



(doctor) **fate** LENDS A HAND TO

SUPERGIRL®

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Ages 10 & up
APPROVED BY THE
COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY

DAVID
KIRK
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A Rose Among THORNS

I shouldn't care if Buzz dies. That's the really remarkable thing.

Granted, he serves a purpose for me. He's my guide, following the path of the Chaos Stream, ideally to guide me to wherever the fallen angel aspect of Supergirl is being held.

But he's a demon as well. A demon trapped in mortal form, who brought no end of grief to Linda Danvers... i.e., me.

So he sustained a stinging wound from his insect-like daughter. So what?

So he's been poisoned. Again, so what? Considering the poisonous effect he's had on my life... I should be happy. Because Linda Danvers, the girl whose life he ruined, should have no mercy for him.

ARRRHHH!

UNHHHHH!

SUPERGIRL?
HELLO? HELLO?

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Except... I'm not that Linda Danvers, anymore. Despite everything Buzz did to me... I still want to believe that that there's potential for good in him. God help me... I even want to understand him.



I should be pleased... even grateful... for this apparently permanent change Supergirl's had on my outlook.

So why am I more bugged about it than anything else?

Hi... Clark... sorry, some obnoxious truckers wanted to use the phone. In answer to your question...

YES, I'M SURE THAT WHATEVER POISON'S GOTTEN INTO HIS SYSTEM IS MYSTICALLY BASED. THE WOUND HE SUSTAINED FROM HIS... FROM THE CREATURE... HEALED INSTANTLY. BUT HE'S GETTING WEAKER.

OKAY, SIT TIGHT. I'LL CONTACT THE JSA IMMEDIATELY, AND THEY CAN OBTAIN THE SERVICES OF THE DOCTOR. STAY IN THE GENERAL AREA, BUT DON'T ANNOY ANY MORE TRUCKERS, OKAY?



GOT IT.
AND CLARK...
HURRY.



And that there, but for the grace of Supergirl... go I.

No, I don't know what formed him. I'm glad I don't...

MARCUS! GAIUS MARCUS! A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME!

LORDS ABOVE, CASSIUS CHAEREA, WHAT AILS YOU? YOU SEEM RATHER WAN.

MMMM?

...OR WHISPER. FOR THE WALLS OF EVEN THE MOST PRIVATE HOMES HAVE EARS THESE DAYS.

COME CLOSE, OLD FRIEND, SO THAT I MAY SPEAK PLAINLY BY HIDING IN THIS PLAINEST OF SIGHT...

AS YOU WISH. ARRHH, DAMNED FLIES. SO... WHAT WILL YOU...?

WE MEAN TO TERMINATE THE REIGN OF OUR MAD EMPEROR. THE LITTLE SANDAL'S TIME HAS COME.

Y-YOU'RE MADDER THAN THE EMPEROR HIMSELF! THREE ATTEMPTS THUS FAR HAVE FAILED!

AND MATTERS CANNOT BE THAT DIRE! CALIGULA'S BEEN IN POWER FOUR YEARS. BE REASONABLE, CHAEREA...

REASONABLE? HE SPEAKS OF MAKING HIS HORSE A CONSUL! HE SLAYS ANYONE WHO USES THE WORD "GOAT" IN HIS PRESENCE FOR HE PERCEIVES INSULT! HIS TREASON TRIALS ARE INCESSANT! HE--!

AND HE MOCKED YOU ON THE SENATE FLOOR... CALLED YOU EFFEMINATE. IS THAT TRULY WHAT'S AT STAKE? YOUR EGO?

YES... ME TO WAR, AND YOU TO THE SENATE AND THE COLLEGE OF AUGURS. YOU'RE CALLED THE MOST PIUS MAN IN ROME, MARCUS. SOME SAY YOU COULD RISE TO BE FLAMINE DIALIS, PRIEST TO JUPITER HIMSELF. THAT'S WHY WE NEED YOU.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

CHAEREA, WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE CHILDHOOD. I STILL CONSIDER YOU FRIEND, ALTHOUGH OUR LIVES HAVE GONE VERY DIFFERENT PATHS...

YOUR REPUTATION IS UNSULLIED, YOUR NAME WITHOUT BLEMISH. IF YOU AID US IN OUR CAUSE, THE GODS THEMSELVES WILL LIKELY ENDORSE OUR ENDEAVORS, AS WILL THE PEOPLE. WE MUST SUCCEED!

IF YOU DO, IT SHALL BE WITHOUT ME. OUT OF RESPECT TO OUR FRIENDSHIP, I'LL SPEAK OF THIS TO NO ONE.

MURDER IS WRONG, CHAEREA. WHETHER BY AN EMPEROR, SOLDIER OR SENATOR, IT IS WRONG. THE SENATE DULY APPOINTED HIM. IF THERE ARE REMEDIES TO HIS... OUTLANDISHNESS... THEY WILL BE LEGAL ONES.

GOOD DAY TO YOU, CHAEREA.

YOU HAVE BEEN UNSCATHED BY HIS "WHIMSIES" THUS FAR, MARCUS! WERE YOU TO KNOW STRIFE, YOU MIGHT BE SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE!

UTTER INSANITY! PERHAPS, RATHER THAN SIMPLY TELL HIM, I SHOULD HAVE DONE MORE TO SWAY HIM FROM HIS COURSE. WHAT SORT OF--

EH? THE EMPEROR'S OWN GUARD... AT MY HOME? DO THEY... DO THEY KNOW OF CHAEREA'S PLANS? SUSPECT ME OF COMPLICITY...?

WRONG IS WRONG, CHAEREA, AND AGAIN, GOOD DAY.

GODS BE GOOD... I-I MUST RESTRAIN MYSELF...

GOOD DAY TO
YOU... UHM,
LARGE SIRS.
TO WHAT DO
I OWE THIS
PLEASURE?

EMPEROR'S
BUSINESS.

WELL... AS THIS
IS MY HOUSE,
HIS BUSINESS
SEEMS TO OVER-
LAP WITH MINE
OWN... SO
PERHAPS...

PERHAPS... SINCE
THEY ARE OUR PERSONAL
GUARDS, THEY SHOULD BE
GRANTED THE SAME COURTESY
YOU WOULD ACCORD US. IS
THAT NOT SO, AUGUR?

HAIL CAESAR! A THOUSAND
PARDONS, YOUR GLORY!

TO ONE OF SUCH
LIMITED VISION, THE THOUGHT
THAT YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY BE
IN MY UNWORTHY HOME NEVER
OCCURRED TO ME!

DOES IT PLEASE
YOUR GLORY TO TELL ME
WHY YOU'RE HERE... OR SHALL
I TAKE YOUR PRESENCE FOR
THE SIMPLE MIRACLE IT--

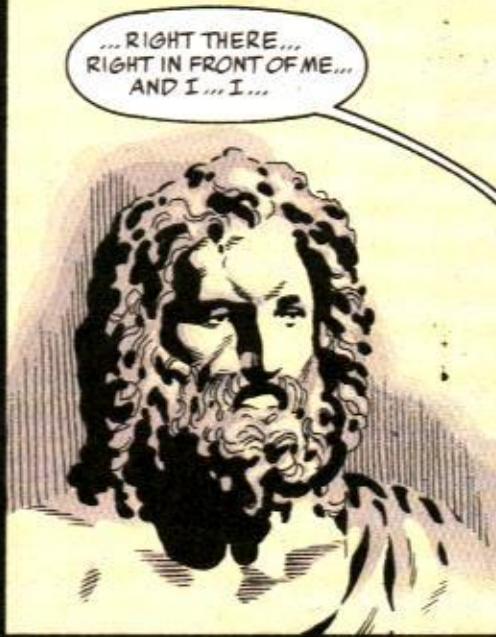
MARCUS...
VA- VALERIA?

YES, WE HAVE
NOTICED HER.
SHE IS A MOST
COMELY
THING.

MARCUS...
PLEASE... D-DO
SOMETHING... SAY
SOMETHING...

WE ARE GIVING
HER THE HONOR
OF JOINING US
FOR... AMUSE-
MENT.

CAESAR,
YOU HAVE...
NOTICED MY
WIFE... I
SEE...



VENGEANCE, ALMIGHTY JUPITER! CHAEREA WAS RIGHT, I SEE THAT NOW! THE EMPEROR MUST BE STOPPED! GREAT ONE, I SACRIFICE THIS GOAT TO SYMBOLIZE THE HUMAN GOAT WHO MUST DIE!

AID CASSIUS CHAEREA! HELP HIM AND THE OTHERS TO SUCCEED, AND DELIVER MY VALERIA BACK TO ME! I WILL GIVE ANYTHING--!

HE AND THE OTHERS ARE ON THEIR WAY OUT, YOU SEE. OH, THEY'LL STILL BE ABLE TO IMPRESS THE ODD AMAZON OR TWO... BUT THEIR TIME IS PASSING. NEW AND VERY DIFFERENT GODS WALK THIS SPHERE... AND YOUR PANTHEON WILL PALE IN COMPARISON.

WH- WHO ARE YOU?

I AM CALLED BY SOME BA'AL ZEBUL... LORD OF THE HIGH HOUSE. ALTHOUGH I'VE COME TO PREFER BAALZEBUB...

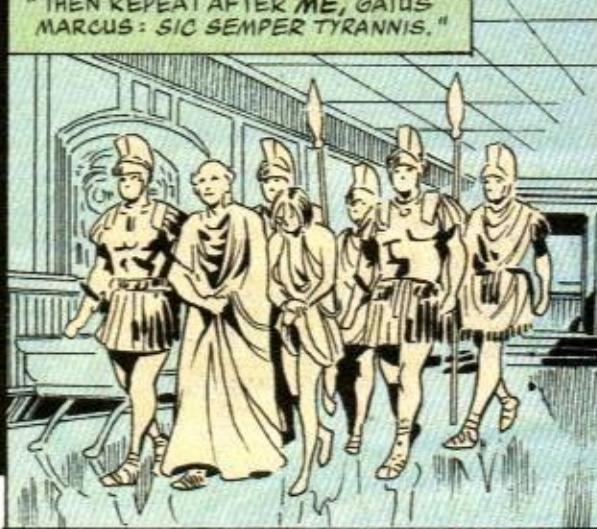
"LORD OF FLIES"?



THE MOST PIous MAN IN ROME, SEEKING AID IN A MURDER? AND WOULD YOU TRULY GIVE ANYTHING FOR SUCH AN IMPIOUS ACT? EVEN YOURSELF? EVEN AFTER DEATH?

DESTROY THE TYRANT AND RETURN MY WIFE TO ME ALIVE... AND AFTER OUR TIME TOGETHER IS AT AN END, I WILL BE FOREVER YOURS, LORD OF FLIES.

"THEN REPEAT AFTER ME, GAIUS MARCUS: SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS."



"SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS."



"WELL SPOKEN, GAIUS MARCUS. INDEED, SO IS IT ALWAYS... WITH TYRANTS. NOW... RETURN HOME. YOUR WIFE, I SUSPECT, WILL BE ALONG DIRECTLY. GO TO HER... AND WHEN YOUR TIME TOGETHER ENDS... YOU WILL SERVE ME."



"A PIous MAN WILL AFFORD ME... MUCH AMUSEMENT."



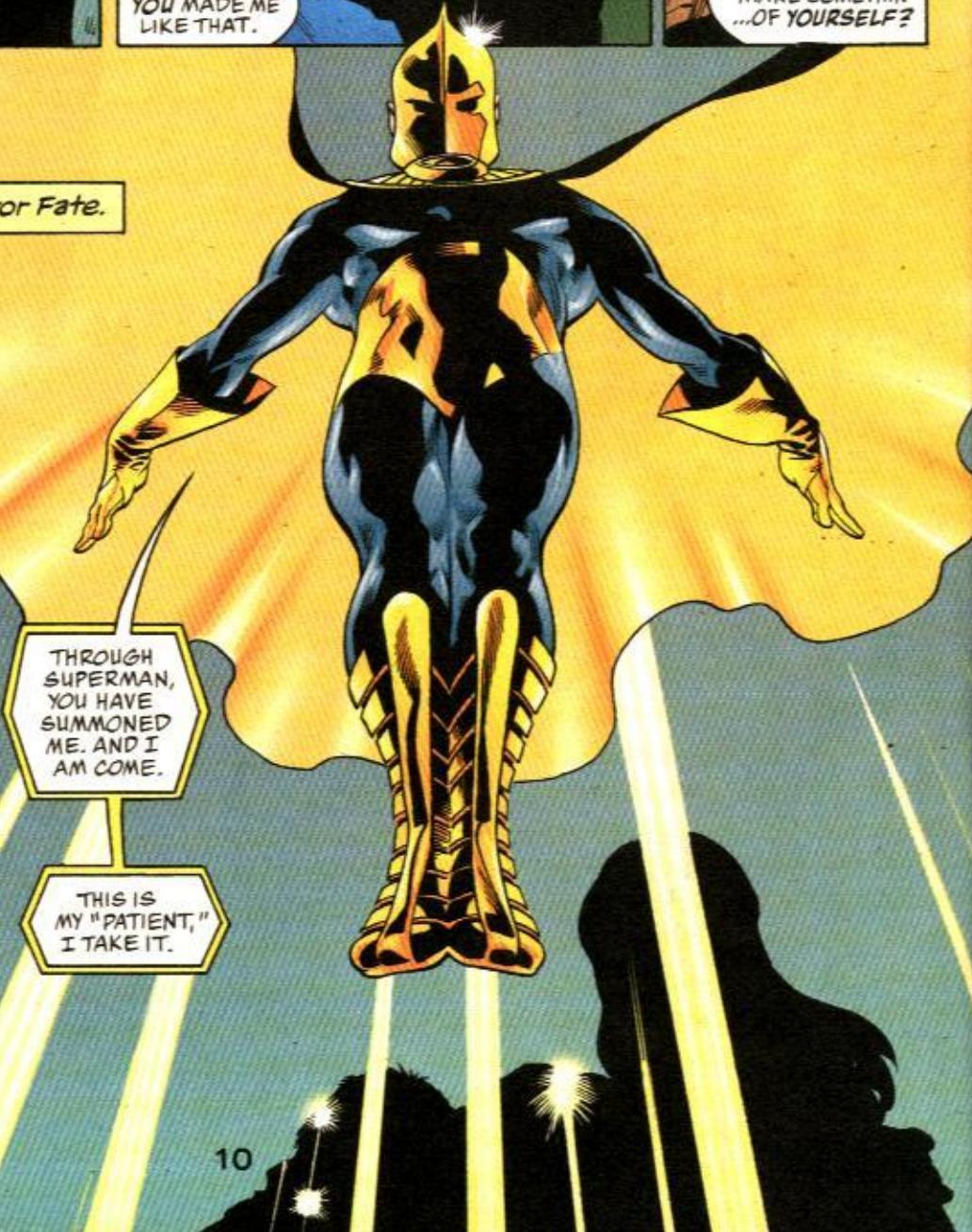
VALERIA!

VALERIA,
ARE YOU HERE?!
ARE YOU--?









OOOO... EVERYONE'S
FAVORITE... SPOOKY
MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.
WHAT INSURANCE
DO YOU TAKE? BOO
CROSS?

IGNORE
HIM. EVEN
WHEN HE'S
HEALTHY, HE'S
INSUFFERABLE.
IT'S A LOT
WORSE THIS
TIME.

YER TOO
KIND.

YOU WERE RIGHT,
SUPergirl. THINK OF IT AS A
SORT OF ARCAne SNAKE VENOM.
IT HAS NO PHYSIOLOGICAL BASE;
IT'S PURELY MAGIC.

AT THE RISK
OF SOUNDING
IMMODOSt:
YES.

TAKE
THE RISK, YA
BLOODY--!

I WOULD HELP HIM IN
ANY EVENT, SINCE I AM
BOUND TO LET NONE DIE
IF I CAN PREVENT IT.
YOU, HOWEVER, HAVE
NO SUCH VOW. IT WILL
NOT ALTER MY COURSE.
I AM SIMPLY... CURIOUS.

...
YES. GOD
HELP ME, YES...
WHICH IS AN
ADMISSION I
NEED LIKE A
HOLE IN THE
HEAD...

SHUT UP,
BUZZ.

DO YOU
CARE ABOUT
THIS... INDIVIDUAL?

FUNNY...
YOU SHOULD
MENTION THAT...





A-A "VILLAIN"? IS...
IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK
ME, BUZZ? AFTER ALL
WE...

HERE, I HAD
THIS DONE
FOR YOU.

GIFT
GIVING, AND
HERE I DIDN'T
GET YOU
ANYTHING.

B-BUZZ? WHY... ARE
YOU BEHAVING LIKE THIS?
AND... WHAT ARE WE WAITING
FOR? YOU... YOU CAME HERE
BECAUSE THERE'S A SECRET
WAY OUT, CORRECT? WE'LL LET
THEM THINK I DIED HERE,
AND YOU AND I--

LOVELY, VERY
LOVELY. I'LL KEEP IT
FOREVER... OR AT LEAST
UNTIL IT AMUSES ME
TO GIVE IT AWAY.

WILKES... IT'S TIME
TO TELL YOU. THERE IS NO
"YOU AND I." AND YES,
THERE'S A WAY OUT FOR
YOU, BUT IT'S GOING TO
BE AS A PILE OF
ASHES.

YOU SEE,
WILKESY...

?KOFF!
?KOFFFF!

BUT... BUT I
?KOFF? I THOUGHT
WE WERE FRIENDS...
I THOUGHT--

ACTING!

THE MASTER I
WORK FOR IS SO PLEASED
WITH MY CENTURIES OF
SERVICE... THAT HE HAS
PROMISED ME I'LL HAVE
MY VALERIA BACK IF I
"FACILITATED" YOUR LITTLE
ENDEAVOR. WHICH
I HAVE.

THAT I CARED FOR
YOU? MY DEAR BOOTH...
CERTAINLY A SHAKESPEAREAN
VETERAN AS YOURSELF CAN
APPRECIATE...

OH, AND
GET USED TO
THE FLAMES.
YOU'LL BE
ENJOYING AN
ETERNITY
OF THEM.

AAARRHH!

ARRHH!

...people suffered at my hands as well. And Buzz was... is a demon. I was a normal human... at least before Supergirl entered my life.

This shouldn't be bothering me. So many good people have suffered because of Buzz. Then again...

I'd be burning in hell right now if she hadn't given me a second chance. Does Buzz deserve less?

Yeah... yeah, he does deserve less. As Linda Danvers, I went down the road I did because of him! He...

Or... is that just an excuse? Let's be honest: I was no prize before Buzz came along.

I fell in with Buzz because I had a habit of hanging with the "wrong" people, just to get back at my mom and dad, who committed no crime except that of trying to be good parents.

It's not as if he's totally without fault. He's probably committed crimes I can't even conceive.



How am I going to get anywhere in life if I keep hanging all my excuses on Buzz?

Then again, who knows what sort of punishment he's received because of them?

I'M TELLIN' YUH, BOSS, I WAS RIGHT READY TO KILL HER THEN AND THERE, I WAS. MARY JUST LOOKS ME SQUARE IN THE EYE AND SAYS, "I'LL DO AS I BLOODY WELL PLEASE, I WILL. JUST BECAUSE WE LIVE TOGETHER, JOSEPH BARNETT, DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO TELL ME HOW TO EARN MY COIN!"

THEN SHE THREATENS TO THROW ME OUT, BOSS! ME! JUST 'CAUSE I DON'T WANT HER SELLING HERSELF TO WHOEVER'S GOT THREE FARTHINGS ON THE EAST END!

IT'S A RIGHT PITY, MATE. A RIGHT PITY.

KEEP TELLIN' YA, THOUGH. IT'S "BUZZ." NOT "BOSS."

SO YOU GONNA LET THE LITTLE TART TALK TO YOU LIKE THAT? JUST CONTINUE BEING A STRUMPET?

CONTINUE BEING A STRUMPET? BOSS, IF I COULD FIGURE OUT A WAY T'DO IT WITHOUT BEING COPPED TO IT, I'D GUT HER LIKE A BLEEDIN' FISH, I WOULD!

AH! GOT IT! WOULD YA LIKE T'KNOW WHAT T'DO, JOEY?

SIMPLE MISDIRECTION, MATE. YOU HAVE THE LAW LOOKING IN ONE PLACE...

Hmm... GETTING NICKED WOULD BE A PROBLEM. AFTER ALL, YOU'D BE THE PRIME SUSPECT IF MARY KELLY DIES, SO...

LIKE T'KNOW WHAT T'DO, JOEY? LOVE TO, BOSS. LOVE TO.

... THINKING THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ONE THING... AND AS A RESULT...

...THEY NEVER
TRULY REALIZE WHAT
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR.
DO YOU FOLLOW ME,
MATE?

WAIT! YES! YOU'RE
SAYIN'... THAT I CARVE UP
ANOTHER TART FIRST! OR
EVEN A FEW OF THEM! THEN,
WHEN I DO MARY A
TREAT...

...THEY WON'T LOOK
TOO CLOSE AT THE INDIVIDUAL
CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY'LL
THINK SHE'S JUST A RANDOM
VICTIM OF A STRING OF
MURDERS.

FOLLOW
ME, MATE?
TRUTH TO
TELL... NO.

BRILLIANT, BOSS!
AND WHO KNOWS? MAYBE
MURDERIN' SOME USELESS
TARTS WILL SCARE MARY
RIGHT OUT OF THAT LINE OF
WORK! IT'S A RIPPING
IDEA!

RIPPING, INDEED. YOU DO THIS
RIGHT, JOEY... AND A HUNDRED
YEARS FROM NOW, THEY'LL STILL
BE TALKING ABOUT THE RIPPING
MURDERS IN WHITECHAPEL IN
1888!

CAN'T STAY AND CHAT,
BOSS! WORK T'DO! HERE,
TAKE THE BOTTLE! I
GOT PLENTY!

LET'S GET
TOGETHER
AGAIN IN A
MONTH!

I DON'T
HAVE THE
ADDRESS
OF YOUR
FLAT!

AND AGAIN,
JOEY, IT'S "BUZZ,"
NOT "BOSS."

LET'S NOT.
JUST DROP ME
A LETTER.

SEND IT CARE
OF THE CENTRAL
NEWS AGENCY. I
SUSPECT I'LL SEE
IT THAT WAY, JACK.









YOU CLAIM THE "ALMIGHTY" IS "FORCING" YOU TO REMAIN WITH SUPERGIRL IN SOME MANNER?

TOO RIGHT. IF I TRY TO LEAVE HER, OR ACT CONTRARY TO HER INTERESTS, I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS DRIVING AN ICEPICK THROUGH MY SKULL. NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS.



AND YOU BELIEVE THIS TO BE DIVINE INTERVENTION OF SOME SORT?

OF COURSE. WHAT ELSE--?

BUZZ... I PSYCHICALLY AND MYSTICALLY SCOURED YOU TO RID YOU OF THE POISON. IF THE PRESENCE HAD, IN ANY WAY, ACTED UPON YOU IN DAYS PAST... I WOULD HAVE NOTICED IT. IT WOULD HAVE LEFT A DIVINE RESIDUE, AS DISCERNIBLE AS A ROSE AMONG THORNS.

I AM SAYING THE PRESENCE HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN MICROMANAGE YOUR FREE WILL.

THEN WHY AM I IN PAIN WHEN I EVEN THINK OF LEAVING HER OR HURTING HER...?

BUZZ... ANY MUSCLE THAT IS UNUSED FOR LENGTHY PERIODS CAUSES PAIN WHEN IT'S EMPLOYED AGAIN. ASK ANYONE WHO TAKES UP AN EXERCISE PROGRAM.

I'M STILL NOT FOLLOWING...

WHAT, YOU'RE SAYING--?

THE PAIN YOU FEEL, BUZZ, IS YOUR CONSCIENCE. YOUR SENSE OF PIETY. APPARENTLY, YOU'RE LONG OUT OF PRACTICE UTILIZING IT. IF YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP USING IT, YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK THROUGH THE PAIN.

PROVIDED YOU THINK YOU'RE WORTH IT...



...AND YOU THINK SHE'S WORTH IT. SHE SEEMS TO THINK YOU'RE WORTH THE EFFORT. HOPEFULLY...

...AT SOME POINT, YOU WILL, TOO.

