THE BIG GUY WITH THE PONYTAIL? STRAITH, FIRST KNIGHT OF THE PAX GALACTICA.

PRESUMEJLY SOME COSMIC ORDER OF JUSTICE OR SOME SUCH.

THE EARTH’S MOON.

THAT WAS QUITE A FIGHT YOU PUT UP THERE, “SUPERMAN”

BUT NOW THAT MY COMRADES HAVE ARRIVED—

YOU WOULD DO WELL TO SURRENDER BEFORE THEY KILL YOU IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE.

THE ONE IN THE LONG RED CAPE AND KRYPTONIAN CEREMONIAL BATTLE ARMOR?

SUPERMAN, EARTH’S GREATEST CHAMPION.

(WHEN HE’S NOT LIVING HIS LIFE AS CLARK KENT, INTERNET JOURNALIST)

THEY JUST MET.

IT DIDN’T GO WELL.

WRITTEN BY SCOTT LOBDELL  ART BY TYLER KIRKHAM
COLOR BY ARIF PRIANTO  LETTERING BY CARLOS M. MANGUAL
COVER BY TYLER KIRKHAM & ARIF PRIANTO
ASSISTANT EDITOR ANTHONY MARQUES  EDITOR EDDIE BERGANZA
SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY
It's about to get worse.

Your Majesty—why are you giving me that look?

Certainly, you're not going to blame me for the actions of this insolent pup.

Dismissing your straitlaced, so you might prepare this beasthead for our final battle against the Lexus.

Instead, I find you planning pokes and tickles with a native.

In this man's defense, no one was poking or tickling.

Hold your tongue! None dare address her exalted courtesies without her permission.

Kind and brave, Seamus, but time is of the essence. Perhaps this pitiful creature can prove helpful by enlightening us to the specifics of vonper sphere of mud and water.

It is more likely it would prove a momentary distraction if we tossed it into the gaping maw of our enemy.

You are always thinking, Oodling.
JV'S, perhaps he might prove useful to our cause.

Now that everyone has offered their opinion—there's my contribution.

You have four minutes to get out of my solar system never to be seen or heard from again.

By the darque—how strong is this thing?

Perhaps he must not reach the queen.

You dare assault our royal—gak!

You started this, strath...

I don't trust it—it's ugly.

I'm ending it.

Fear not—none shall pass!
STOP HIM, MY BROTHERS IN ARMS! YOU'RE CLEARLY THEIR LEADER. CALL OFF YOUR HELLHOUNDS AND MAYBE I CAN ACTUALLY HELP YOU WITH THIS THREAT YOU'RE FACING—THAT "LEXUS." THEY MIGHT PROVE DIFFICULT... AFTER YOU'RE DEAD FOR THE CRIME OF TOUCHING A ROYAL BODY DEVOID ON A HUNDRED WORLDS?

WILL A CRUSHED SKULL SUFFICE?

LAST CHANCE...

BLOWARD! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE!

VERV-WELL, PERHAPS WE HAVE A COMMON ENEMY...
WHO ARE YOU CALLING... COMMON!

IT'S HERE!

A LOT SMOOTHER THAN WE EXPECTED.

LEXUS, I TAKE IT?

THAT IS ONE NAME. YES.

HE IS ALSO CALLED THE DEVOURER OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.

UH, YEAH...

EXT TIME YOU MIGHT WANT TO OPEN WITH "WE'RE TRYING TO STOP THE DEVOURER OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE."

YOU AMUSE ME, YOU FAUX EARTHINGS!

YOU COULD HAVE PREPARED FOR MY COMING EVERY DAY SINCE THIS PLANET STARTED TO COOL.

YOU COULD HAVE SPENT ITS ENTIRE LIFE PREPARING FOR MY ARRIVAL.

IT WOULD HAVE AVAILED YOU NOTHING!
AFTER YEARS OF BATTLE... AFTER COUNTLESS WARRIORS HAVE FALLEN, THIS MONSTER'S REIGN OF TERROR ENDS HERE NOW! THE PAX GALACTICA WILL SLAY THIS MONSTER AT LONG LAST!

DIE—DIE BY THE ETERNAL LIGHT OF CREATION!

SO MUCH POWER—WIELDED BY SUCH CHILDREN!

NOT REAL BIG ON STRATEGIES, EH?

DON'T KNOW WHAT THE ENERGY IS... BUT IT'S MAKING MY OTHERWISE INVULNERABLE SKIN TINGLE ALL THE WAY OVER HERE!

SHOVE
I’VE FOUGHT THESE PEOPLE—
--I’VE TAKEN THEIR MEASURE.

NO WAY THEY SURVIVE A DIRECT HIT.

THE SUPERMAN!

WHAT MANNER OF ADVERSARY IS THIS—
--THAT HE IS WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR US?

A FOOLISH ONE...

FOR NO FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE CAN
WITHSTAND—

BLAH.

BLAH.

BLAAAAARRGH!

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS
 WITH BEING SUPERMAN...

(THere ARE A FEW)

...IS AFTER FIVE YEARS OF
 BEING BLASTED BY FLEETS
 OF WAR JETS, ASSAULTED BY
 MEGA-TECHS, EVEN FENDING
 OFF A PAN-DIMENSIONAL ARMY
 MORE THAN ONCE...

...YOU RUN THE RISK OF
 THINKING YOU’RE DAMNED
 NIGH INDESTRUCTIBLE.
YOU'RE NOT.
NO ONE IS.

NOTHING IS.

YOU... LIVE?

CLEARLY.

OH... MAGIC?

THERE WE GO.

THE SUPERMAN?!
HE'S FALLEN!

I WILL ATTEND TO OUR FALLEN COMRADE!

HOLD THIS BEAST AT BAY!

BY YOUR COMMAND!

BY YOUR GLORY!
THE FLAT—WHAT IS IT?

I ASK YOU A FINAL TIME:
DO YOU LIVE?

IF NOT...I HAVE A BATTLE ON BEHALF OF ALL LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE. I NEED TO FINISH.

LOURDES...
THE OTHERS?

MY KNIGHTS ARE DISTRACTING THE DEVOURER FOR THE NONCE. LEST HE ATTACK YOU AGAIN BEFORE YOU HAVE TIME TO RECOVER.

PFFFT.
I'M FINE.
THAT THING—WHAT IS IT?
HOW DID IT COME TO BE?

SIMPLY: IT IS EVIL.
THOUGH HIS BODY WAS BORN TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO ON THE DAY OF MY BIRTH—

“HE LEFT THE EMBRACE OF THE KINGDOM OF WONDER EARLY—

“SEEKING OUT ANYONE WHO COULD TEACH HIM HOW TO WIELD THE HORROR WITHIN HIM.

“SOON THERE WAS NO STOPPING HIM AS HE CUT A SWATH ACROSS A DOZEN WORLDS.

“EVENTUALLY, OUR FATHER CUT THE DISEASED HEART FROM MY BROTHER—

“—THAT A UNIVERSE MIGHT KNOW FREEDOM.

“HE CAST THAT STILL BEATING HEART DEEP INTO SPACE.

“A MISTAKE.

“FOR EVIL—

“LIKE ENERGY—

“—CAN NEVER TRULY BE DESTROYED.

“SOON, THE REMAINS OF MY BROTHER...

“...CLOAKED HIMSELF IN THE REMAINS OF THE VERY SAME PLANETS HE’D DESTROYED OVER THE YEARS.

...The evil that consumed my brother had infected his heart long before he began to practice the dark arts.

Maybe...

Maybe that is why our father insisted I followed the ways of the warrior.

So that some day I might lead the Pax Galactica against the monster my brother would one day become.
WHEN I BEGAN THIS CRUSADE TO BRING HIM TO HEEL—WE WERE FIVE HUNDRED STRONG. NOW WE ARE BUT FOUR.

I HAVE FAILED MY FATHER, MY PEOPLE, THE GALAXY.

YOU ARE JUST A MAN—ALBEIT A SUPER MAN. YOU HAVE ALREADY FAILED ONCE.

UNTIL THAT BLAST, I HAD MISSED THE THREAT AS TECHNOLOGICAL IN NATURE. ADMITTEDLY A VERY LIMITED PERCEPTION BASED ON THE FACT THAT WE'RE ALL HERE IN SPACE. THAT, AND WELL—MAGIC ISN'T REALLY MY FORTE.

I NEED TO BORROW THIS A MOMENT.

NAVY A THOUSAND NASIS! RETURN MY ENCHANTED BLADE THIS INSTANT.

YOU DON'T GET TO BE A SUPER MAN—WITHOUT STANDING FOR SOMETHING GREATER THAN YOURSELF.

IT HAS RETURNED?

LEAVE... OR FACE THE END OF YOUR EXISTENCE!

YOU DARE TO SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT?

I WILL PAINT THIS MOON WITH YOUR BLOOD—SO YOU MIGHT WATCH AS THE WORLD YOU SEEK TO PROTECT IS CRUSHED WITHIN MY MASSIVE MAW?

HONESTLY? I WAS HOPING YOU WOULD SAY SOMETHING TO THAT EFFECT.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS.
These are notions the rest of us might entertain in our weaker moments.

But Superman isn’t acting on emotion.

He uses his X-ray vision to peer into the very core of his enemy—

—making certain there is indeed nothing left of the man who was once a person, no matter how corrupt that person might have become.

All he sees is the dead heart of a man slain by his own father.
HE INDICATED TO LOURDES, MAGIC IS SOMETHING THAT OFTEN COUNTERS SUPERMAN’S NATURAL ABILITIES.

SPELLS OFTEN TRUMP THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RED AND YELLOW SUNS THAT ARE THE SOURCE OF HIS POWERS.

SO IN THIS INSTANCE--

--THE KEV IS USING MAGIC AND SCIENCE IN TANDEM!

ON EARTH WE HAVE A SAVING.

“THE EVIL THAT MEN DO LIVES AFTER THEM--THE GOOD IS OFT INTERRED WITH THEIR BONES.”

YOUR POSTHUMOUS REIGN OF TERROR ENDS HERE AND NOW!!

WITHOUT A VESSEL--

--FOR YOUR HATRED,

--YOUR RAGE--

YOU CAN NO LONGER AFFECT THE UNIVERSE AROUND YOU!
Without a sound—

---It's over.

At long last... our enemy has been smitten?

It certainly seems that way. I can't say he'll be missed.

The Pax Galactica will never forget what you have done this day, Superman.

Just doing my part. No need to make a big thing out of it.

Your humility only does you credit, my liege.

My false—?

Wait, your liege?

You have slain our enemy—you have ended our crusade.
WE PLEDGE TO YOU ETERNAL VIGILANCE AND SERVITUDE, SUPERMAN.

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, YOU ARE THE UNDISPUTED RULER OF THE PAX GALACTICA!

YEAH, UM-- NOT INTO THE UNDISPUTED RULER BUSINESS. BUT THANK YOU.

WE ARE DUTY BOUND TO OBEY YOUR EVERY COMMAND.

OKAY.

GO HOME. FIND ANOTHER QUEST.

BY YOUR COMMAND.

HOW CAN YOU NOT LOVE THIS GUY?

SO AM I ALL.

NEXT MONTH: VILLAINS TAKE OVER WITH ACTION COMICS 23.1 CYBORG SUPERMAN!

IN 2 MONTHS: THE EPIC CONCLUSION TO THE PSI WAR IN ACTION COMICS AND SUPERMAN!
With Lara's failed attempt to put down the military coup, all that stands between the colonel's defeat and the complete destruction of Kryptonian society is a single man. His name is Jor-El. Though guided by years of scientific thought and logic, he is--at the last--at a loss.

The World of Krypton

Part 5: Fortitude

Written by: Frank Hannah
Art by: Tom Derenick
Color: M. H. Q. (letters), Carlos M. Mangual
Ass't. Editor: Anthony Marques
Editor: Edric Berganza

The great Jor-El, the youngest and brightest member of the science council, frozen at the controls, you're pathetic.

This is madness.
I think maybe it's you that's taken leave of your senses.

What did you say?

I said no. I won't do it.

It makes no sense. If there is something all of us can agree on, it's that Krypton is more than just a planet. It's an ideal. It's bigger than all of us.

If I've done things to hurt Krypton in the past, I will live with that, but I won't be part of its complete destruction. Not now. Not ever.

The only logical answer, therefore, is to die trying to protect that ideal in hopes that it will serve those yet to come.
YOU SEEM CONVINCED OF YOUR POSITION.

FOOL!

THWACK

JOR-EL, FOR CRIMES AGAINST KRYPTON, I HEREBY SENTENCE YOU TO PUBLIC EXECUTION. MAN OF SHADOW NEVER FIND YOU IN THIS WORLD... OR ANY OTHER.

ON YOUR KNEES!

WIIUZZZZT

1000000!
THE COLONEL HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED. ALL TEAMS INITIATE SECURITY MEASURES.

JOR-EL, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WOULD BE MORE ACCURATE.

LISTEN, OLD FRIEND. THE KRYPTONIAN GUARD HAD A SMALL RESISTANCE TO THIS MADNESS FROM THE START.

I'M JUST SORRY IT TOOK THIS LONG TO ACT. YOU MAY NEED THIS.

THANK YOU---

JAX-UR, YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN ME DIE AT THE HANDS OF THAT MONSTER.

LARA! NO!

LARA, I TRIED TO SAVE YOU. YOU KNOW I DID.

I THOUGHT I LOVED YOU AS WELL.

I-I LOVE YOU.
YOU MUST BE RELIEVED.

I'M SORRY?

THE COLONEL WAS RIGHT, YOU'RE A FOOL.

JAX-UR. BETTER TO FIND OUT NOW THAN, YOU KNOW, AFTER. STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, IT'S BETTER.

IS THAT RIGHT? WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?

ME?
JOE-EL, I'VE FAILED YOU AND THE SCIENCE COUNCIL. I'M A COWARD AND A FAILURE. I THINK I SHOULD RESIGN MY POSITION.

YOU'RE WRONG. I FAILED YOU. I PUT YOU IN THIS POSITION BY CREATING THIS IDIOTIC MACHINE. I BROUGHT THIS TO OUR DOORSTEP.

NOW MOVE ASIDE.

FZZZZZZZZT

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

SOMETHING IMPULSIVE. IT FELT KIND OF GOOD. MIGHT COME IN HANDY SOME DAY.

JOR-EL!
I GUESS THIS WASN'T THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE HAD TO SAVE MY LIFE.
NOR WILL IT BE THE LAST.
LISTEN, WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER ABOUT KRYPTON BEING AN IDEAL THAT'S BIGGER THAN ALL OF US? WELL—I AGREE WITH THAT.

COLONEL EKAR WAS A RELIC. HE FELL VICTIM TO THE SINS OF KRYPTON'S PAST. WE ARE ITS FUTURE.

KRA-HIII, THIS IS AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE FROM CHILDHOOD.

COMMANDER ZOD, AT YOUR SERVICE.

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