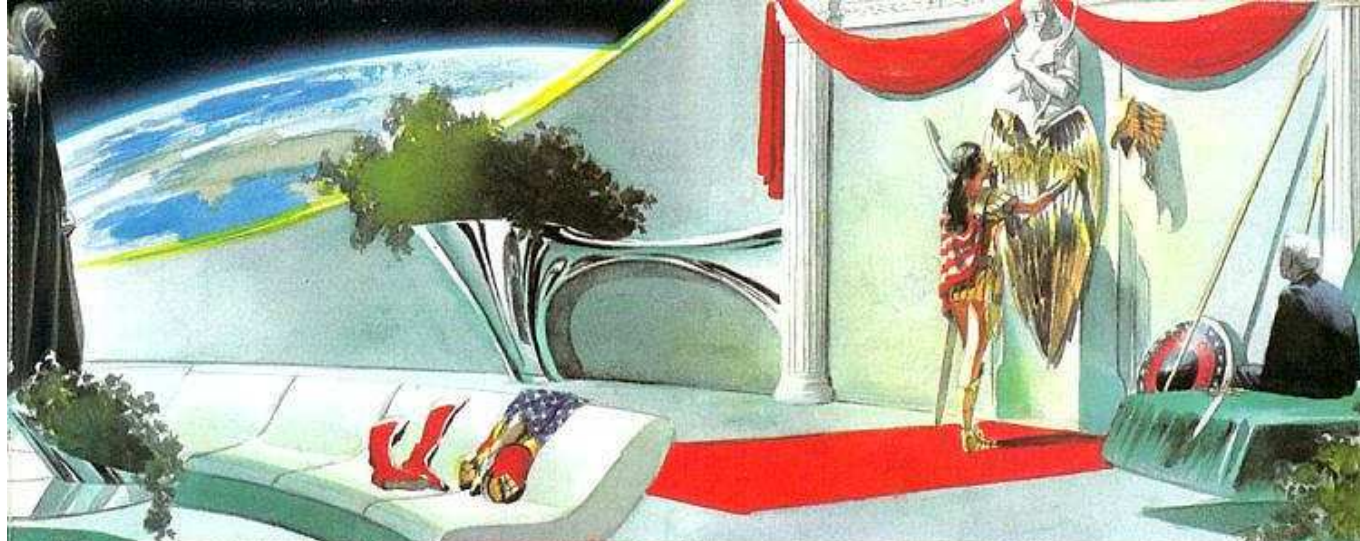


IN CUSTODY,  
EVERY *ONE*. WHAT  
ABOUT *MARVEL*?

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

TAKE ME  
TO THE *CAVE*.  
NOW.





YET ANOTHER SIDE OF YOU I'M NOT COMFORTABLE WITH.

GET USED TO THIS ONE.

A SOLDIER UNPREPARED HAS NO BUSINESS CALLING HERSELF A SOLDIER.

MORE AMAZONIAN "WISDOM."

ISN'T IT POSSIBLE THAT WE'VE ALREADY WON THE BIG FIGHT? ONCE THE RIOTERS ARE CALMED, WE CAN INSTILL--

OW!

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.

AND YOU EXPECT TO USE IT?

I EXPECT TO BE A SOLDIER.

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  
TEETERS ON THE BRINK!

YOU MADE THE  
DECISION TO INCARCER-  
ATE THEM FOR THE GOOD  
OF MANKIND, RE-  
MEMBER?

AND MAYBE THAT  
WAS MY MISTAKE. MAYBE  
I SHOULD HAVE LET THE  
HUMANS DECIDE HOW  
TO--



--HEAR  
ME! SEND  
HELP!

>koffe

FOR GOD'S  
SAKE, CAN  
YOU HEAR  
ME?

GL?



WE'RE... WE'RE IN  
TROUBLE! THE FIGHT  
AT THE GULAG GOES  
WORSE THAN WE EX-  
PECTED!

THE PRISONERS  
HAVE ALREADY  
BEGIN TO BREACH  
THE WALLS! THEY  
CAN'T HOLD MUCH  
LONGER-- NOR  
CAN WE!



THEY'VE  
ALREADY...

...THEY'VE  
KILLED CAPTAIN  
COMET...



**NO!**

**THWAM!**















"-- 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 IMAGINED  
IT MIGHT COME TO THIS?

DID YOU EVER  
CONSIDER THAT A WAR  
MIGHT BE FOR THE BEST?  
THAT PERHAPS HUMANITY'S  
ONLY CHANCE IS FOR THE  
SUPERHUMANS TO SWALLOW  
EACH OTHER?

DON'T  
GIVE ME  
THAT!



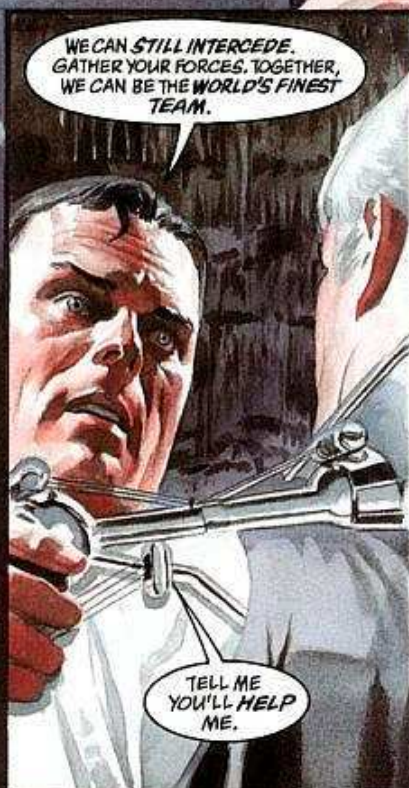


THE DELIBERATE TAKING  
OF HUMAN-- EVEN *SUPER-HUMAN*--  
LIFE GOES AGAINST EVERY BELIEF  
I HAVE--AND THAT YOU HAVE.

THAT'S THE *ONETHING*  
WE'VE ALWAYS HAD IN COMMON.  
IT'S WHAT *MADE* US WHAT WE  
ARE.



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



WE CAN STILL INTERCEDE.  
GATHER YOUR FORCES, TOGETHER,  
WE CAN BE THE *WORLD'S FINEST*  
TEAM.

TELL ME  
YOU'LL HELP  
ME.



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 OUT--

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



MARVEL'S HEADED  
FOR THE *GULAG*,  
CLARK.

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

WHAT DO  
YOU EXPECT  
ME TO DO  
AGAINST...



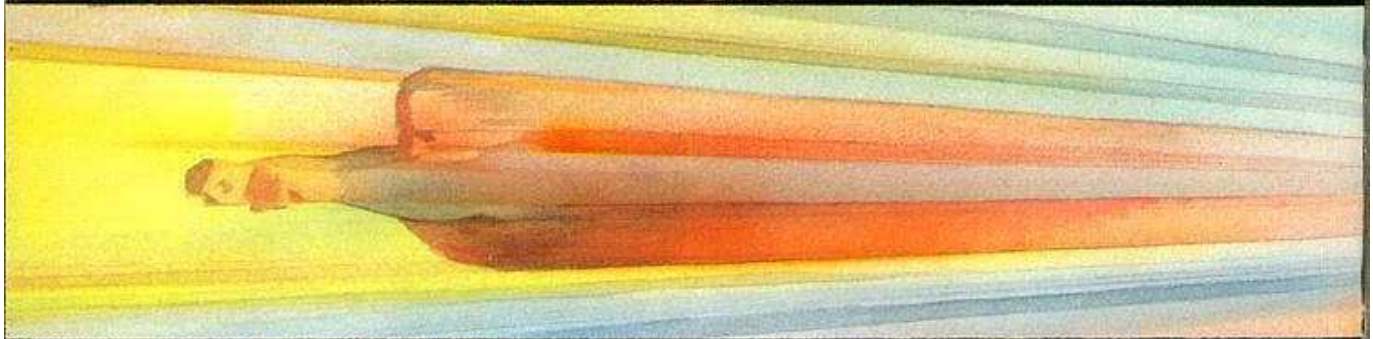
SO THAT'S  
WHAT THAT FEELS  
LIKE...



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 dawning  
horror in Wonder  
Woman's eyes.







I see Ragnarok  
at last unfold.

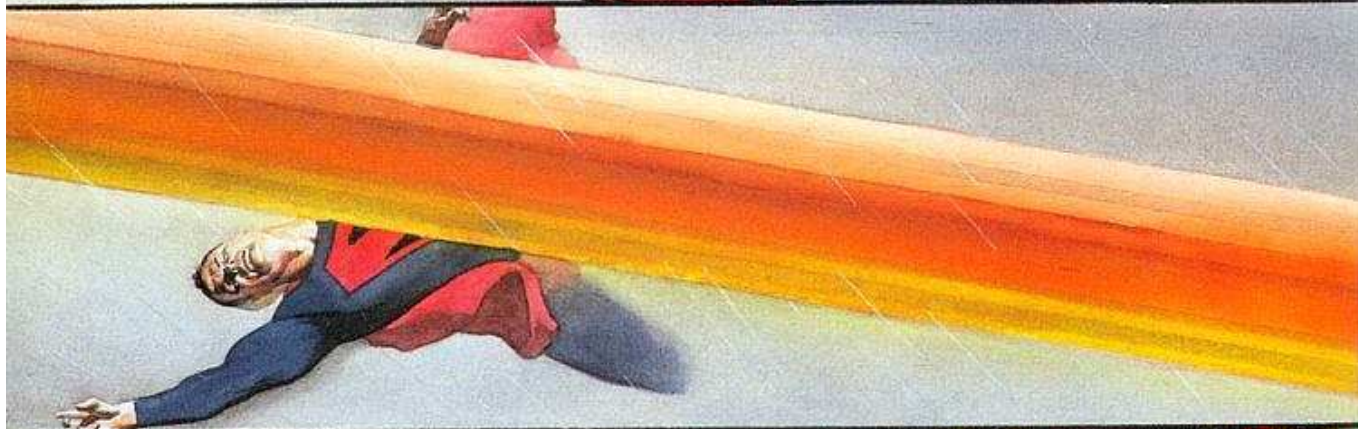




And worst  
of all ...

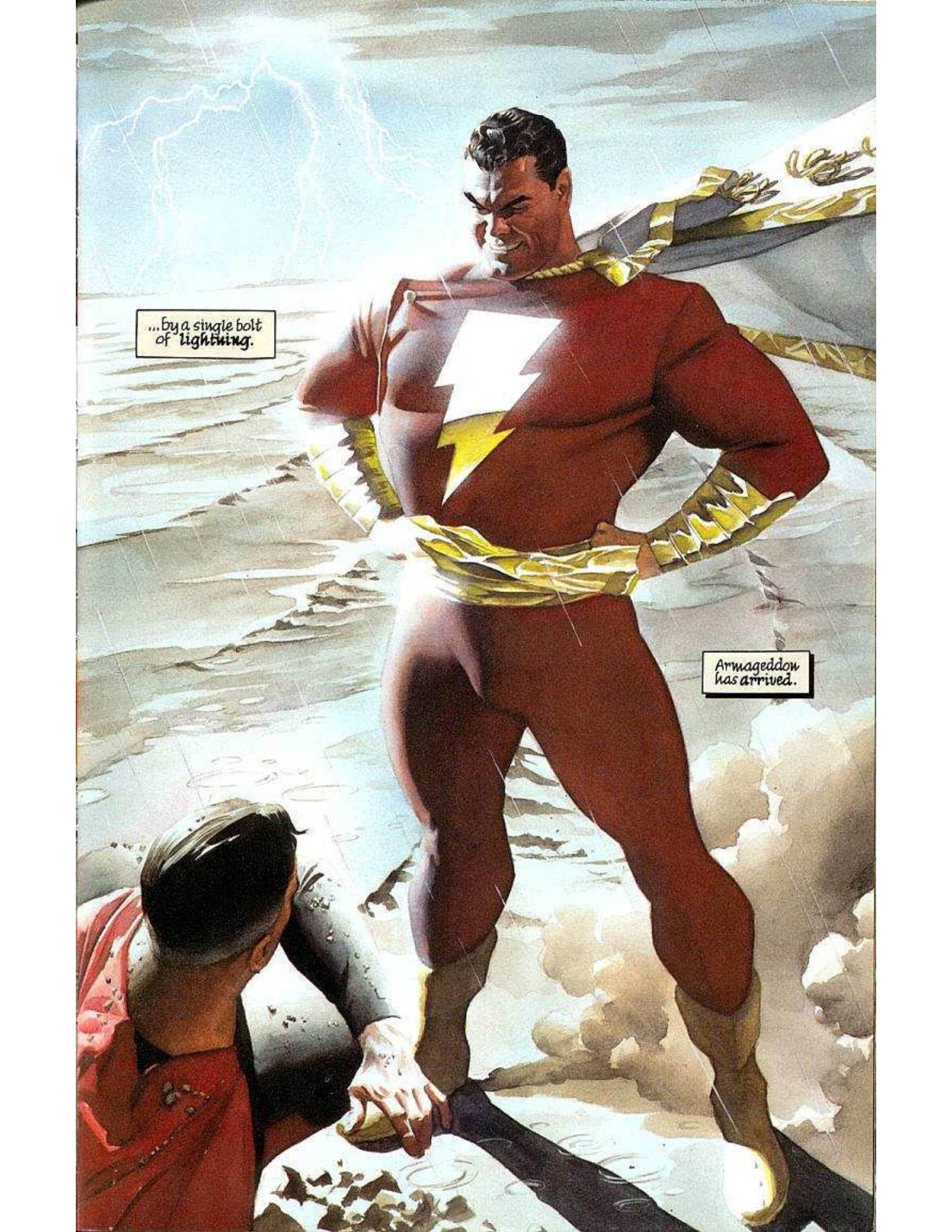


... I see the desperate  
hopes of the one man  
who might yet stop it...



... turned to ash  
and cinders...

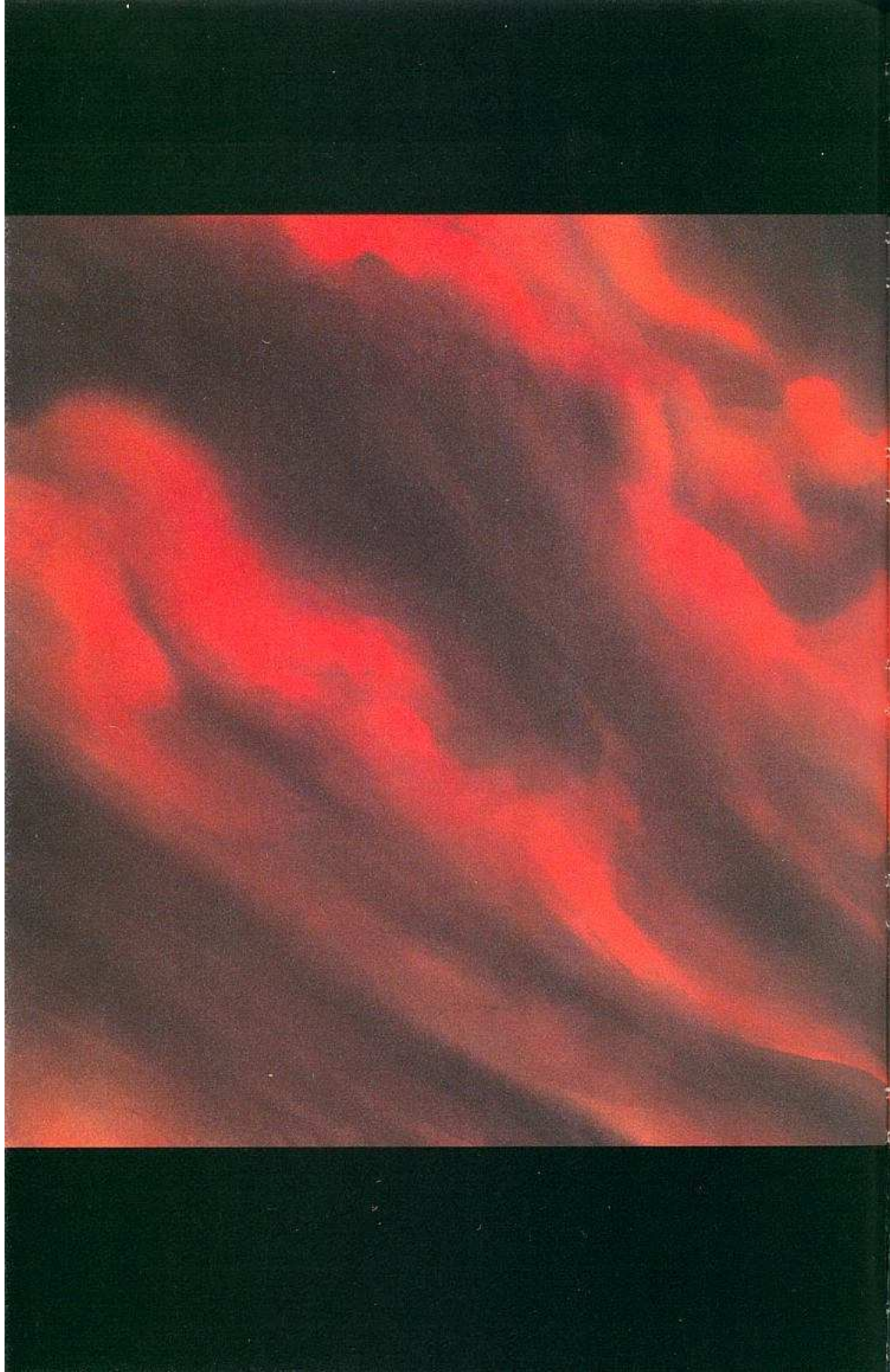




...by a single bolt  
of lightning.

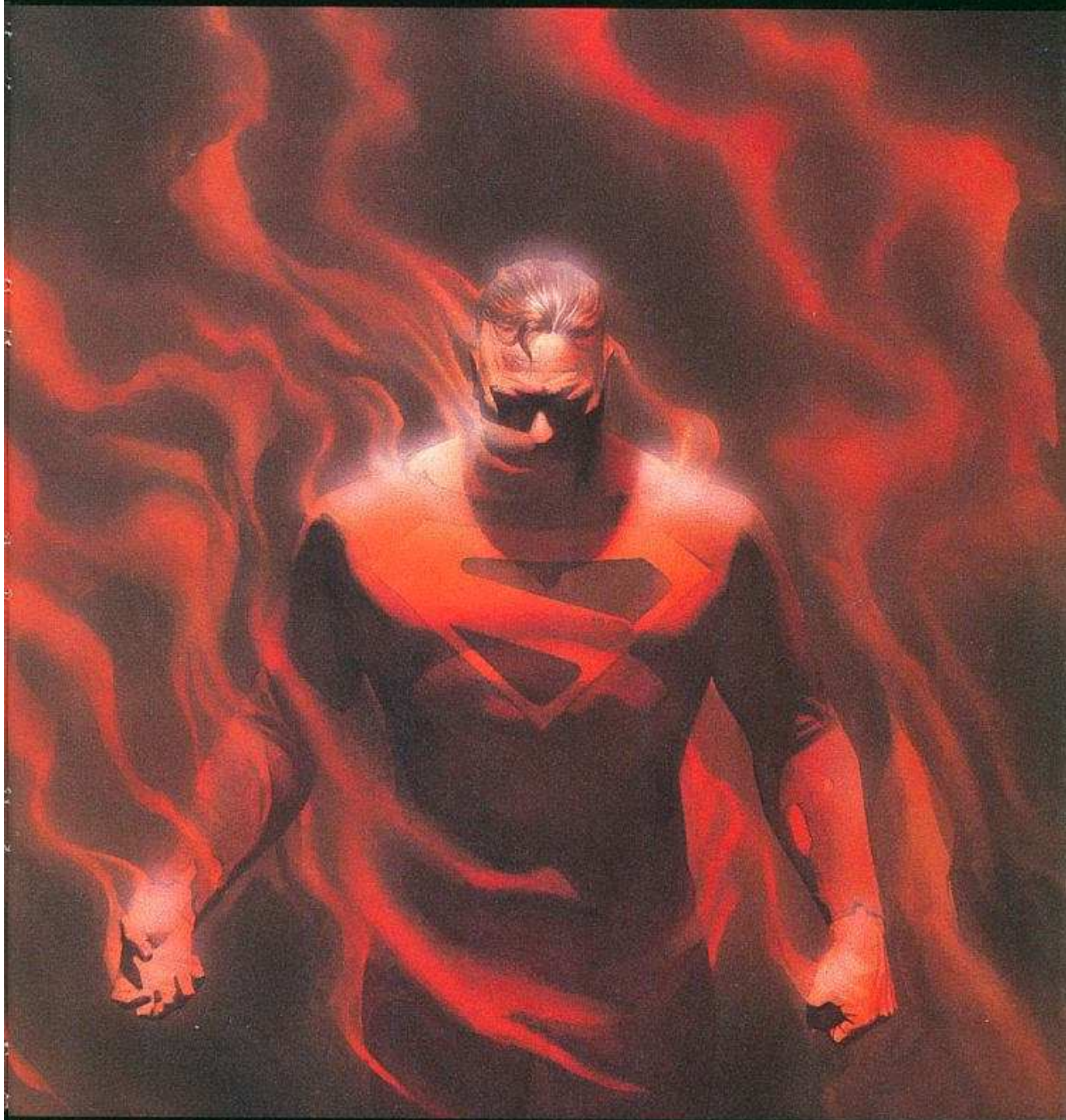
Armageddon  
has arrived.







# CHAPTER FOUR

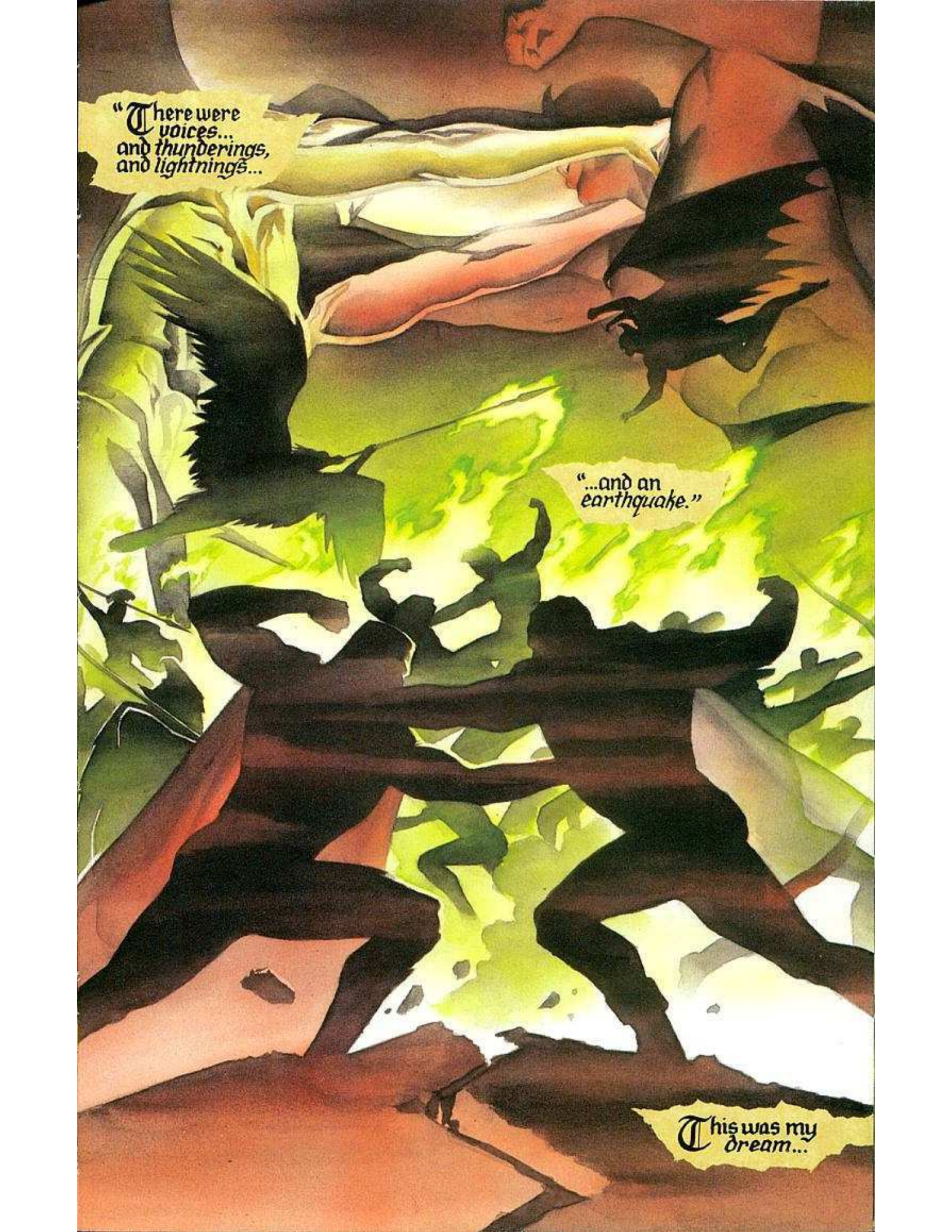


Never-Ending Battle









*"There were  
voices...  
and thunders,  
and lightnings..."*

*"...and an  
earthquake."*

*This was my  
dream..."*









...no more.





IT'S HAPPENING...  
JUST AS THE VISIONS  
FORETOLD!

SUPERMAN  
CAME TOO LATE!  
WAR HAS  
BEGIN!

DO  
SOMETHING!  
FOR THE LOVE  
OF GOD--

--MAKE IT  
STOP!!



I CANNOT.  
I CAN TAKE NO ACTION  
... NOT YET.







WHY NOT?  
WHAT IN GOD'S  
NAME HAS TO  
HAPPEN?

HOW MUCH  
TIME MUST  
PASS?




THERE WILL BE  
A RECKONING, NORMAN  
MCCAY, BE 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.

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.

DAMN IT,  
MARVEL! SNAP OUT  
OF IT! YOU CAN'T  
DO THIS!

TOO MUCH  
IS HAPPENING  
TOO FAST!

WE HAVE  
TO WORK  
TOGETHER--

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

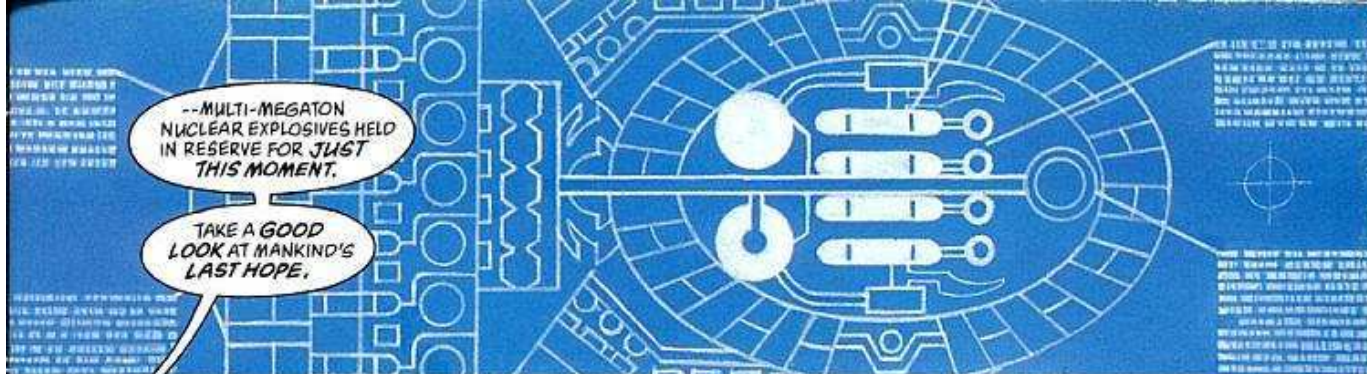
...making the Captain a  
soldier of chaos-- the one  
warrior who can counter  
Superman's every move...

...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 COUNTY,  
SHEATHED IN A FORCE-  
FIELD **UNREACHABLE**  
BY ALL CATALOGUED  
METAHUMAN 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.**

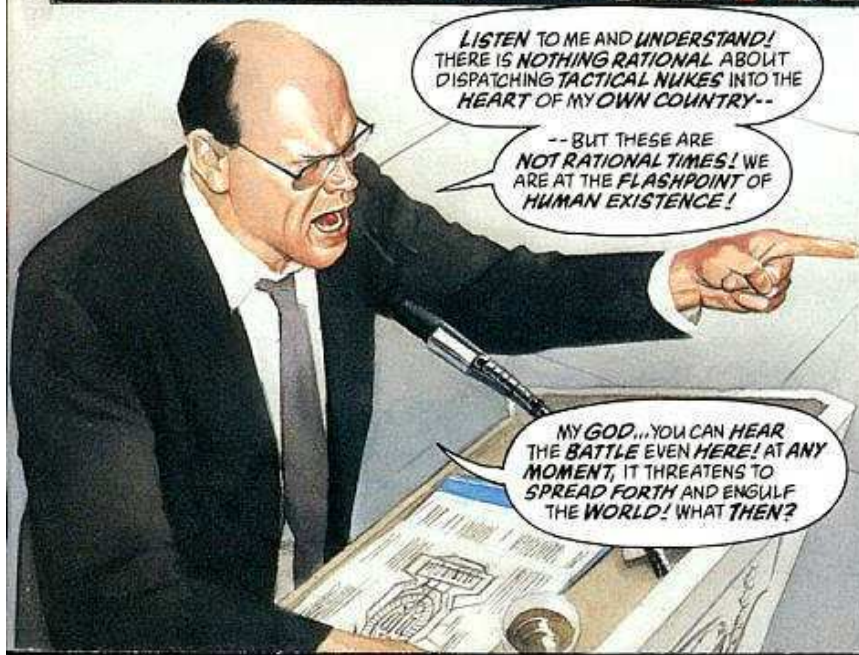


**THREE?  
UNACCEPTABLE!**

SURELY  
KILL CIVILIANS,  
TOO

RISK OF  
INFLAMING

**INSIST  
ON SOME  
OTHER WAY  
OF**



**LISTEN TO ME AND UNDERSTAND!**  
THERE IS **NOTHING RATIONAL** ABOUT  
DISPATCHING TACTICAL NUKES INTO THE  
HEART OF MY 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 ENGULF  
THE WORLD! WHAT THEN?



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.

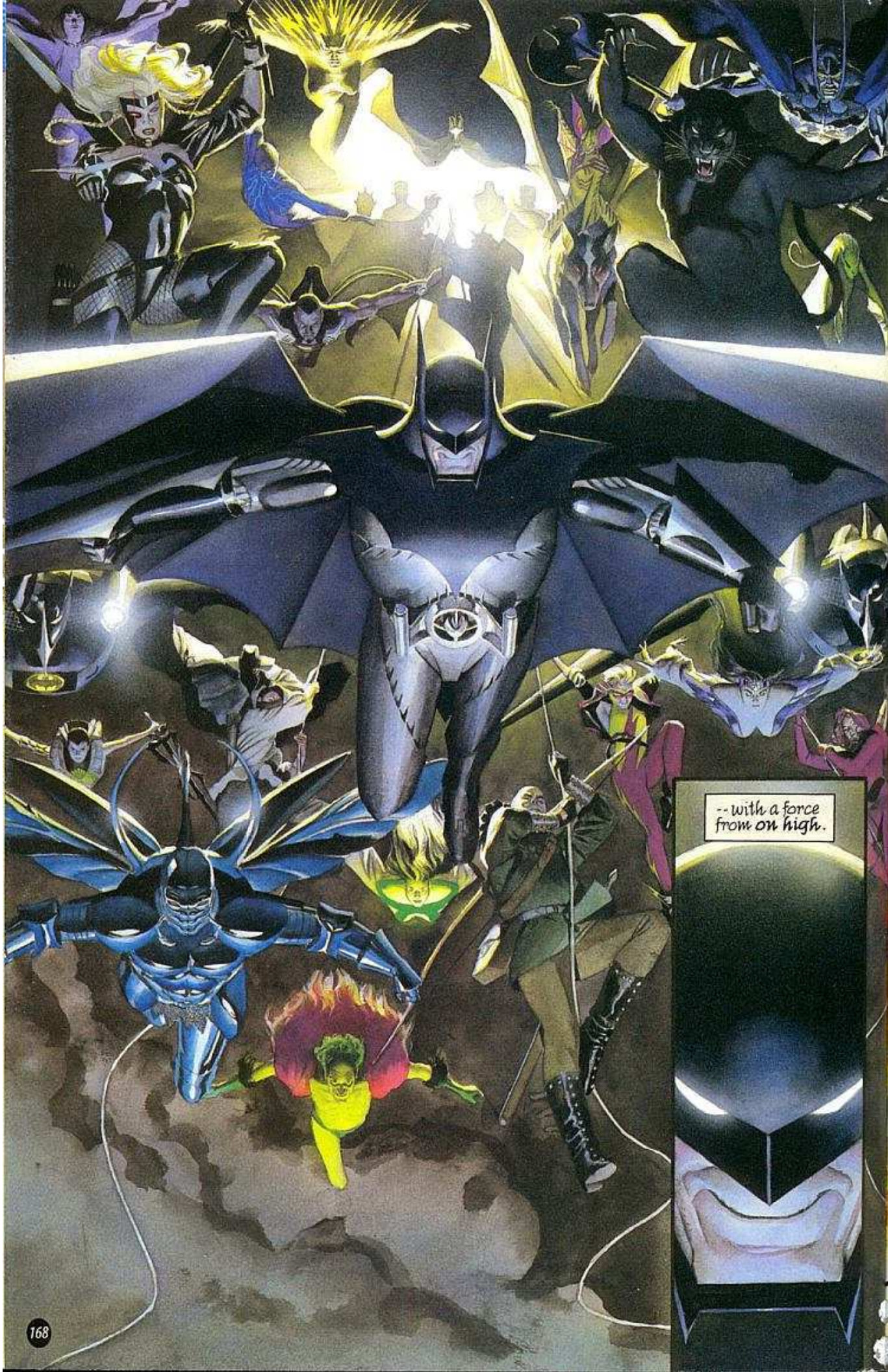
Any instant now, there will be fatalities--




-- and no way to turn back.

With Superman deadlocked, their only prayer of deliverance rests--












Batman's legion  
soars in like a  
silent cavalry.




Man or machine, each  
agent knows his mission.



Stem the loss  
of life.

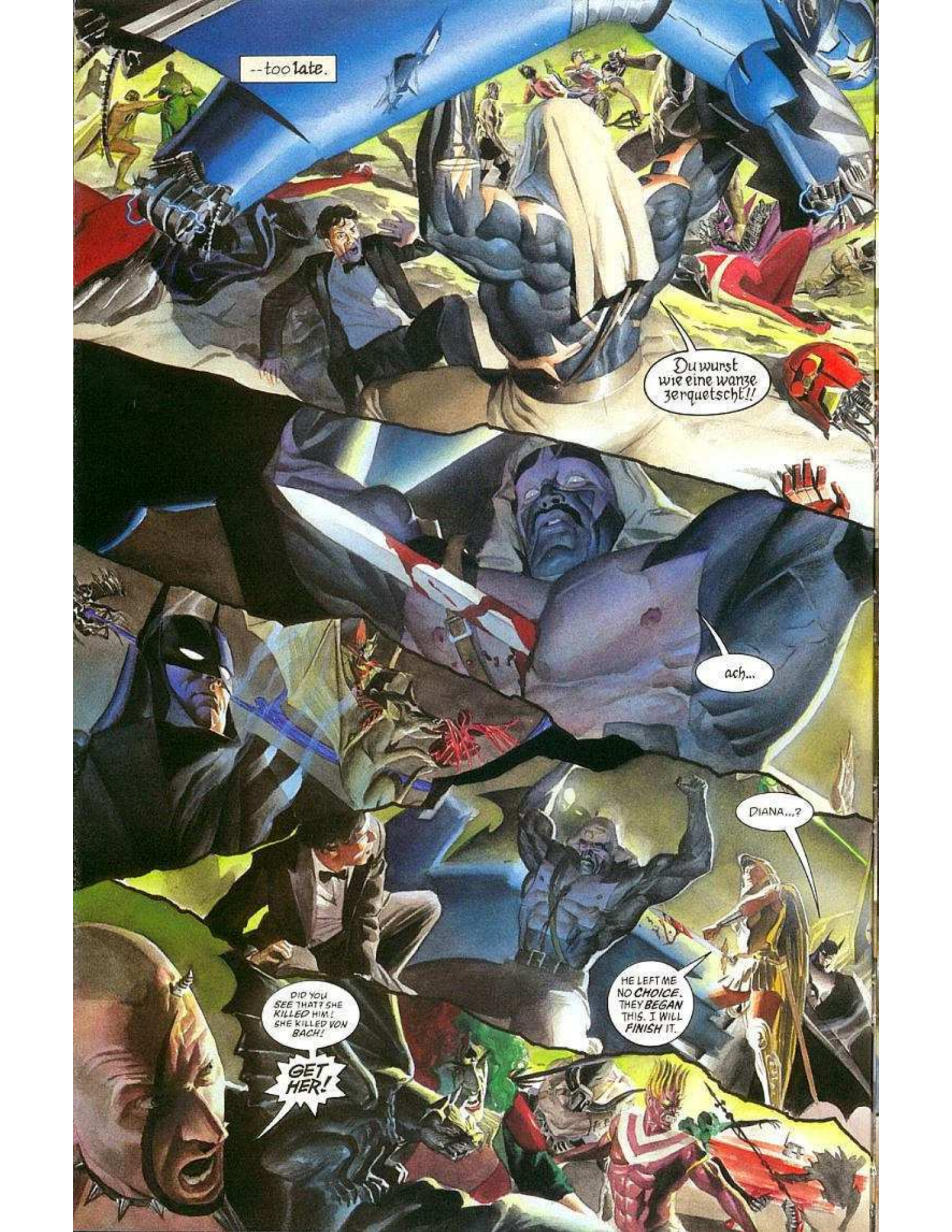


Prevent the riot  
while there's still time  
to exert control.



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





--too late.

Du wurdest  
wie eine Wanze  
zerquetscht!!

ach...

DIANA...?

DID YOU  
SEE THAT? SHE  
KILLED HIM!  
SHE KILLED VON  
BACH!

**GET  
HER!**

HE LEFT ME  
NO CHOICE.  
THEY BEGAN  
THIS. I WILL  
FINISH IT.





AND WE WILL FINISH  
IT WITHOUT YOU, BRUCE!  
YOUR PEOPLE ARE OUT  
OF THEIR LEAGUE!

WHY? BECAUSE  
WE'RE HERE TO **SAVE**  
LIVES RATHER THAN  
**TAKE THEM?**

WE'RE HERE TO  
**FORCE PEACE!** WE'RE  
LEFT WITH **NO CHOICE!**  
IF YOU STAND IN THE  
WAY-- I WILL RE-  
MOVE YOU!

DON'T TELL ME  
YOU STILL **SUBSCRIBE**  
TO THAT PARADOX.

"FORCE PEACE"  
THE **AMAZON**  
TENET.

"SPREAD LOVE AND  
UNDERSTANDING... BUT  
DON'T BE AFRAID TO  
**BLOODY YOUR KNUCKLES**  
DOING IT."

I'VE HEARD **RUMORS**  
THAT THE **AMAZONS** **RELIEVED**  
YOU OF YOUR **DUTIES** AND  
**HERITAGE** FOR NOT BEING  
STRIDENT ENOUGH.


FACE  
THE **TRUTH**,  
DIANA...

...YOU WON'T WIN  
BACK YOUR ROYAL  
STATION BY **OVER-**  
COMPENSATING.

YOU  
ARISTOCRATIC  
**BASTARD.**

HOW DARE YOU  
**CONDEMN ME?**





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  
PRECIOUS WISDOM!

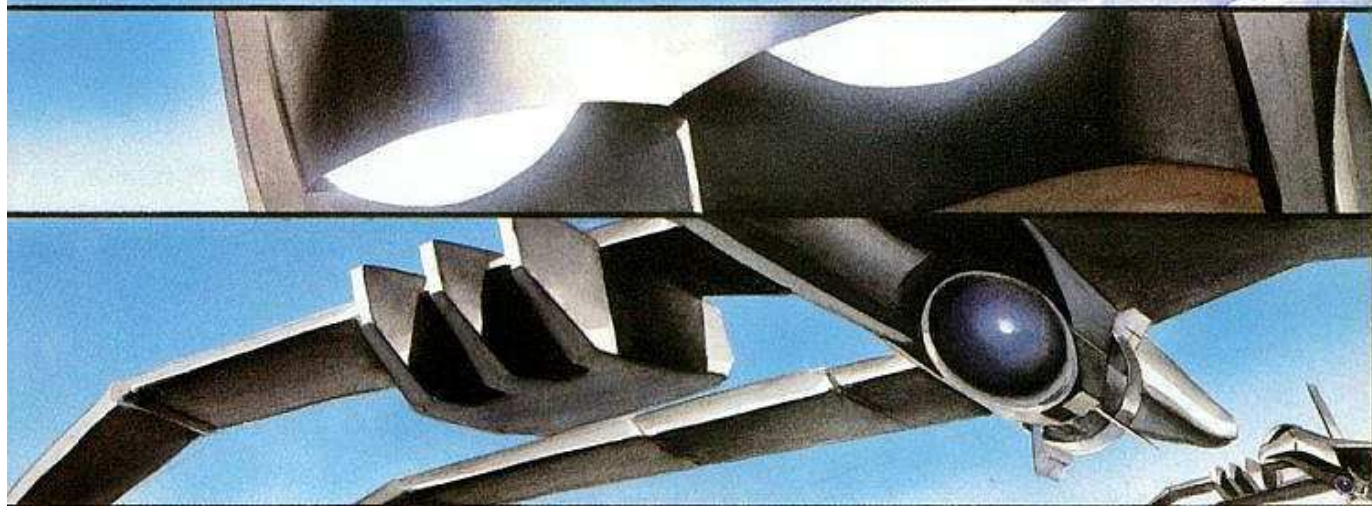
WELL, IT'S  
TOO LATE FOR  
THAT, BRUCE!



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! HOW  
CAN YOU DO THIS?  
HOW?

LOOK AT THE  
HORROR YOU'VE  
LET LOOSE!

DAMN IT--  
SAY SOMETHING FOR  
YOURSELF!

SHAZAM!

BOOM!

SHAZAM.





BOOM!



BOOM!



SHAZAM.

SHAZAM.





OPEN YOUR EYES,  
DIANA. YOUR ANSWER  
FLIES ON METAL  
WINGS.

THOSE ARE **NUCLEAR  
CARRIERS...** THE ULTIMATE  
WARBRINGERS.

OUR WAR IS NOT  
ONE ACT OF VIOLENCE...AT  
THE COST OF SOME LIVES.

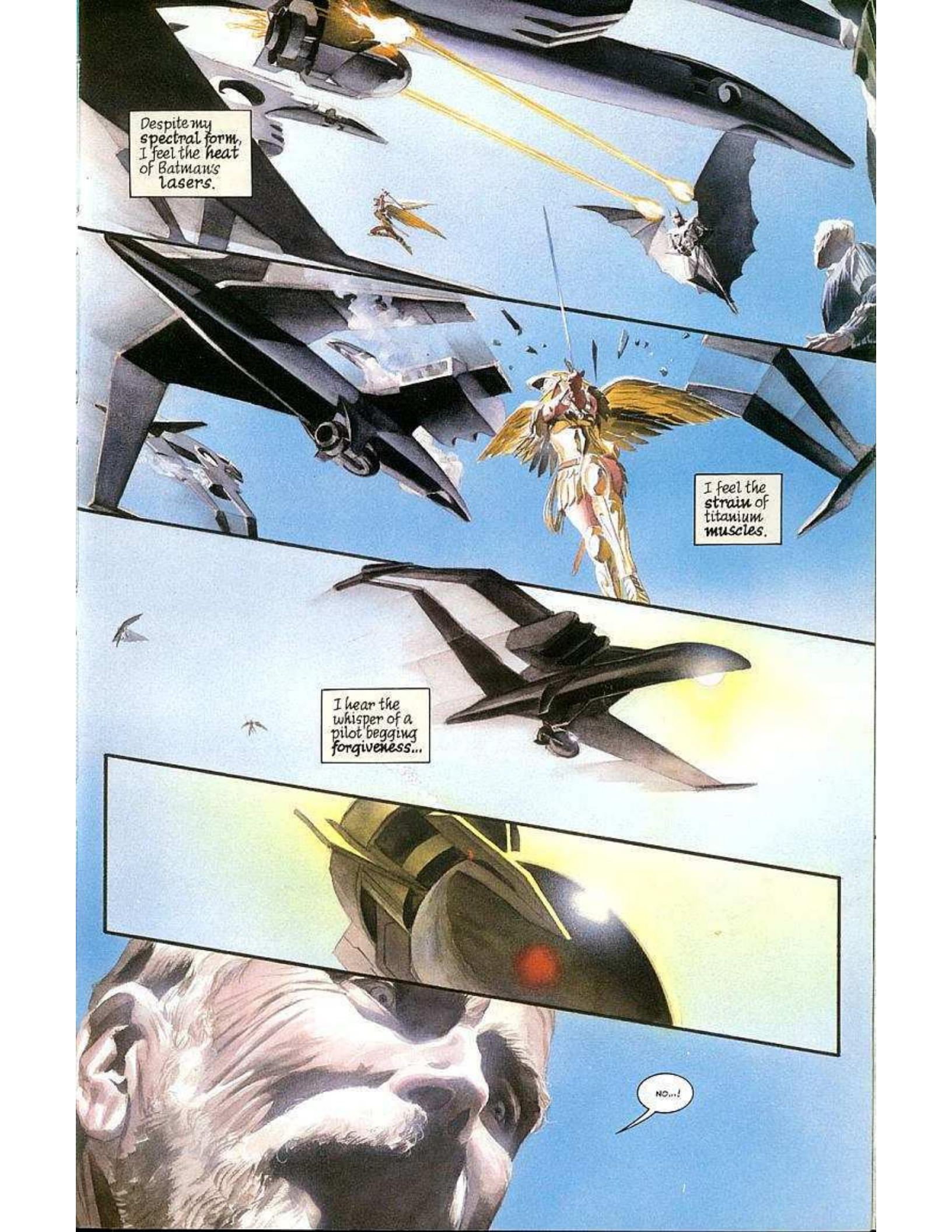
OUR WAR ENDS IN  
EXTINCTION.

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...

NO!!!



...over the sound of  
distant thunder.

BOOM!

ENOUGH...!

SHAZAM!


DOOM!



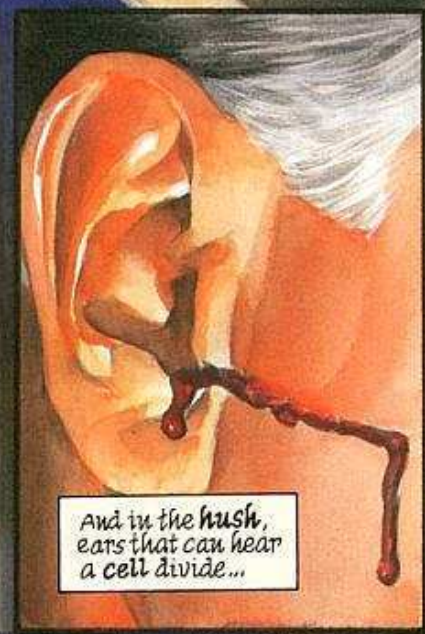


ENOUGH!


For one frozen instant, the storm clears.




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



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



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



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?





JUDGMENT  
HAS COME,  
NORMAN MCCRY.  
THE HOUR  
TOLLS.

OUR  
ENTIRE JOURNEY  
HAS BROUGHT US  
TO THIS MOMENT.

BUT--THE  
BOMB!

THE  
BOMB--

-- WILL DE-  
TERMINE THE  
FATE OF THE  
WORLD.

IF IT DROPS, THE  
SUPERHUMANS WILL  
SURELY DIE-- BUT  
HUMANITY WILL BE  
SPARED THEIR  
VIOLENCE.

IF NOT, THEY  
WILL LIVE ON-- TO  
FIGHT A BATTLE  
THAT WILL, IN TIME,  
SWALLOW THE  
EARTH.

IN EITHER  
CASE, WE FACE THE  
EVIL OF GENOCIDE.  
AND MY TASK IS TO  
FINISH THOSE  
RESPONSIBLE  
FOR EVIL.

BUT WHO SHALL BE  
HELD ACCOUNTABLE?  
WHOSE SIN IS THIS?  
THE HUMANS'... OR THE  
SUPERHUMANS'?

TELL ME,  
NORMAN.

JUDGE.

ME...?





YOURS IS  
THE SOUL THAT  
GUIDES ME.



JUDGE.

CAREFULLY.

HOW CAN  
I...?

THERE IS NO  
"EVIL" HERE!  
THERE IS TRAGEDY  
AND BEDLAM  
AND--



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



I--

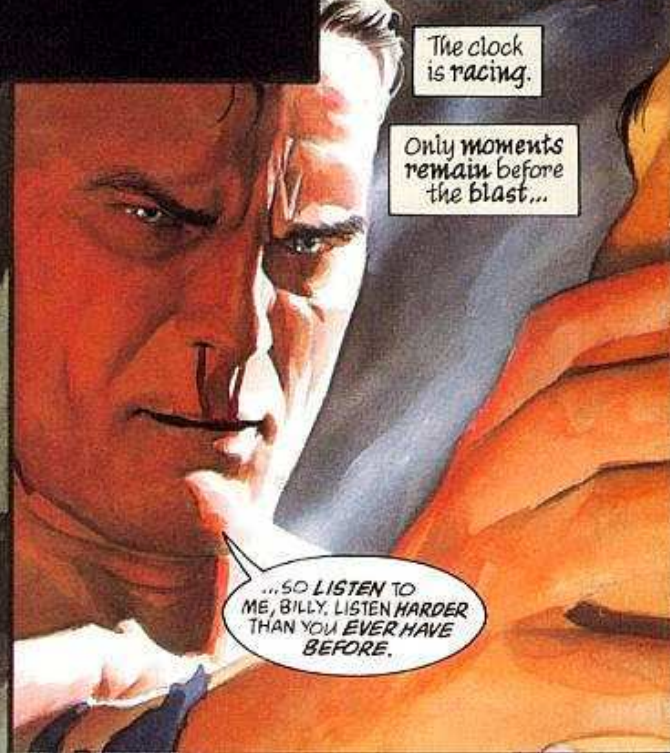
--I DON'T  
KNOW WHAT TO  
DO!

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

...and Batson  
whimpers.

The clock  
is racing.

Only moments  
remain before  
the blast...



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





LOOK AROUND  
US. LOOK WHAT WE'VE  
COME TO.

THERE'S A BOMB  
FALLING. EITHER IT  
KILLS US--



--OR WE RUN  
RAMPANT  
ACROSS  
THE GLOBE.



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.

Superhumans or  
mankind...one  
will pay the ulti-  
mate price.



AND THAT  
DECISION...

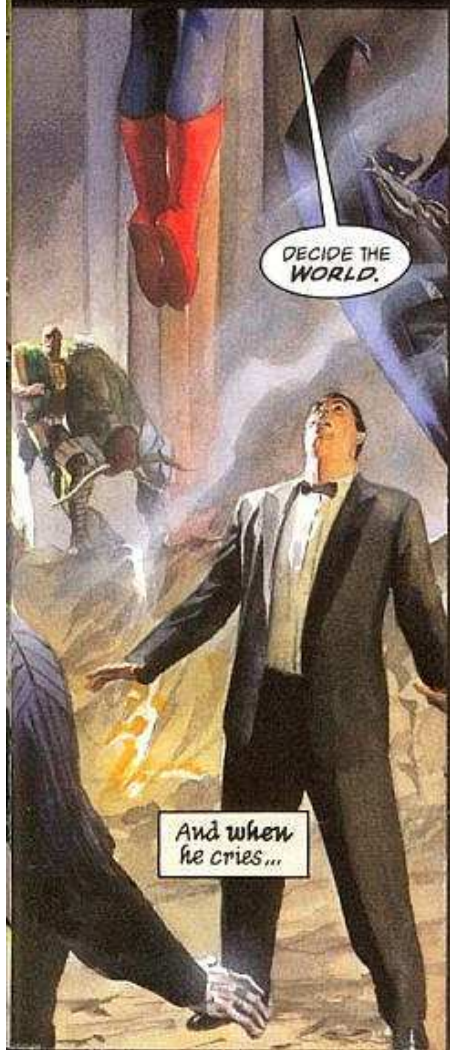
...is not for me to  
make. I'm not a  
god...

...I'M NOT  
A MAN.



BUT YOU,  
BILLY... YOU'RE  
BOTH.

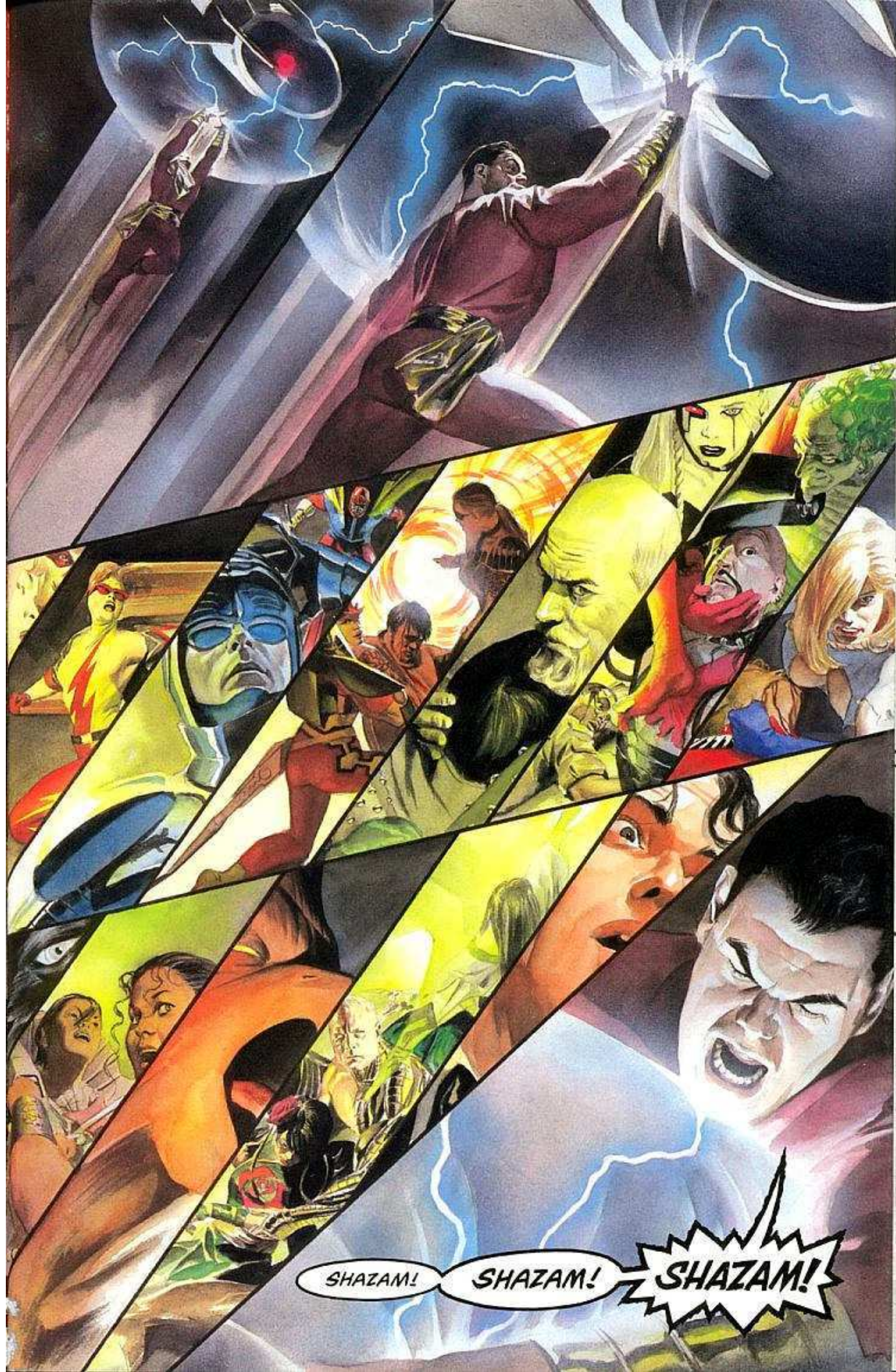












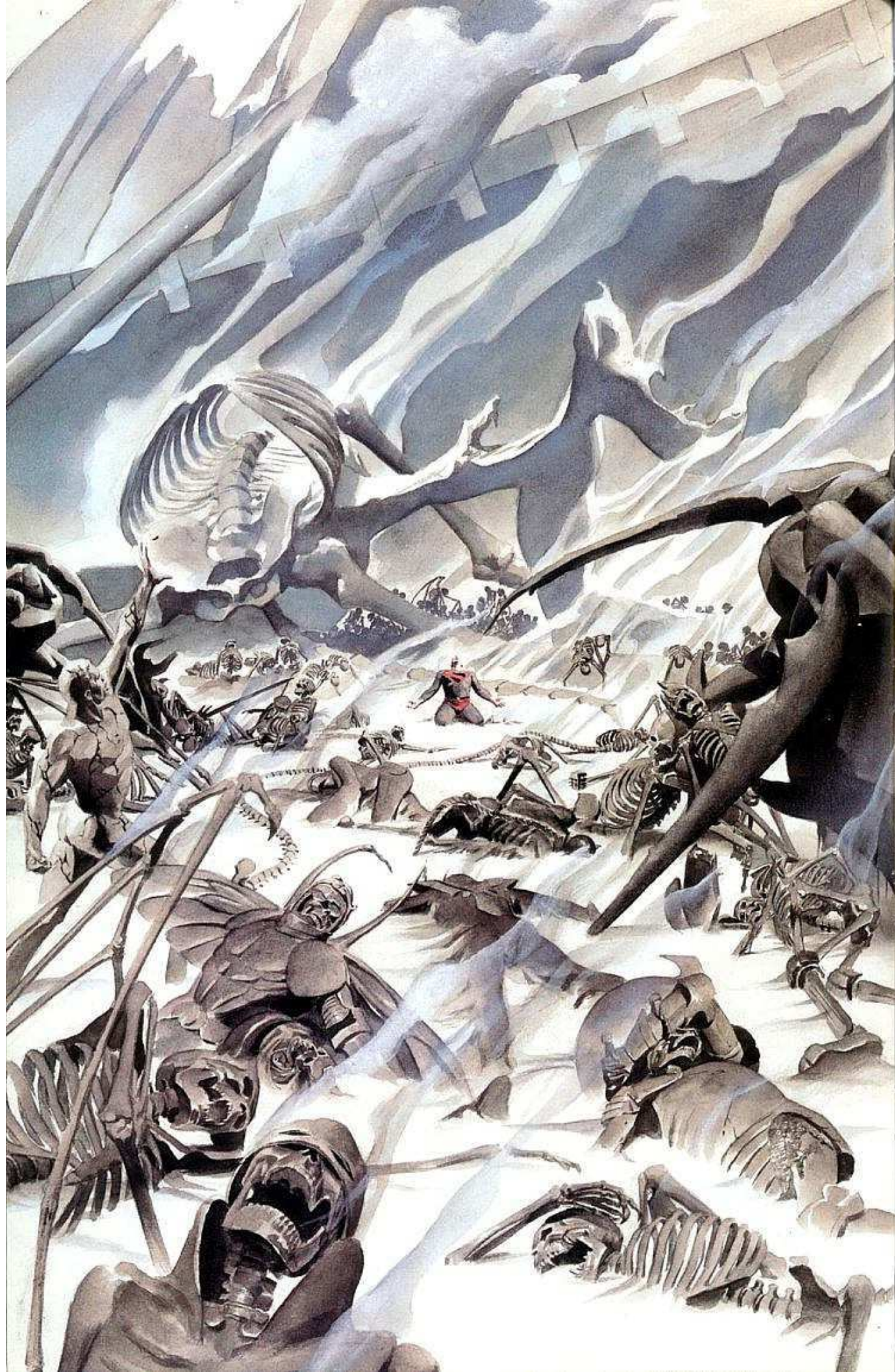
















WHERE...?

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.

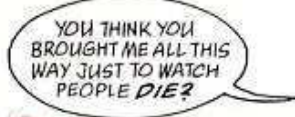
FAREWELL, NORMAN MCCAY.



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 U.N.  
...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 IS EVIL."



GOD IN  
HEAVEN--RUN!  
HE'S GONE  
BERSERK!



LOOK  
OUT!

THE **DOORS!**  
HE'S **WELDED** THE  
**DOORS!**

**COREZ!**  
COREZ POUR VOS  
VIES!

NANDIYAN NA ANG  
SIVA ULO! PAPTAYIN  
NIYA ULO!

ΘΕΕ ΜΟΥ!  
ΘΑ ΜΑΣ ΣΚΟΤΩΚΕΙ  
ΟΛΟΥΣ!

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 FREE  
A WRATH THAT WOULD  
COWER **SATAN** HIM-  
SELF.

HOW CAN  
ANY MAN POSSIBLY  
CALM THE **FURY** HE  
FEELS TOWARDS HIS  
PERSECTORS.

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 YOUR-  
SELF FOR CAPTAIN MARVEL  
...FOR MAGOG 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.



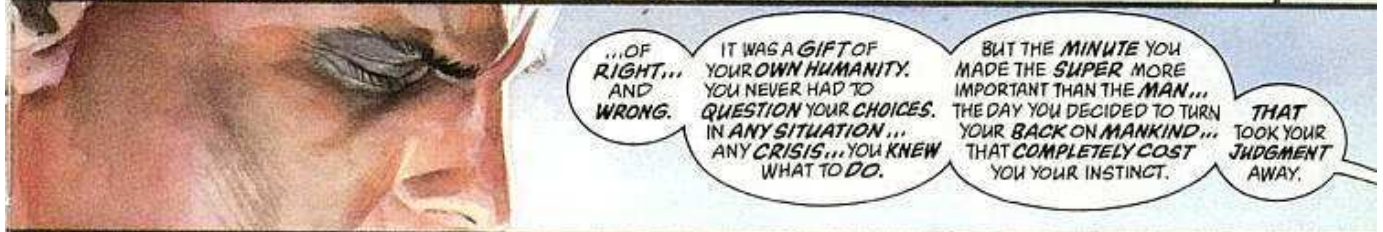
THEY WON'T  
FORGIVE YOU FOR  
THIS, CLARK.



FORGIVE  
YOURSELF.















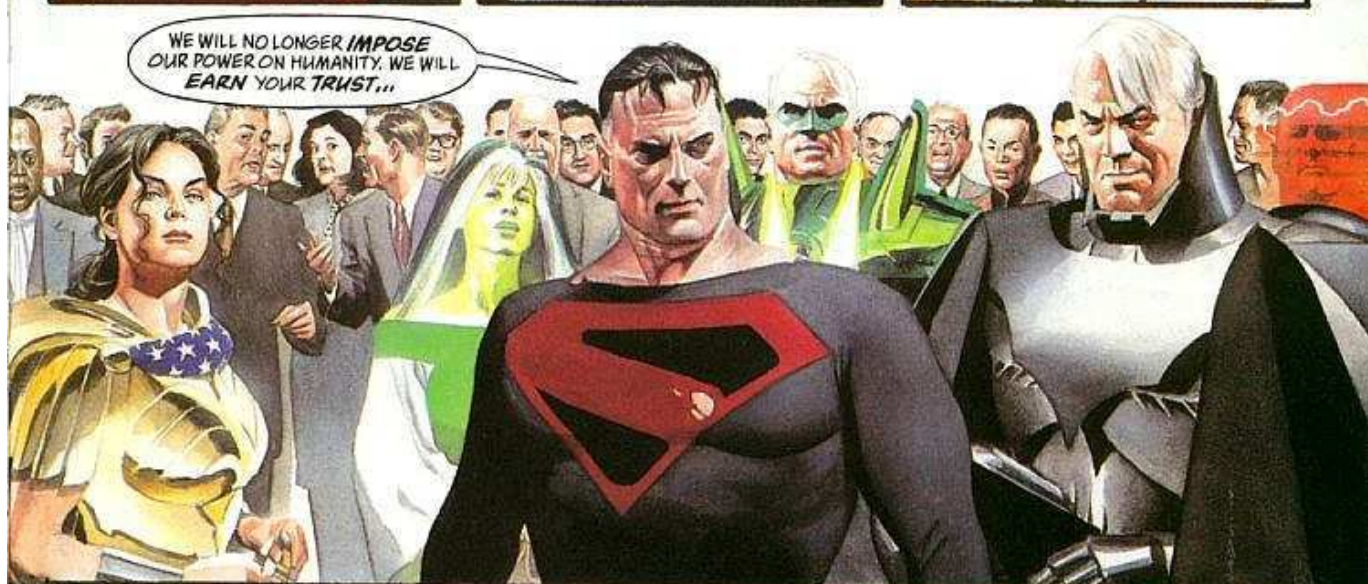
THE PROBLEMS WE FACE  
STILL EXIST, WE'RE NOT GOING  
TO SOLVE THEM FOR YOU...



...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...



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



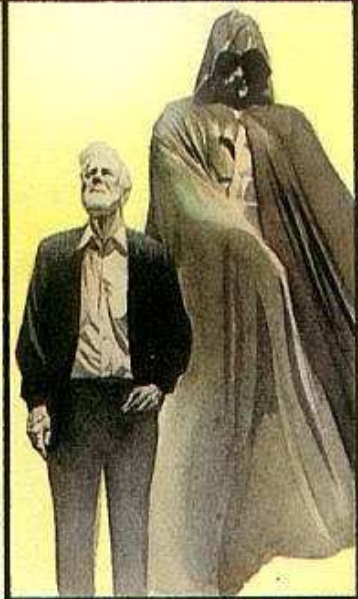
I ASKED HIM TO  
CHOOSE BETWEEN HUMANS  
AND SUPERHUMANS. BUT HE  
ALONE KNEW THAT WAS A  
FALSE DIVISION...

...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.









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  
MISTAKES.

LET THEM  
REST IN PEACE,  
KAL.

THEY'LL ONLY  
HAUNT YOU IF  
YOU FORGET WHAT  
THEY TAUGHT  
YOU.



SPEAKING  
OF WHICH...

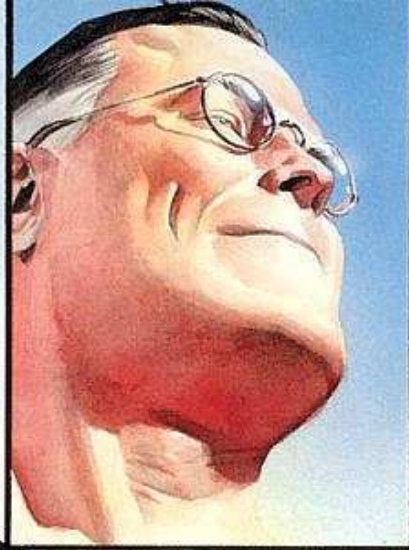
WHAT'S  
THIS?

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 WITNESSED, 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?

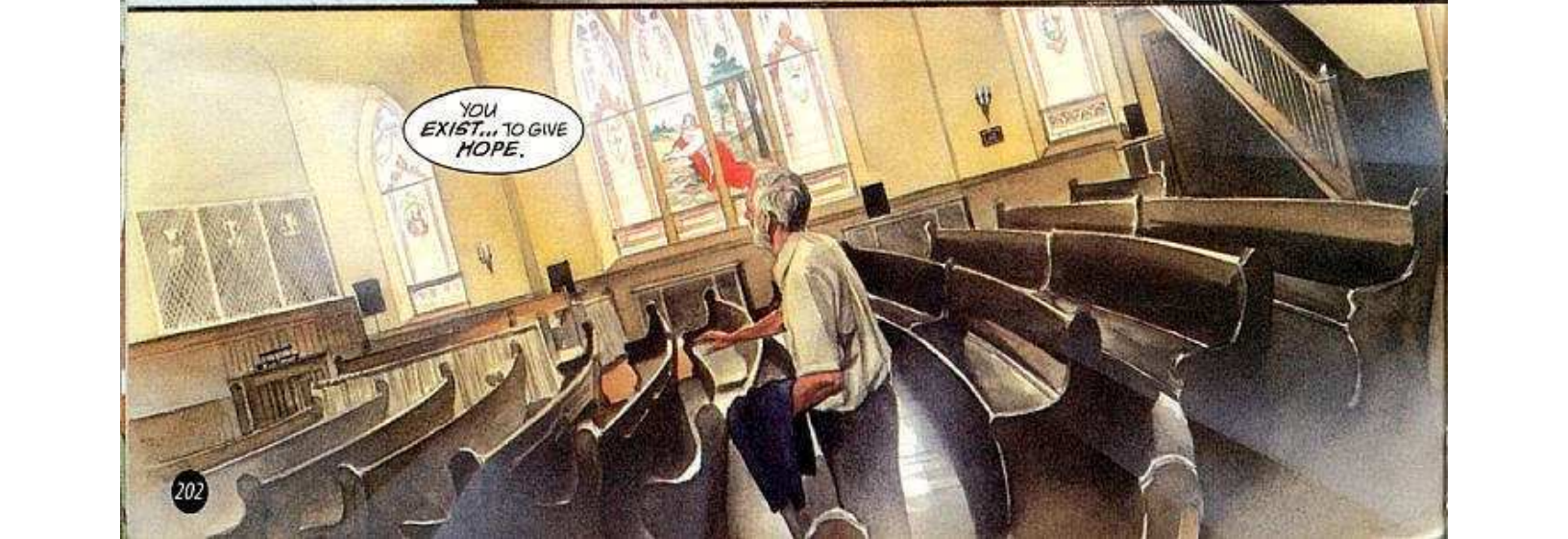


AN EXCELLENT QUESTION.



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.



That the  
future...

...like so much else...

...like so much else...

# THE REVELATION TO JOHN

...of Jesus  
God gave  
serv-

ga," says the Lord God  
who was and who  
Almighty.  
91 John, your  
with you in Jesus  
I am an

VELATION TO JOHN

... is open to interpretation.

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

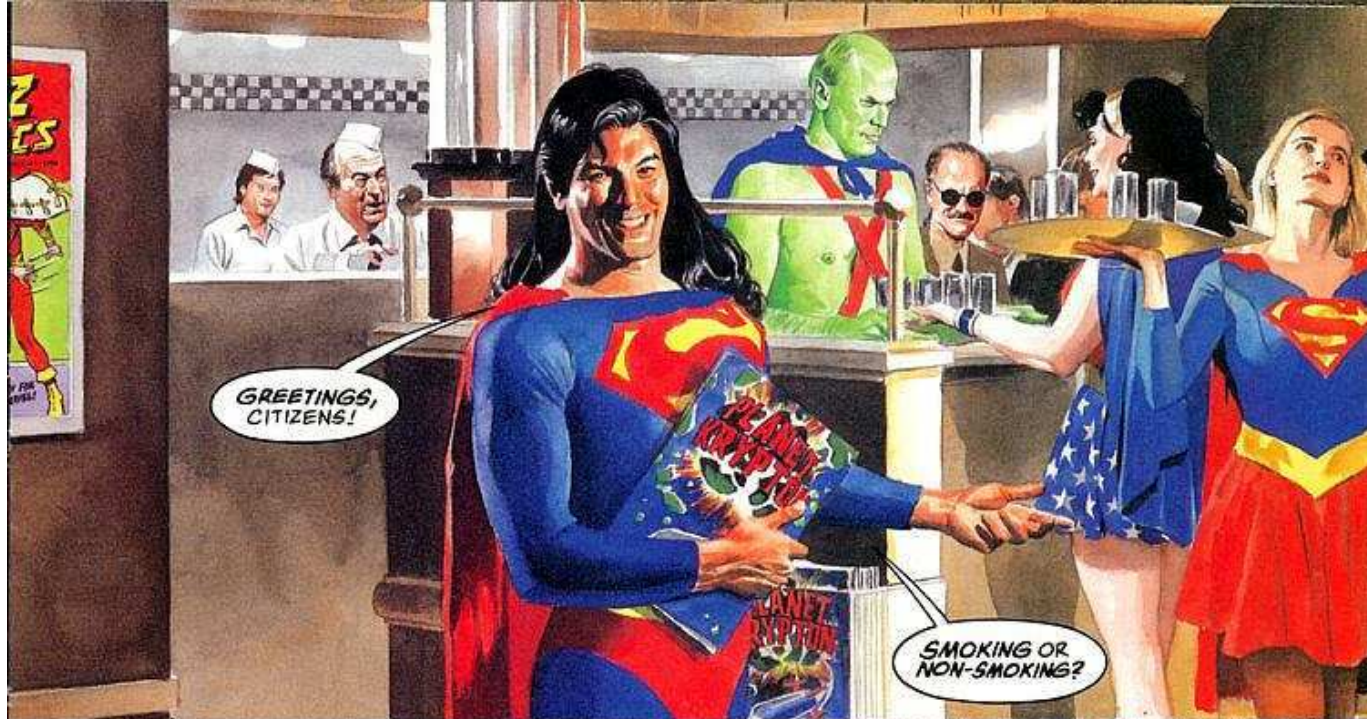
GRACE BE  
WITH YOU  
ALL.

AMEN



**ONE YEAR LATER...**





GREETINGS, CITIZENS!

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 HE?

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 HOARD THE MOMENT?





IT'S AWFULLY CROWDED, YOU'RE SURE WE WON'T BE RECOGNIZED?

HARDLY LIKELY. IN THE FIRST PLACE, YOU WROTE THE BOOK ON SECRET IDENTITIES...



...AND IN THE SECOND PLACE, AMIDST ALL THIS TAWDRY BRIC-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.

ME. HOW DO YOU DO THAT?



IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU UNDER BRIGHTER CIRCUMSTANCES, BRUCE. HOW ARE THE BOYS?

DICK'S HEADED FOR A FULL RECOVERY. IB'N...WELL...

...DICK'S DAUGHTER IS... COUNSELLING HIM. MAYBE HE'LL TURN AROUND YET... IF HE CAN SHED THE LESSONS OF THE LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS.



THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE RAISED BY AN ISOLATED SOCIETY OF ZEALOTS. YOU END UP A LITTLE BRAIN-WASHED.

YOU DON'T SAY.



MAY I BRING YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK?

WATER'S FINE.

COFFEE.

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...?



...USING THE KETCHUP? WE'VE RUN OUT.

AH.

BE MY GUEST.



SO I GATHER FROM YOUR COMMUNIQUE WE HAVE BUSINESS?

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.



TO PAST FRIENDS.

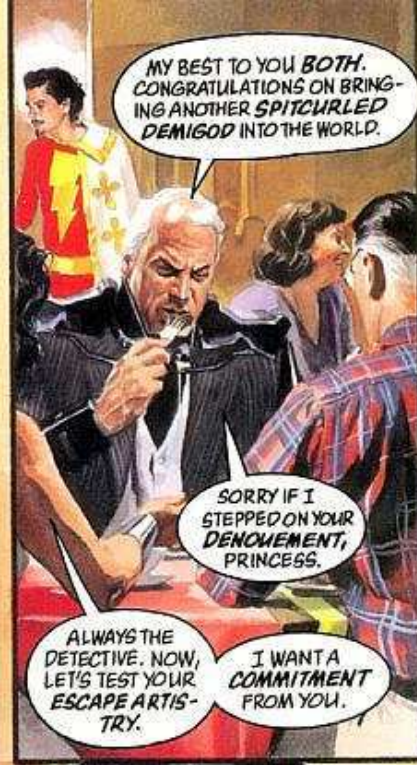




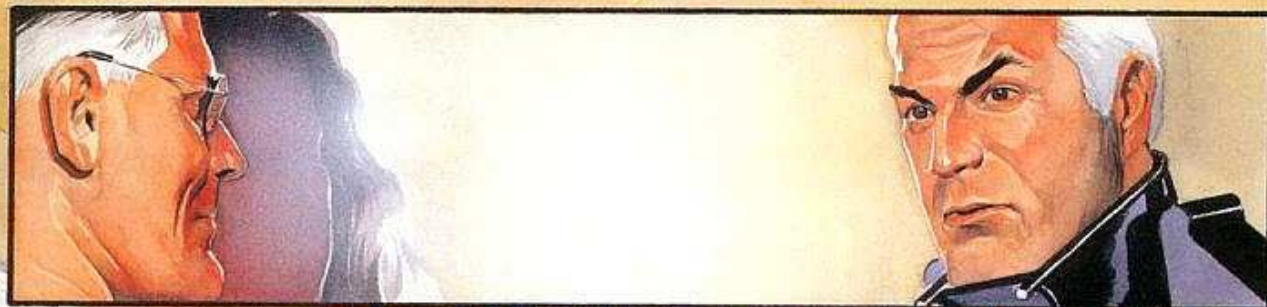


















# THY KINGDOM

## **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."

**SUPERMAN**

**BY CRAIG SHUTT**



# COMES

## 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-opts this character to help him interpret the story's events from a human perspective. All of the action is seen from his viewpoint, as *Marvels* 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 swash-buckling 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 cagily, "She seems to have a strong connection to Wally West's Kid Flash look."



## GREEN LANTERN ▲

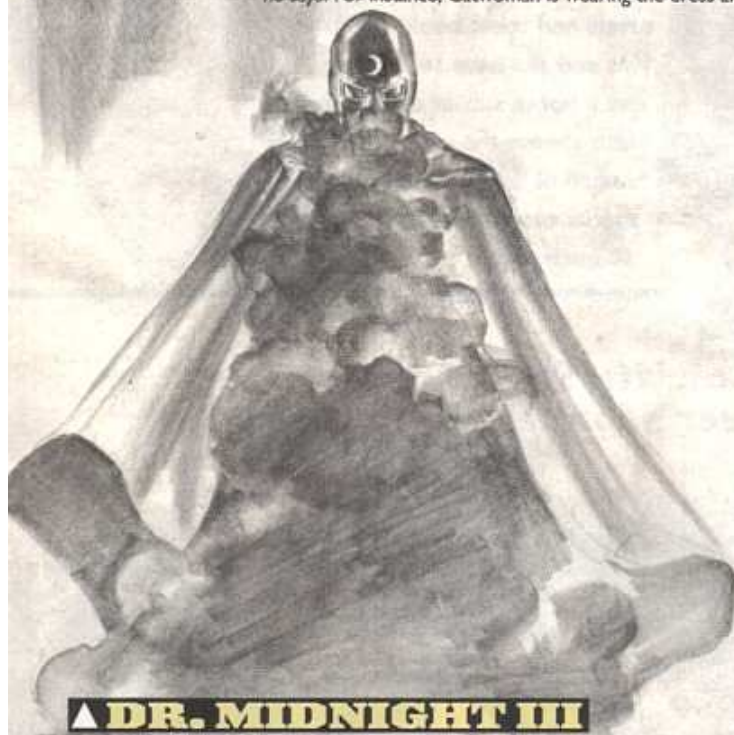
Ross won't reveal which Lantern is under the mask, but readers will ultimately figure it out, he says. (He promises it isn't Guy Gardner.) The look combines primarily the Golden Age version and Hal Jordan's Parallax style. "My goal was to create a design that wouldn't offend Martin Nodell [creator of 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 aloof 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 looks 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 beneath. 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. **W**

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.

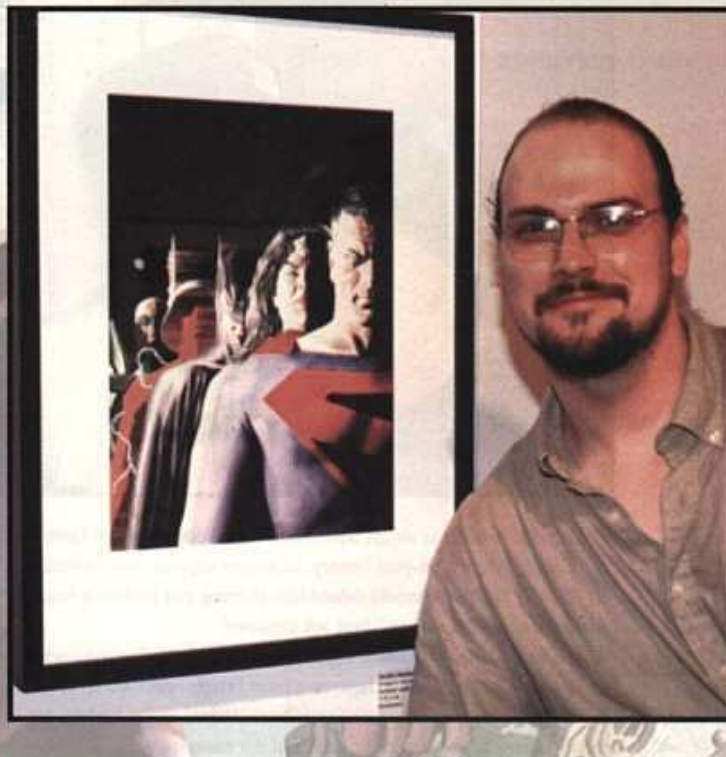


## ▲ RED TORNADO

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 flared 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.



# KING FOR A DAY



"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

W

## Gallery exhibit allows Alex Ross to put his *Kingdom* on display





At right: Ross poses next to the *Wizard* #57 cover, a piece priced at \$3,500  
Below: The exhibit's display case



Original art from the first issue



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





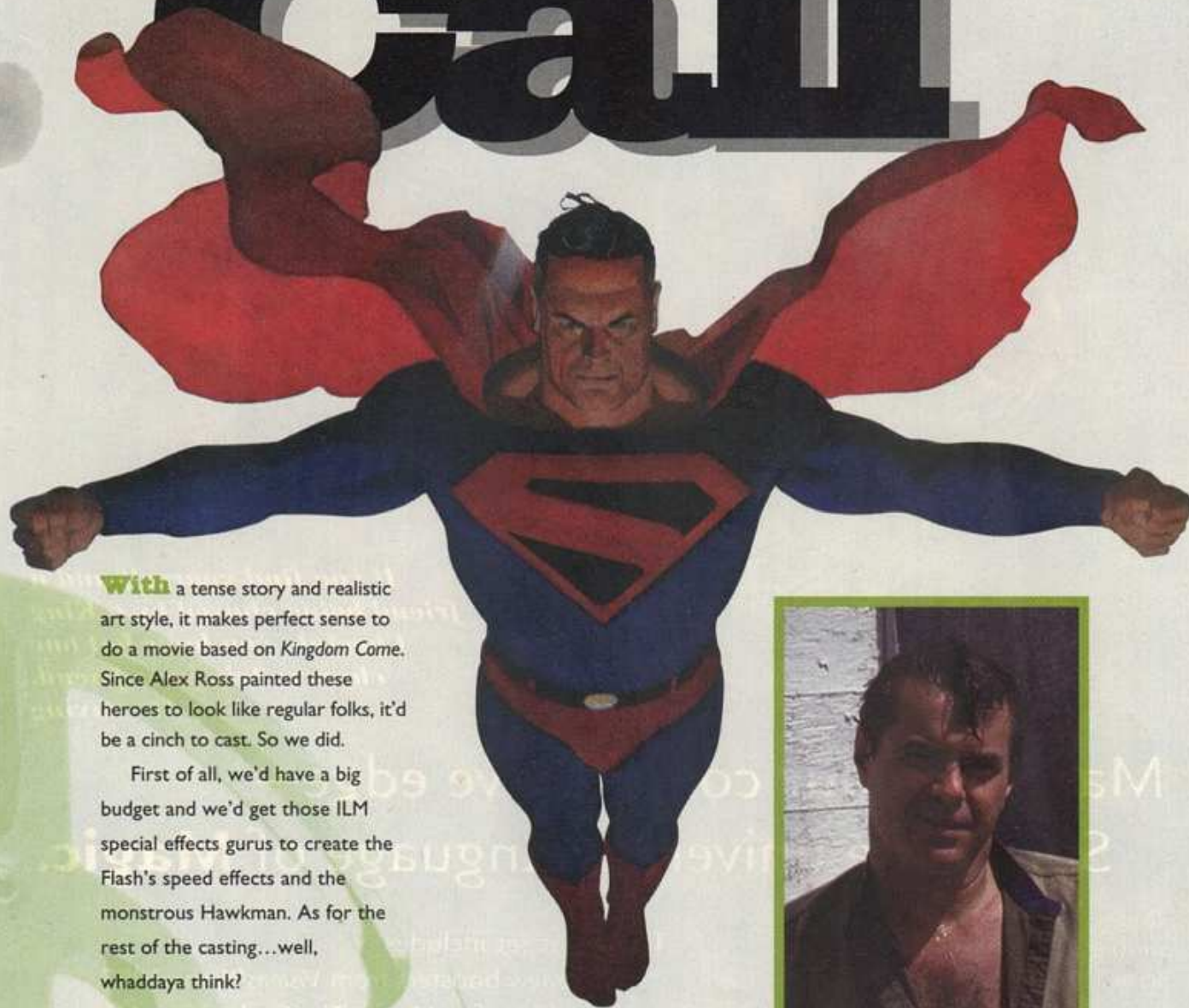


**KINGDOM COME**



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**

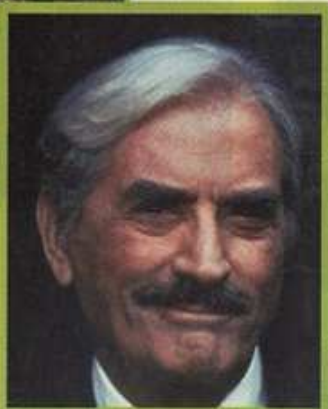
All photos: Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.





### BATMAN

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



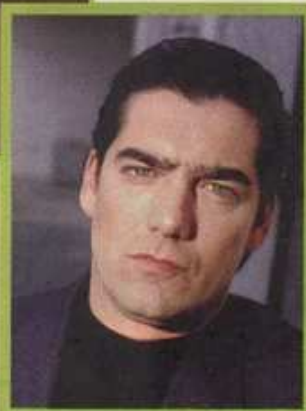
### WONDER WOMAN

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.



### CAPTAIN MARVEL

Ken Wahl ("Wiseguy") 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.



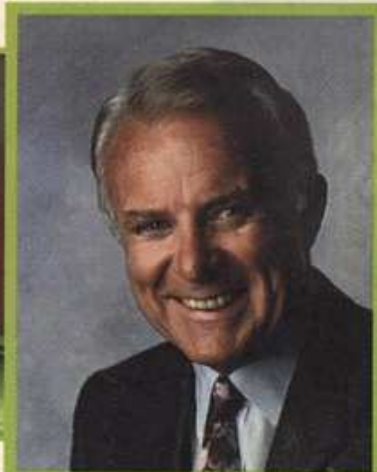
### AQUAMAN

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.







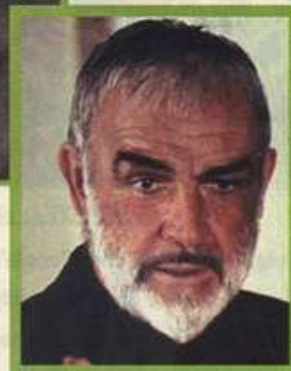
## POWER GIRL

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.



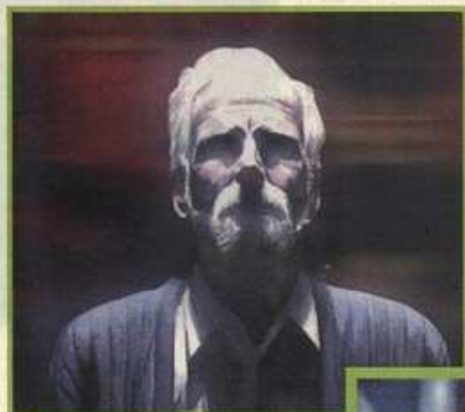
## THE SPECTRE

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



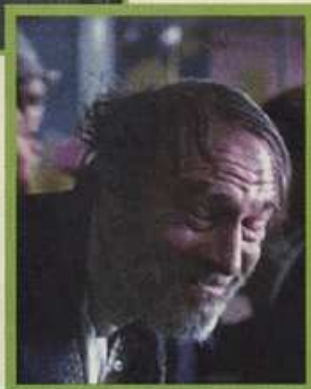
## MAGOG

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 give 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.



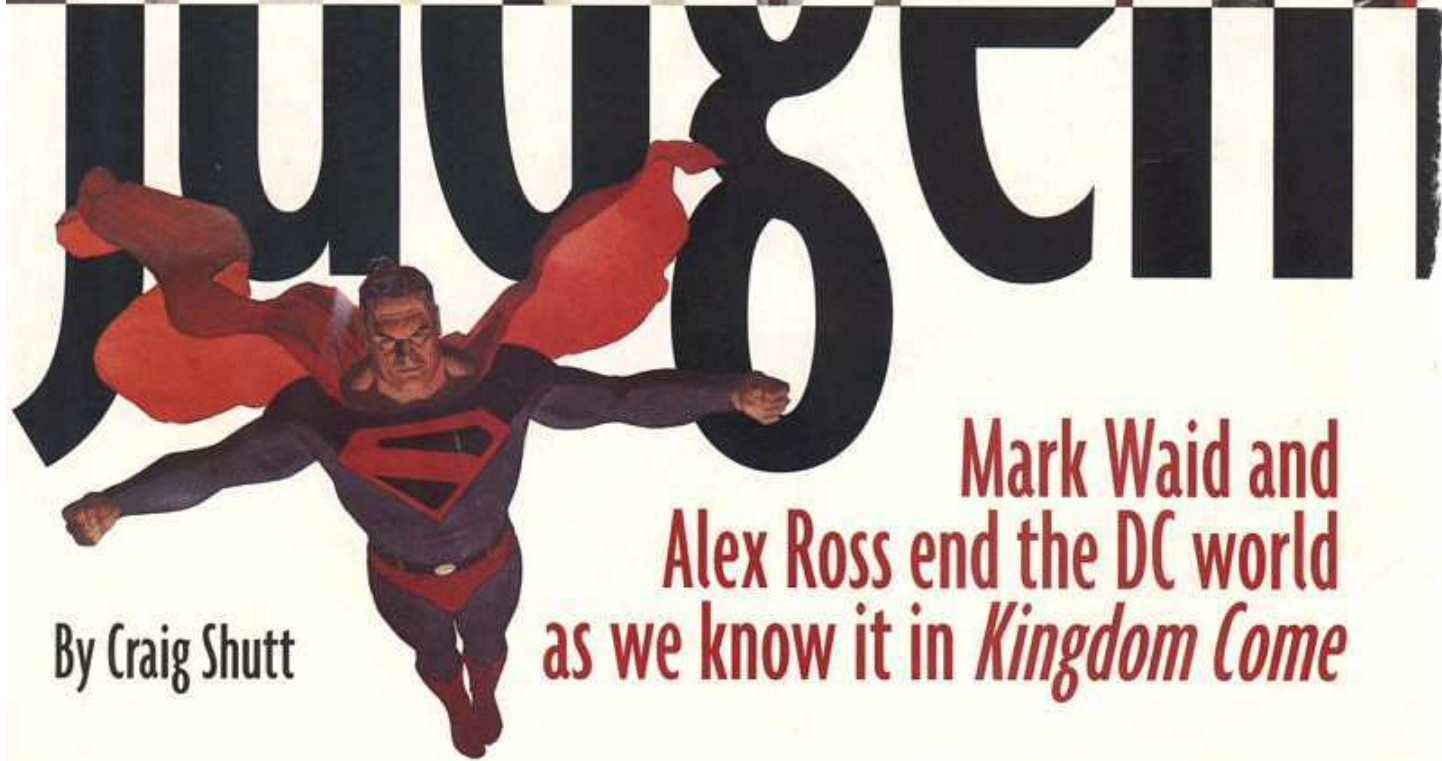
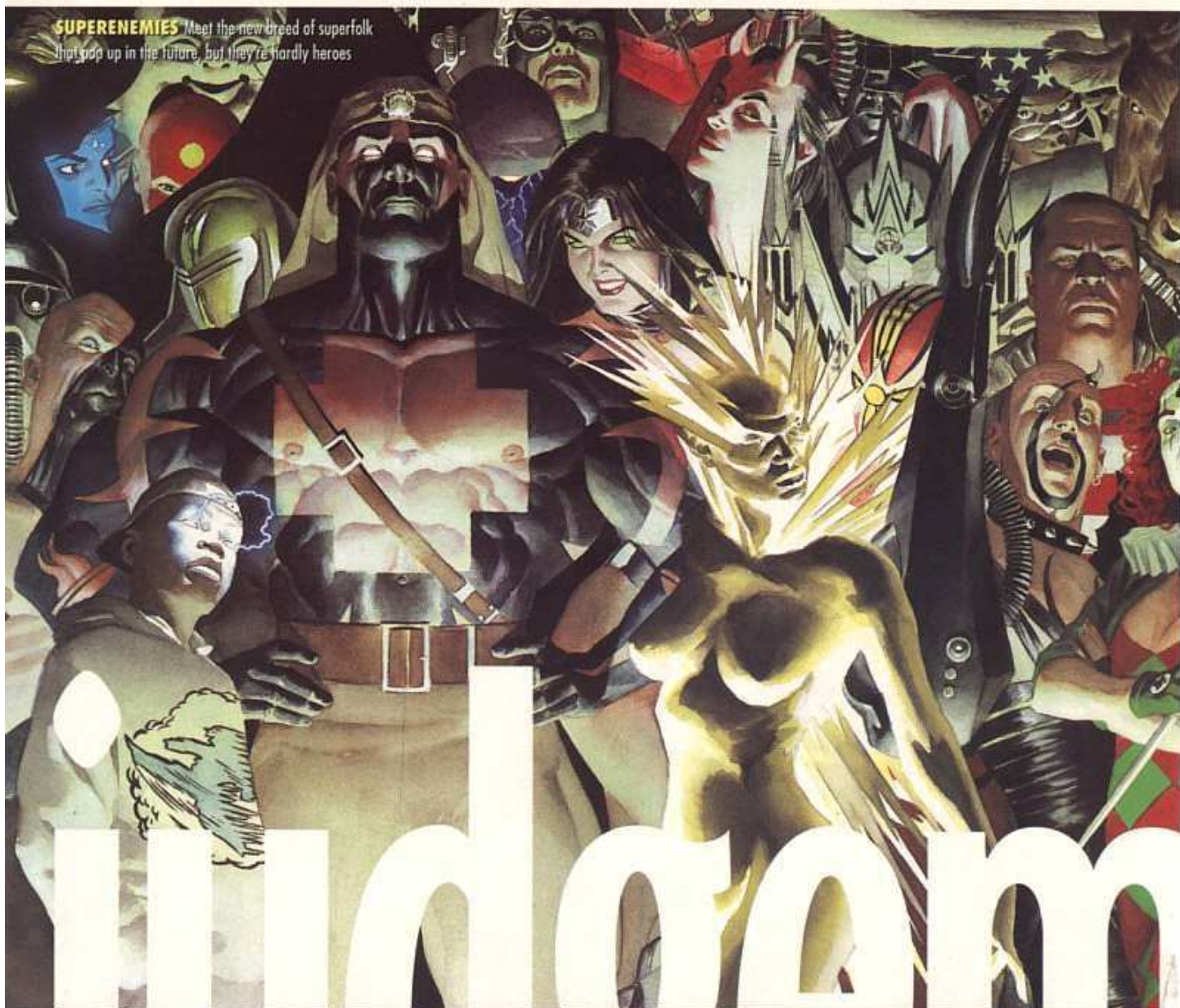
## LEX LUTHOR

Geez, this rendition of Lex screams hardass. And if there's one thing Lawrence Tierney ("Reservoir Dogs") has proven, he can be one. And hey, he's bald, which is always a plus. **W**





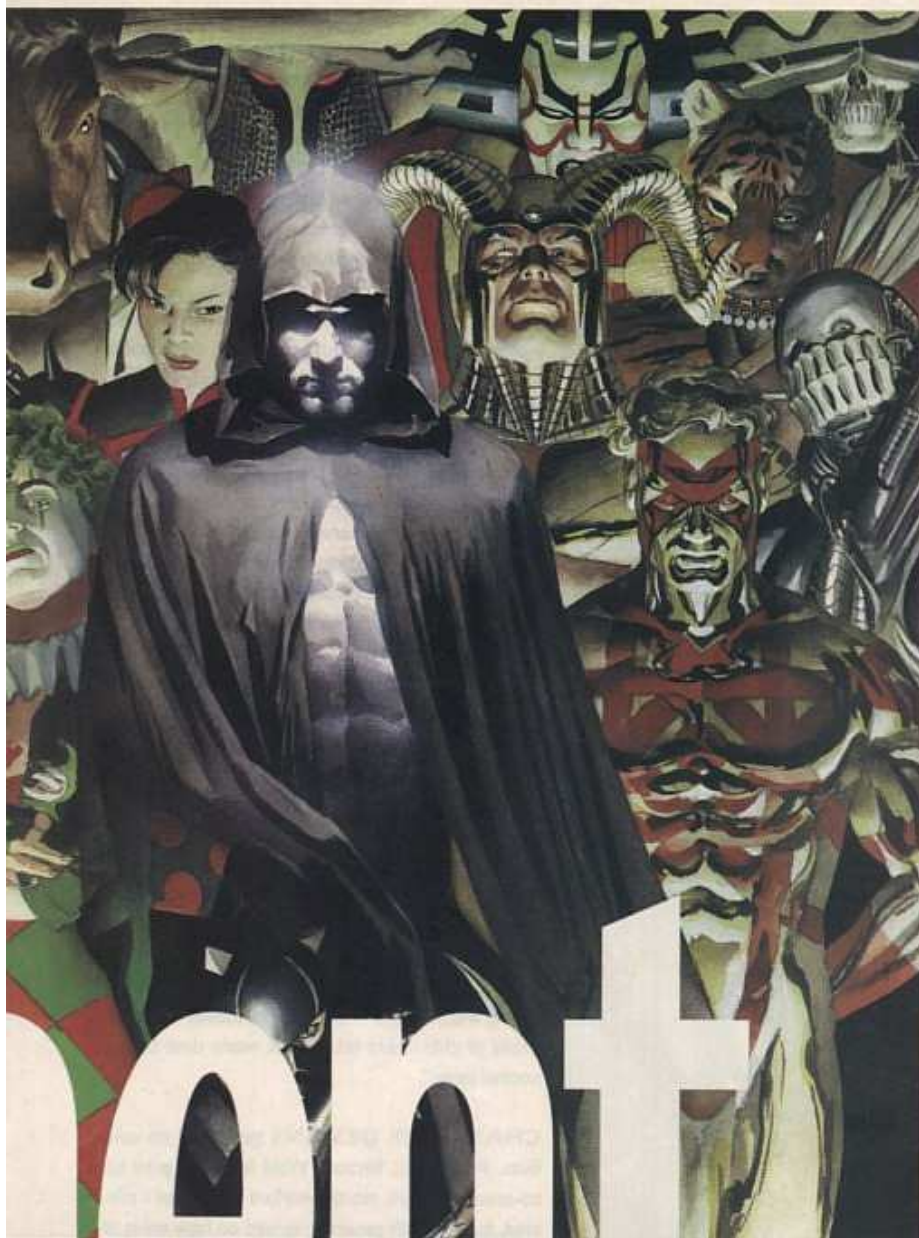
**SUPERENEMIES** Meet the new breed of superfolk  
that pop up in the future, but they're hardly heroes



By Craig Shutt

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





# Kingdom Come

**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 overabundance, however, doesn't mean readers will need a scorecard 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 back story 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 there 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, he co-opts 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 to the other heroes]. It's a necessary flaw, because if he knew, he'd have a swelled 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/son 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 as big a 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 isn't 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."

**WAID BEGAN** telling these stories in April 1994, when Raspler faxed him seven single-spaced pages from Ross' original story proposal. Coming off of *Marvels*, 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 closely 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 wall-opping 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-laden covers and paint portions of the saga-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 reverted 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



**SUPER-EGOS?** Do the Flash (at top) and Green Lantern of the future have delusions of grandeur?



**SUPERFRIENDS** The future holds more than its fair share of heroes, though some are more heroic than others



reluctant to give her to the DC Universe, he admits, "but I came to terms with the fact that most of the stuff I created when I was a kid was really derivative. I realized that I could use this without leaving a personal piece of me behind."

Although most of the heroes' roles fell into place easily, a few caused disagreements. The primary snag centered on J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter. "I thought he screwed up the balance of power, but Mark really wanted to use him," explains Ross. "I had to fight tooth and nail to somehow remove him from the action. He had no antecedent in the Justice Society of America, nor was he in [the animated TV show] 'Super Friends,' which the entire world knows. So to me, he really isn't in the upper echelon of heroes."

Counters Waid, "Alex is too young to understand that J'onn is a seminal hero in the DC Universe," he argues. "Alex grew up in the 1980s, for God's sake. We fought like cats and dogs over J'onn's role." Ultimately, they agree, they found the perfect spot for the Manhunter. "It's a small role, but it's a key one," Waid says. Adds Ross, "His cameo offers a very interesting take, presenting a perspective that I really like."

Another clash erupted over how to treat the supervillains. "Mark insisted that we couldn't skip over these classic villains and say they're all dead," he says. "He came up with a great way to fit them in." Adds Waid, "My favorite part of the whole book was dealing with the supervillains. Luthor is one of my favorites because of his sense of humor."

The villains' roles, explains Ross, evolve from the notion that "the new heroes have become more aggressive vigilantes who kill, while the good heroes have become less good. It's harder to tell who's who." That results in the villains organizing for their own purposes. They create the Mankind Liberation Front, with agendas that go beyond supervillainy. "Their view is

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, Fate, 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 *Marvels* 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."

Adds Waid, "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 it 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.

**W**

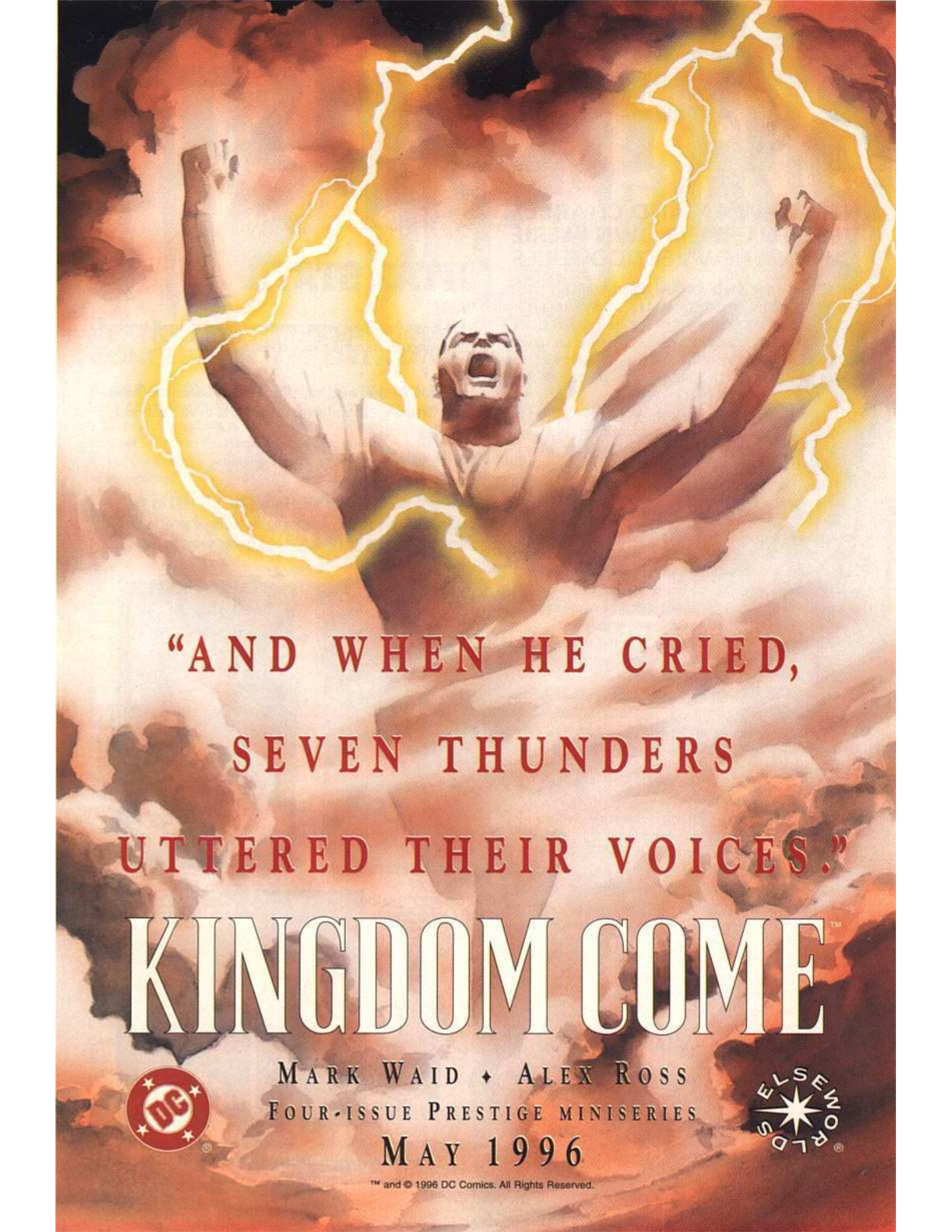
Craig Shutt, who reported on the Amalgam Universe in issue #56, would really like to see another Alex Ross-painted superhero project.

## 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 Darnall, the project will take Ross about nine months to complete, and he figures it will 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." ■ CS





“AND WHEN HE CRIED,  
SEVEN THUNDERS  
UTTERED THEIR VOICES.”

# KINGDOM COME™

MARK WAID ♦ ALEX ROSS  
FOUR-ISSUE PRESTIGE MINISERIES

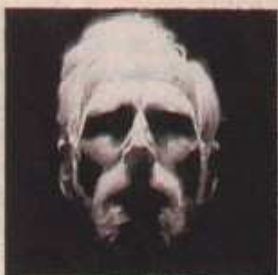
MAY 1996



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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



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# THY WILL BE DONE



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

BY CRAIG KOSTELECKY

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### 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. Plug: 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** (no longer a human, this indigo demon harkens from the netherworld) 2. **Shiva the Destroyer** (four-armed defender of India, based on the Hindu god) 3. **Judomaster II** (female inheritor of the mantle) 4. **Buddha** (Sumo-sized scourge of China) 5. **Von Bach** (Yugoslavian would-be dictator) 6. **Nuculoid** (pliable nuclear-powered hero) 7. **Mr. Terrific II** (over-equipped update of the old version, with little understanding of his predecessor's motto of "Tair play") 8. **Tusk** (elephant-shaped man-a-war) 9. **Nightstar** (daughter of the late Starfire and the former Nightwing) 10. **Demon Damsel** (would-be Legion of Super-Heroes member) 11. **Pinwheel** (blade-laden, leather-clad master of pain) 12. **Cathedral** (holy terror of the underworld) 13. **Stars** (hip-hop, modern Star-Spangled Kid with cosmic rod and belt; note the flag on his shirt is upside-down in issue #1, page 13) 14. **Manotaur** (classical Greek myth armed for the future) 15. **Black Mongul** (Mongolian shadow of death) 16. **Kabuki Kommando** (the Fourth World's Japanese champion) 17. **Huntress III** (warrior queen of the African jungle) 18. **N-I-L-8** (a sentient army with an appetite for destruction) 19. **Trix** (after "Matrix," a morphing biomechanism) 20. **Captain Atom** (human nuclear reactor and symbol of the atomic age) 21. **Magog** (Superman's successor as Metropolis' #1 superhero) 22. **The Spectre** (the wandering spirit of God's vengeance) 23. **Tokyo Rose** (Japanese martial arts assassin) 24. **Stripes** (modern Stripes armed to the teeth) 25. **Joker's Daughter** (one of many to follow the Joker's chaotic style) 26. **666** (tattooed, self-mutilated man-machine of destruction) 27. **Phoebus** (Firestorm's successor as Earth's fire elemental) 28. **Lightning** (daughter of Black Lightning) 29. **Thunder** (a new Jahany Thunder with the mischievous spirit of Thunderbolt) 30. **Swastika** (American militiaman and anarchist) 31. **Germ-Man** (master of biological warfare who spews poison gas) 32. **Stealth II** (cloaked one-woman war machine) 33. **Catwoman II** (armored meta-human, successor to Selina Kyle)



1. **Original Red Tornado** (armored with more than a pot for a helmet) 2. **Hawkman** (combining the spirit of the old with the other-worldly flesh of the new) 3. **Lady Marvel** (formerly Mary Marvel, caretaker of the power of Shazam) 4. **King Marvel** (formerly Captain Marvel Jr., caretaker of the power of Shazam) 5. **Aleca Strange** (half-human, half-alien daughter of Adam Strange and Manna Strange) 6. **Human Bomb** (still the same combustible hero of old) 7. **Midnight** (a spirit manifesting itself as a living smoke cloud) 8. **Whiz** (son of Lady and King Marvel, and natural inheritor of the power of Shazam) 9. **Captain Comet** (former L.E.G.I.O.N. member and the first superhero of the Silver Age) 10. **Bulletman** (modern steel-coated human bullet) 11. **Brainiac's Daughter** (the living computer's human progeny, and ancestor of Brainiac 5) 12. **Bulletgirl** (modern steel-coated human bullet) 13. **Robotman III** (Victor Stone, formerly Cyborg, now an organism made of liquid metal) 14. **Starman VII** (formerly Starboy, from the 30th Century) 15. **Golden Guardian** (second body cloned from the original Golden Age shield-bearer, the Guardian) 16. **Powerman** (robot minion of Superman) 17. **Hourman II** (current inheritor of the mantle with none of the time limits the original Hourman had) 18. **Sandman III** (formerly Sandy the Golden Boy, who now doesn't age) 19. **Red Tornado III** (fire-haired, wind-manipulating successor to the mantle) 20. **Living Doll** (daughter of Doll Man and Doll Girl) 21. **Tornado** (reformed spirit of the Tornado Champion) 22. **Avia** (Big Barda and Mister Miracle's daughter) 23. **Atlas** (legendary demigod figure) 24. **Atom-Smasher** (formerly Nuklon, godson of the original Atom) 25. **Donna Troy** (formerly Wonder Girl, Troia and Darkstar, now an Amazonian champion) 26. **The Ray** (son of the original, and Lord of Light) 27. **Wonder Woman** (former Amazonian princess and now Superman's second-in-command) 28. **Red Robin** (formerly Nightwing, Dick Grayson, the original Robin, is following in his mentor's footsteps again) 29. **Norman McCay** (a preacher and the Spectre's human anchor) 30. **Red Arrow** (formerly Speedy, and later Arsenal, now following more closely the methods of his mentor, Green Arrow) 31. **Superman** (reluctant leader of the Justice League, now showing his alien nature more and more) 32. **Aquaman II** (formerly Aquadad, now inheritor of his mentor's mantle) 33. **Power Woman** (formerly Power Girl, and still a major superhuman wrecking machine) 34. **The Flash III** (emanating from the Speed Field, Wally West fights crime 24 hours every day at super-speed) 35. **Green Lantern I** (merging his lantern into his armor, Man Scott is the most powerful champion of that name)



1. **A Bat-Knight** (one of Batman's robot sentinels) 2. **Steel** (has switched his devotion from Superman to Batman, and is accented with his bat-shaped bottle ax) 3. **Menagerie** (formerly Changeling, and now only able to create the shapes of imaginary beasts) 4. **Deadman** (still dead and, after a long time of rejection, loving it) 5. **Huntress III** (warrior queen of the African jungle) 6. **Cossack** (champion of Russia, from the Batmen of many nations) 7. **Ace** (otherworldly bat-hound, and Batwoman's steed) 8. **Batwoman** (Batman admirer from the Fourth World) 9. **John Jones** (former Martian Manhunter, now has psychological problems) 10. **Mysteryman** (one of Batman's fellow crimefighters) 11. **Zatara II** (son of the late Zatanna, and grandson of the original Zatara) 12. **Samurai** (champion of Japan, from the Batmen of many nations) 13. **Dragon** (champion of China, from the Batmen of many nations) 14. **A Bat-Knight** (another of Batman's robot sentinels) 15. **Creepex** (aging, wretched screwball superhero) 16. **Nuculoid** (pliable nuclear-powered hero) 17. **Wildcat III** (a man-panther with the original's spirit) 18. **Lightning** (Black Lightning's daughter) 19. **Condor** (current inheritor of the Black Condor mantle) 20. **Nightstar** (half-human, half-alien daughter of Starfire and Nightwing) 21. **Obsidian** (son of Alan Scott, the original Green Lantern, and Harlequin) 22. **Mr. Scarlet** (blue-collar bruiser, with bright red skin) 23. **Ralph Dibny** (formerly the Elongated Man, now just stretched out) 24. **Spy Smasher** (independent operative in the post-Cold War world) 25. **Phantom Lady II** (a literal phantom of the original) 26. **Tula** (seafaring malcontent and daughter of Aquaman II) 27. **Blue Beetle** (his high-tech suit of armor incorporates the original scarab's power) 28. **Red Hood** (daughter of Red Arrow and the mercenary Cheshire) 29. **Darkstar** (son of Donna Troy and is the inheritor of her Darkstar role) 30. **Flash IV** (Wally West's daughter) 31. **Fate** (the Helmet of Nabu, a talisman that no longer needs a human host) 32. **Jade** (daughter of Green Lantern I and Harlequin, and a living battery of the Lantern's power) 33. **Batman** (a master strategist, and still the world's greatest detective) 34. **Captain Marvel** (under the control of Lex Luthor, the World's Mightiest Mortal quickly becomes the world's mightiest villain) 35. **Oliver Queen** (formerly Green Arrow, now married to Dinah Lance, Black Canary II) 36. **Black Canary III** (daughter of Oliver and Dinah Queen) 37. **Dinah Queen** (formerly Black Canary II)



## 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 (at right)

The quotes on the first few pages of this (and every) issue are taken from Revelations, the part of the Bible that talks about the end of the world. Not exactly the best of starts for our heroes.

The first vision experienced by Wesley Dodds, a.k.a. the Golden Age Sandman, is that of an eagle in an aerial fight with a bat. Initially, many thought this represented a battle—real or ideological—between Batman and Superman. Later, it is revealed that this represents a battle—both real and ideological—between Batman and Wonder Woman. "[It was] 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."





In the last couple panels of this page is the cover of *The Daily Planet*.

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

**panel 3**  
The statue of Lady Justice has crashed into the antique shop "Knight's Past" owned by Jack Knight, star of DC's current *Stargirl* series. Also, a poster of alternative Icelandic performer, Björk, is on a wall that McElroy passes. The image is from the cover of her album "Debut."

**panel 4** **BOOKS WILL**  
As McCoy continues his walk, he passes a window with several items on display, including three books. These books are *Alternate Egos* by John Law, *Behind the Mask* by Jessie Chambers and *Under the Hood* by Hollis Mason. *Under the Hood* was an autobiography of the original Nite Owl, taken from the *Watchmen* mini-series. The other two are curiously inaccurate [well, as inaccurate as you can get in an "Elseworlds" mini-series like *Kingdom Come*]. *Behind the Mask* was actually written by Jonathan Law (a.k.a. the All-Star Squadron's Tarantula) as seen in the *Golden Age* mini-series, while *Alternate Egos* is actually *Altered Egos* taken from *All-Star Squadron*.



McCoy 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 cheapens the image of superheroes. 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.



Inside Planet Krypton are superhero memorabilia and employees dressed like superheroes. Among the memorabilia is Green Arrow's bow and boxing glove arrows, Batman's batarang, replicas of the Golden Age Batplane and the ship that brought the infant Kal-El to earth. On the big screen is DC kiddie characters, Sugar and Spike. On display is the Batman costume from the 1960s "Batman" TV series, just as it is on display at Planet Hollywood in Chicago. At the front counter is an aging Beatriz DaCosta, a.k.a. Fire, asking to see fellow ex-JLAer 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)** Monotaur is hoisting a car with the license plate number 281F. This is the license plate number to the car behind the Beatles on the cover to their "Abbey Road" album.



#### Pages 20-21 (at left)

The naked and aloof Spectre is "...out of touch with the man he once was," Waid 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 swift sword." One can see this aspect in his eyes: If you look closely, you will see a tiny skull. (You'll see that skull often in Spec'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 tagline, "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** As Kal-El lifts a tractor, in the background amongst 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 Streaky the Supercat, Comet the Superhorse, Krypto the Superdog and Beppo the Supermonkey.



#### Page 29, panel 2 (above)

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

According to Waid, the name "Magog" comes from the Bible's Book of Revelations, where Magog and Gog are emissaries of Satan on Earth. Asks Ross, shyly, "But is there a character named Gog...?"

#### Page 29, panel 1 (below)

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







## SECRET IDENTITY

Miffed that you didn't know Wally West was The Flash or that Green Lantern was Alan Scott? There was a method behind the madness, notes artist Alex Ross. Ambiguity was intentional, he says, as he and writer Mark Waid wanted readers to fill in the blanks themselves.

Waid is more blunt: "Kingdom Come is a story about generals, not infantry. I don't know the names of every person Moses led across the Red Sea, but it doesn't mean I don't enjoy his story."



## Page 33 (far left)

Keystone City is a utopia due in part to the Flash. The Flash is Wally West, but Ross has melded key elements of all three Flashes into this one. The winged helmet is taken from the Golden Age Flash, while the red "aura" is taken from the Silver Age Flash. This Flash also incorporates the energy pulsating around his body like the current Flash. Waid says this Flash has become even more connected to the Speed Force (the energy field from which Flash derives his super-speed) and he is constantly moving to rid his city of crime at all times. It's no wonder that Ross coined him as Mercury, the Roman god of speed, in his original sketch of the Flash.

## Page 34 (left)

The new Hawkman is a nod to the Golden Age Hawkman. Essentially, he is the spirit of the Golden Age Hawkman in the body of the new Hawkman, which is merged with the mystical hawk nature. Like the original Hawkman (a.k.a. archaeologist Carter Hall), there are several Egyptian motifs about him. (In fact, Ross called him "Hawkgod" in his original character sketch.) However, this Hawkman has forsaken his crimefighting to take on environmental causes. Ross wanted to do a different take on some of these Golden Age characters and felt the best way to be "more dramatically different" is by actually going back the furthest you can go with that character. He wanted to be inspired by what the initial inspiration was.

If you noticed, Hawkman had no lines in *Kingdom Come*. Waid says this was "because he had no mouth."

## Page 35 (left)

Alex Ross originally wanted to call the Green Lantern of *Kingdom Come* "The Green Knight," for obvious visual reasons. This GL is neither Kyle Rayner nor Hal Jordan. Ross chose Alan Scott to wear the power ring because he's a real Golden Age buff. "Originally, this was going to be Hal Jordan," Ross says, but because of Hal's "screwed continuity, [we] avoided it for the best." However, he tried to give readers "a sense of Hal Jordan's character in that Green Lantern, so that he was almost an all-encompassing Green Lantern."

Green Lantern's orbiting emerald satellite is called New Oa in reference to the home planet of the Guardians, the source of all Green Lantern power rings. Also, the saucer part of New Oa is modeled after the ship used on many album covers by Electric Light Orchestra. (This particular view came off the ELO album "Out of the Blue.")

Another interesting aspect of this GL is the fact that his power battery is part of his armor.



## Page 37-39 (above and right)

Hey, hey, hey!—those teens ain't no ordinary criminals! That's Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids going on a crime spree in the fair city of Gotham. (Y'know, those kids should know better.)

Fat Albert and his posse are cornered by the Bat-Knights. In the first panel of page 39, a young and frightened Bill Cosby gets busted. These robot sentinels of Gotham are controlled by Bruce Wayne. The Bat-Knights resemble the Golden Age Batmobile if they had Transformer capabilities.



## Page 42, panel 2 (above)

Within the cable car are tons of DC Comics staffers.

## panel 3 (left)

Ross says Joker's Daughter is modeled after Vertigo artist Jill Thompson (right).



## Page 45 (above)

The text in the captions and word balloons are throw-backs to the opening credits of the 1950s "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 Max Fleisher cartoons of the 1940s. Not only has the yellow in the "S" symbol has changed to black (as has his belt), but the "S" itself is more angular and rigid. Also, there no longer a yellow "S" on his cape, as will be seen later. Even 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 McCoy looks up at the second coming of Superman, he is surrounded by DC staffers and Björk, who makes another appearance in the crowd.



#### panel 2 (far right)

Another vision comes to McCoy. While the crowd cheers Superman's return, McCoy sees it as a sure sign that the apocalypse will be coming. Waid says he was 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 oncoming apocalypse.



## KINGDOM COME #2



**Page 9 (at left)** Rendering the mental-powered Brain Trust 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 Starfire, but returned at the behest of Superman. (You later learn 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)

Homing his way through the media circus is Phil Sheldon, the protagonist from Kurt Busiek and Ross' popular *Marvels* 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.







**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 fighting crime. "As Alex 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 chest plate is similar to that of Darth Vader's from "Star Wars."

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

**Panel 3 (below)** In the lower right screen on Batman's console is the face of Bat-Mite, the imp that bedeviled the Dark Knight during his sillier 1950s comics.



### Page 19, panel 2 (at right)

Batman's allies are former JLers Ted Kord (Blue Beetle), Dinah Queen (Black Canary) and Oliver Queen (Green Arrow). All of whom are non-powered and share Batman's concern about the proliferation of metahumans. Waid describes Kord's importance as being that he is "a tinkerer" and "a complete nerd" but lends technical support to Batman and assisted Batman with the design of the robotic Bat-Knight. Of Queen, Waid states, "He's the bitter, cranky reactionary that he always was, but he's the voice of conscience." And finally, Dinah Queen is there "to put up with Oliver Queen," he laughs.

### Panel 4

Batman also has a team of metahumans he uses for his crimefighting activities, as seen on the TV screens. Most of these characters are the offspring of many of the old guard heroes. Waid 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. To 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* #27. Superman is shown hoisting a car as seen on the cover of *Action Comics* #1. A horse-riding Wonder Woman is Ross' version of *Wonder Woman* #1.



### Page 21, panel 2

The Justice League is shown fighting those who would become members. This included the previously mentioned Phobos, Starmen VII, Brainiac's Daughter (at one point known as KTC—listed on a poster in *KC* #1, page 12—in tribute to the band of the same name, who recorded songs called "That's Really Super, Supergirl" and "Brainiac's Daughter") and Red Tornado III. Starmen VII is actually former Legion of Super-Heroes member Starboy transplanted to the past. Brainiac's Daughter is not only the daughter of Brainiac, but also the offspring of Supergirl. (Interestingly, in old DC continuity, Brainiac 5 and Supergirl 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.





## Page 25 (at left)

The Spectre and McCoy observe as Lex Luthor calls to order a meeting of the Mankind Liberation Front. Besides Luthor, it includes the immortal Vandal Savage, the King of Spades of the Royal Flush Gang, Lord Naga (a.k.a. Kobra), Ibn al Xu'ffasch (heir to Ra's al Ghul's empire), Selina Kyle (the former Catwoman) and Edward Nigma (the Riddler).

Ross says Ibn al Xu'ffasch is Batman's son from his union with Talia, the daughter of Ra's al Ghul. "Ibn al Xu'ffasch" actually means "son of the bat" in Arabic. (Longtime readers will recall the birth happening in the *Batman: Son of the Demon* graphic novel. The child has yet to resurface in current continuity.)



## THE NIGHTCLUB SCENE IS FULL OF CAMEOS FROM THE DC UNIVERSE AND BEYOND.

**Page 28 (at left), panel 1** An older and overweight Lobo has a drink with "teammate" Vril Dox II from L.E.G.I.O.N. (he is drinking DC beer). Also, seen are Ultra the Multi-Alien, the motorcycle guy from the Village People, two members of the Blackhawks, Solomon Grundy as a bouncer, Shadow Lass in a costume originally worn by the X-Men's Storm. Flying 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 joke 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 Q beer, in reference to Quality Comics, his original comic company). Behind them, again is Ultra the Multi-Alien and Zan of "Super Friends" as a waiter.

The Spectre and McCoy continue to witness the events of that lead them to the apocalypse. On the right of the panel is another of Ross' creation Pinwheel, an old and balding 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 Durlan (like Chameleon of the Legion of Super-Heroes), John Steed and Emma Peel from the TV show *The Avengers*, and Mr. 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 were among 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, and an old and drunken Marvin from "Super Friends" mousing off to the Man of Steel (Marvin's had a few too many HB beers, in reference to Hanna-Barbera). Behind them are the members of the Village People looking like they've been bionically enhanced since their last tour. On the right is Virman Vundabar all the way from Apokalips, Atom-Smasher, DeSoad and Germ-Man.



**Page 31 (below), panel 2** From left: Cesar the Somnambulist from the German film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, a Betty Page-like Phantom Lady II, Pinwheel, the silhouette is Ross' creation Nowhere Man.

**Panel 3** In the background: Swamp Thing (sitting with trenchcoat), Sherlock Holmes, the Shadow, the Question, Rorschach, Obsidian.





**Page 34** Superman and Wonder Woman stand over the unconscious bodies of several German nationalist metahumans. The most powerful of which is Von Bach, (Ross' 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 Laibach. On Von Bach's right arm is "liebe," the German word for love, and on his left arm is "hass," German for hate.



**Page 35** 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, Waid 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.



**Page 37, panel 4**  
"There has clearly been a previous intimacy between Wonder Woman and Superman," Waid says in the card set. "But Superman's self-imposed exile took him away from even his closest friends."



**Page 40, panel 1**

At a newsstand are titles of many pulp magazines that were around in the '30s and '40s. With the exception of *Newstime* (which is a DC Universe magazine), of all the magazine titles, only one is still being published: *Juggs*.

## KINGDOM COME #3



**Page 5 (at left)** Ross' design of Superman's Gulag is based on the Hall of Doom belonging to none other than the Legion of Doom in the "Challenge of the Super Friends" Saturday morning cartoon.

**Page 6-7 (below)** The metaprisoners find themselves in very comfortable surroundings—however, a gilded cage is a cage nonetheless. Some of the prisoners we see include Ross' creations *KC* versions of Black Manta, Demon Damsel, Stealth II and many unknown metas. In the lower right-hand side, behind the robot guard stands Raggedy Andy leaning against one of the columns.



**Page 8, panel 1**

Among the prisoners in this frame is The Fool and Goblin Lord (modeled after Columbia and Riff-Raff *a la* Nosteratu from "The Rocky Horror Picture Show"), Big Barda (though she's a guard, not a prisoner), Blue (of Red, White and Blue), Spode, Somnambulist and Bloodlust.



**Page 10, panel 5 (at left)**

After Von Bach is sent flying by Captain Comet, he is helped out by Kabuki Kommando on his left, and on his right is tie-dyed hero Terry LaBon. LaBon is the writer/artist of *Lud* which is printed on his T-shirt.

Von Bach says to Comet in German, "No threat, astronaut." Kabuki Kommando says in Japanese, "He's heavier than he looks."



**Page 11, panel 1**

Von Bach, threatening, "I will kill that guy," pushes Laban down. Kabuki Kommando replies, "Don't get mad at me...get mad at him!"



**Page 11, panels 5-7 (below)**

Red, an agent of Luthor, shows his boss what is happening at the Gulag via the eye of his captured cohort White.



**Pages 12-14 (above and right)** McCoy and the Spectre listen in on a cosmic conversation on the fate of Earth. The cosmic bigwigs include Phantom Stranger, Shazam, Ganthet the last Guardian, Highfather of the New Gods and Zeus. McCoy then enters a conversation with Deadman. Deadman'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 discuss 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 Ibn al Xu'ffasch 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 *KC*. 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 Teen Titans group together once again to discuss the wisdom of throwing a bunch of psychotic 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, Hawkman, Power Woman, Flash, Wonder Woman and Atom-Smasher, other heroes look on. On the level above them 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 designed his '60s and '70s jumpsuit with the short cape and big collar after his childhood hero.

Also, on the upper level is the Tornado, formerly the JLA's Red Tornado, his protégé Red Tornado III and the Golden Age comical "Ma Hunkel" Red Tornado. However, this time she seems more robotic than comical.



**Page 38 (at left)** In panels 1-3 (and on the following page, panel 3), standing behind Red Robin are Mike Nesmith, Mickey Dolenz, Davey Jones and Peter Tork—collectively known as the '60s rock group The Monkees. They are shown in their Monkeemans costumes similar to those once worn on their TV show. Snapper Carr, former hip mascot to the JLA, appears in panel 2 (they continue to appear in the battle at the Gulag in issue #4. Tragically, none of the Monkeeman 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 Jonzz 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 Gulag'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 Monkeemen, one can also spot teeny-tiny renditions of Spider-Man, Thor, Captain America, X-O Manowar and Dr. Strange in the crowd of heroes rushing to meet the onslaught of the anti-heroes.





# KINGDOM COME #4



## Page 9, panel 6 (above)

In panel 6, Waid, *KC* editor Dan Raspler (at right) and his assistant Peter Tomasi (in between) are depicted as members of the United Nations.

**Page 10 (below and right)** On the door of Secretary Wyrwood's door is a symbol very similar to the old Justice League of America logo.

Incidentally, Ross designed Wyrwood after F.B.I. Director Skinner from "The X-Files." His name however also is from the Bible's Revelations. "Wyrwood is the name of the star that fell to Earth," says Waid, "and clearly, in our story, the star is the bomb."



Owners released  
it's thunderbolts  
out blindly.

## Page 11, panel 1 (above)

On the right side is a cyborg version of the cowboy 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). Batman 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 GL's armor.

## Page 21 (below)

The nuclear bombs resemble the matrix chamber that brought Superman to Earth.



## Page 25, panel 3 (at left)

Behind Superman is Menagerie in the form of a green Martian from Edgar Rice Burroughs' novels starring John Carter of Mars.

## 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 Tubed" 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 Krimson, Golden Guardian, Robotman III, Aleea Strange, 666, Catwoman II, Phoebe, Atom-Smasher, Sandman III, Alloy, Nucleoid, Green Arrow (to the left of Robotman III, 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, Trix and the Flash. (Thunder is also seen on the next page. Batman, Wonder Woman, Tokyo Rose, Manotaur and Joker's Daughter are also seen a few pages later.)



**Page 35 (at left)** An angry Superman is about to tear down the UN, 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 clearly the driving force of this whole series," says Mark Waid.



### Page 43, panel 1 (at far right)

Now held on Paradise Island, Manotaur, Tokyo Rose, Magog, Joker's daughter, Swastika, Thunder and Trix are the last few inmates to survive the destruction of the Gulag. Of all the new breed of heroes, these few can gain redemption—rather than dying like Von Bach and his ilk.

### Panel 4 (at right)

Once again, the old JLA logo is seen incorporated into the UN symbol. We also see Alan Scott representing New Oa as a human and not a superhuman.



**Page 44 (above)** Superman buries the dead in the Kansas wasteland. To keep him company is Krypto.

It's ironic that, like Magog in issue #2, Superman is trying to "fix" Kansas, further drawing 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 sits Jim Corrigan, a.k.a. the Spectre. In a 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 far behind? Sort of, the creators say. "We swore we wouldn't do a sequel," 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 Kastelecky's head is still spinning from researching this article. So is the Wizard staff's.





# KINGDOM COME™



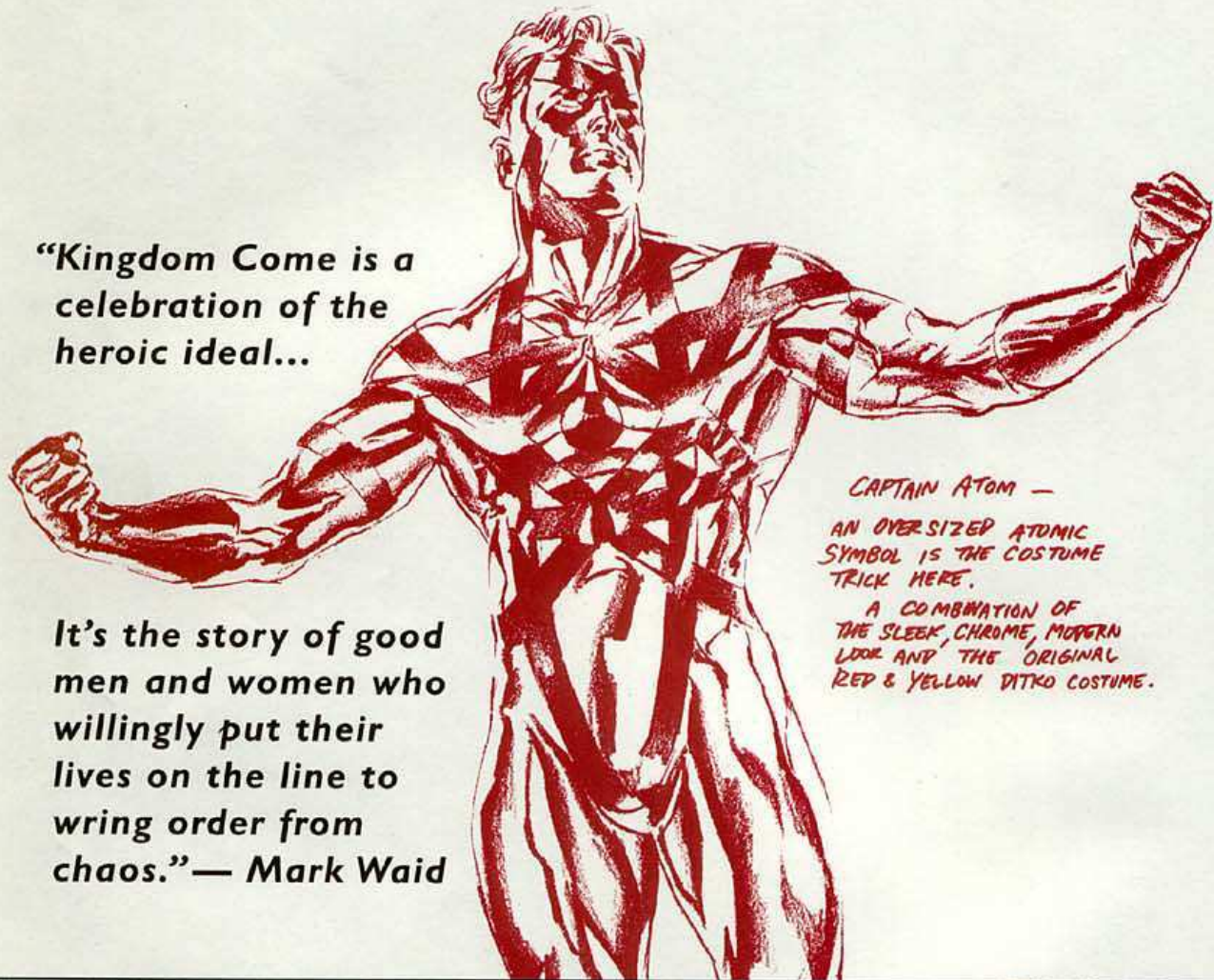
## PREVIEW



ORIGINAL SKETCHES AND HANDWRITTEN  
NOTES BY ALEX ROSS. ADDITIONAL  
COMMENTARY BY MARK WAID.

**"Kingdom Come is a  
celebration of the  
heroic ideal..."**

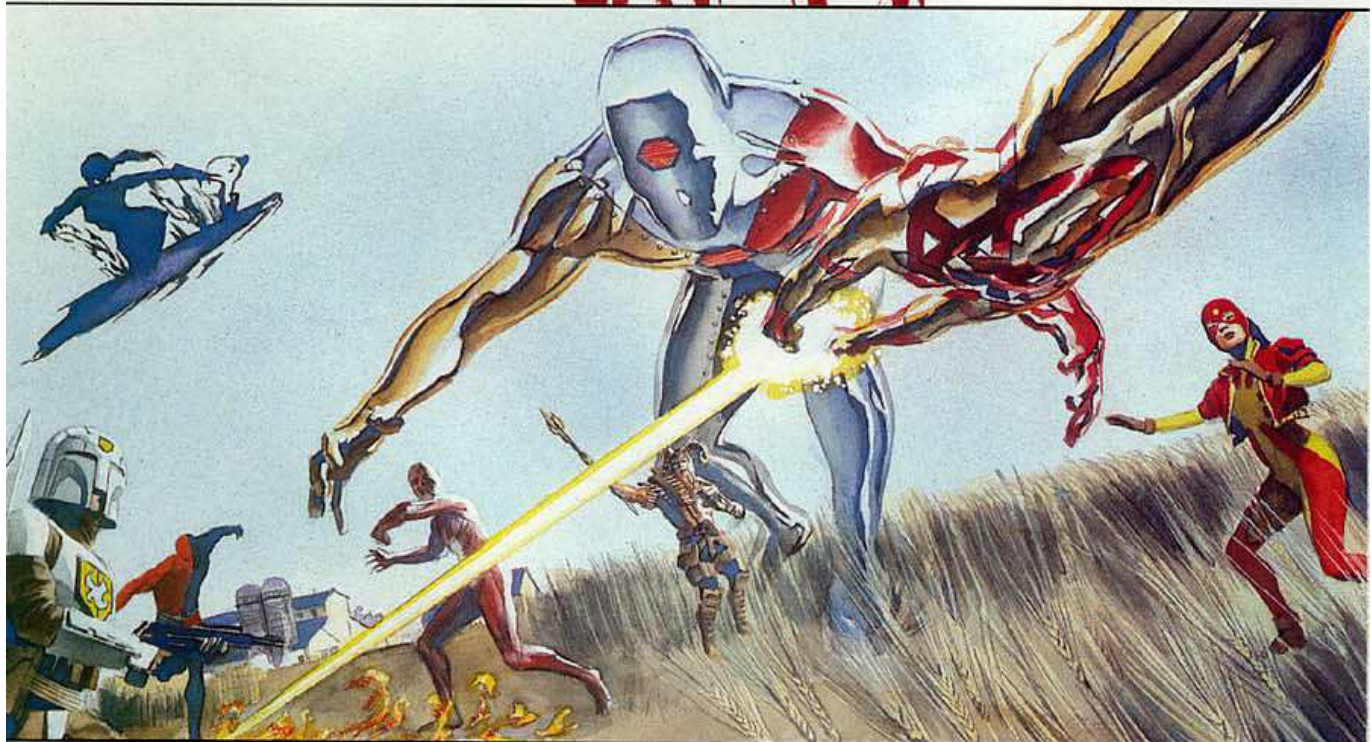
**It's the story of good  
men and women who  
willingly put their  
lives on the line to  
wring order from  
chaos." — Mark Waid**



*CAPTAIN ATOM —*

*AN OVERSIZED ATOMIC  
SYMBOL IS THE COSTUME  
TRICK HERE.*

*A COMBINATION OF  
THE SLEEK, CHROME, MODERN  
LOOK AND THE ORIGINAL  
RED & YELLOW DITKO COSTUME.*





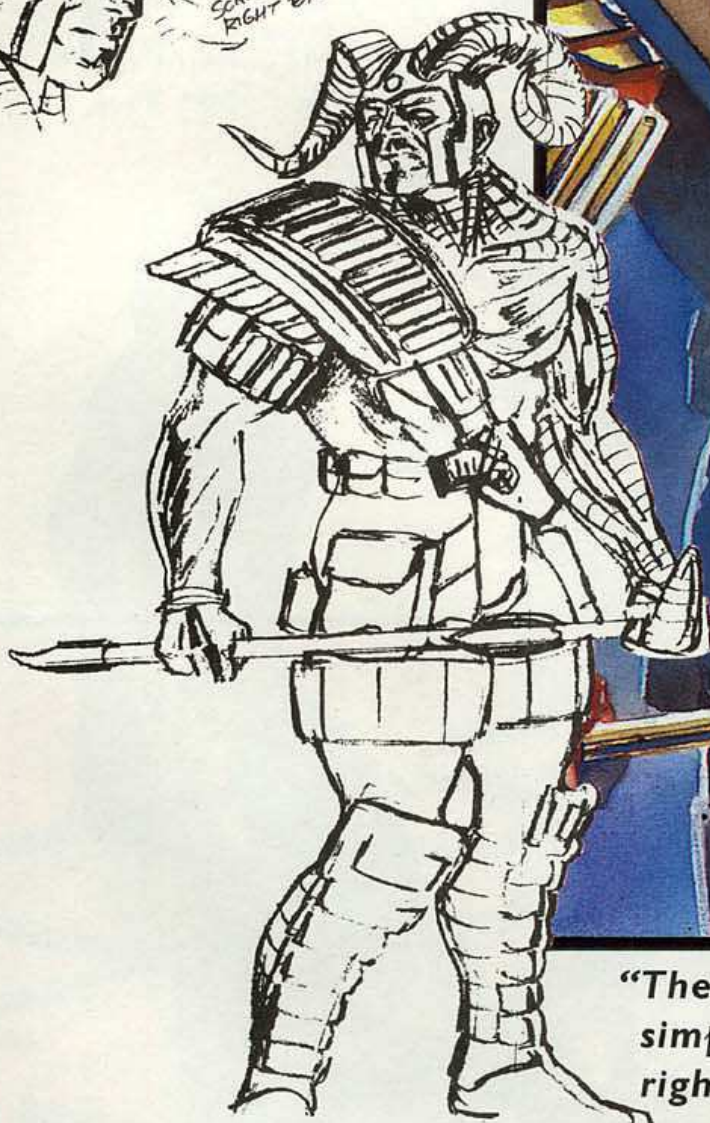
MAGOG -

WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED  
TO REFLECT EVERYTHING WE  
HATED ABOUT CURRENT  
SUPERHERO COSTUME DESIGN.  
(KINDA 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.



SCAR ON  
RIGHT EYE



"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."**

*NUCULOID -  
I MADE THIS ONE UP  
WHEN I WAS 11.  
BE KIND.*

*NIGHTSTAR  
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.*





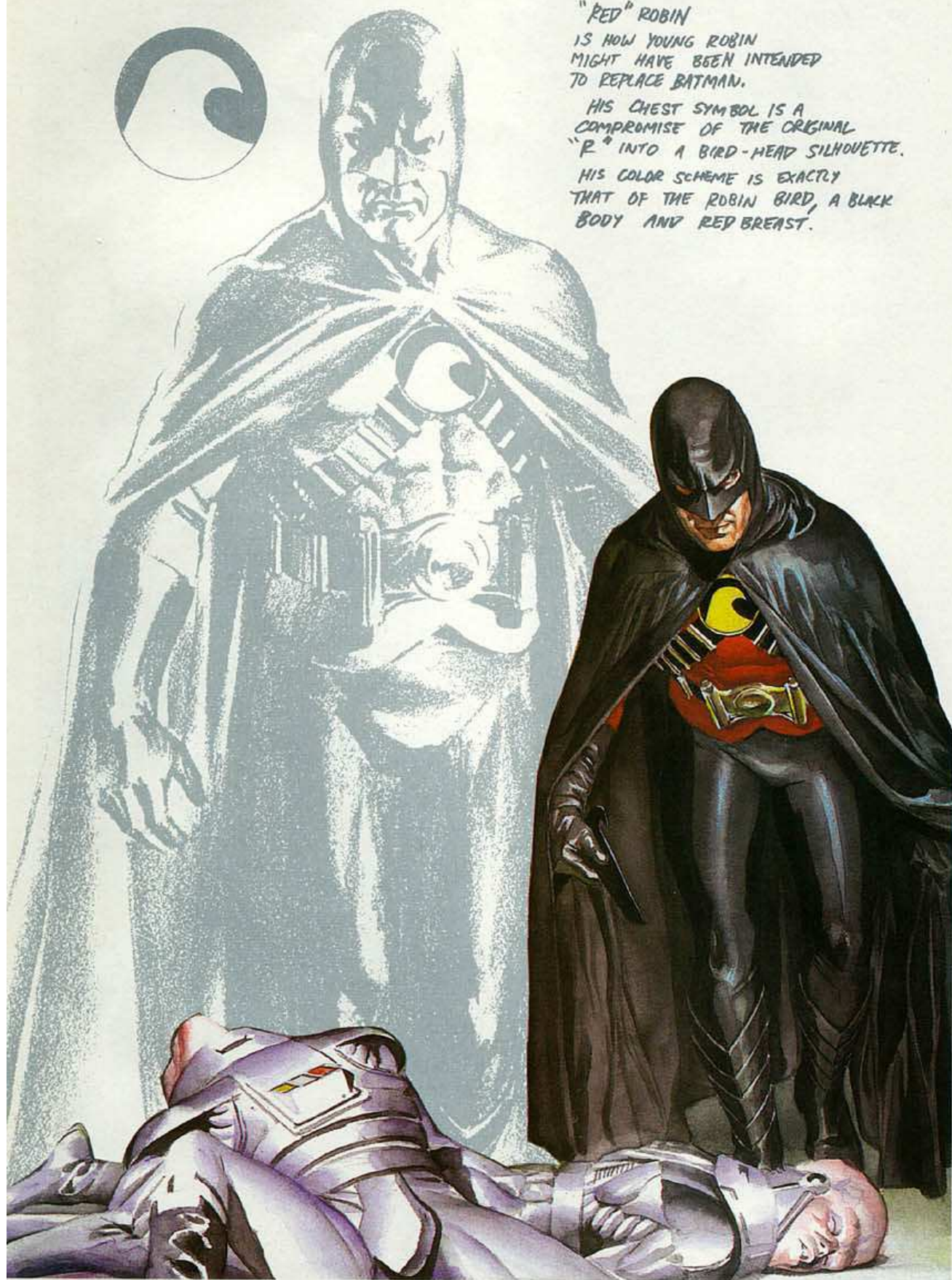
**"They have survived—they are important—  
because they are a reflection of our  
dreams, not our nightmares."**

**"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.

CLOISONNÉ PIN OF  
KINGDOM COME-  
STYLE SUPERMAN  
"S" SHIELD

POSTER II,  
FEATURING THE  
COMBINED COVERS  
OF KINGDOM COME  
#1-#3

WRAPAROUND  
T-SHIRT WITH NEW  
ART BY ALEX ROSS



MARK WAID  
ALEX ROSS

FOUR-ISSUE  
PRESTIGE  
MINISERIES

BEGINNING  
MAY 1996

# KINGDOM COME™



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