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SUPERGIRL®

A
COMET'S
TALE!



#98
ROBIN
TRIGGS

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P. DAVID • L. KIRK • P. ROLLINS

I try to do right.
Always. Without
exception.

PETER DAVID · WRITER
LEONARD KIRK &
PRENTIS ROLLINS · ARTISTS
PAT PRENTICE · LETTERS
GENE D'ANGELO · COLORS
DIGITAL CHAMELEON · SEPS
FRANK BERRIOS · ASSISTS
MIKE MCAVENNIE · EDITS

And as I feel Comet's
powerful arms around
me... as I feel myself
drawn to him in a
way that I haven't been
since Lex Luthor, my
brain *screams* at me:

"Since Lex? That
alone should
warn you! You
know nothing
about him!
Get clear!"

But for once, I
don't care about
doing the right
thing. I simply don't.

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SO... YOU
SAID YOU CAN
GET MONEY TO
GET ME OFF THE
HOOK WITH THE
STABLE. THAT'S
RIGHT?

HOW
MUCH DO YOU
NEED?

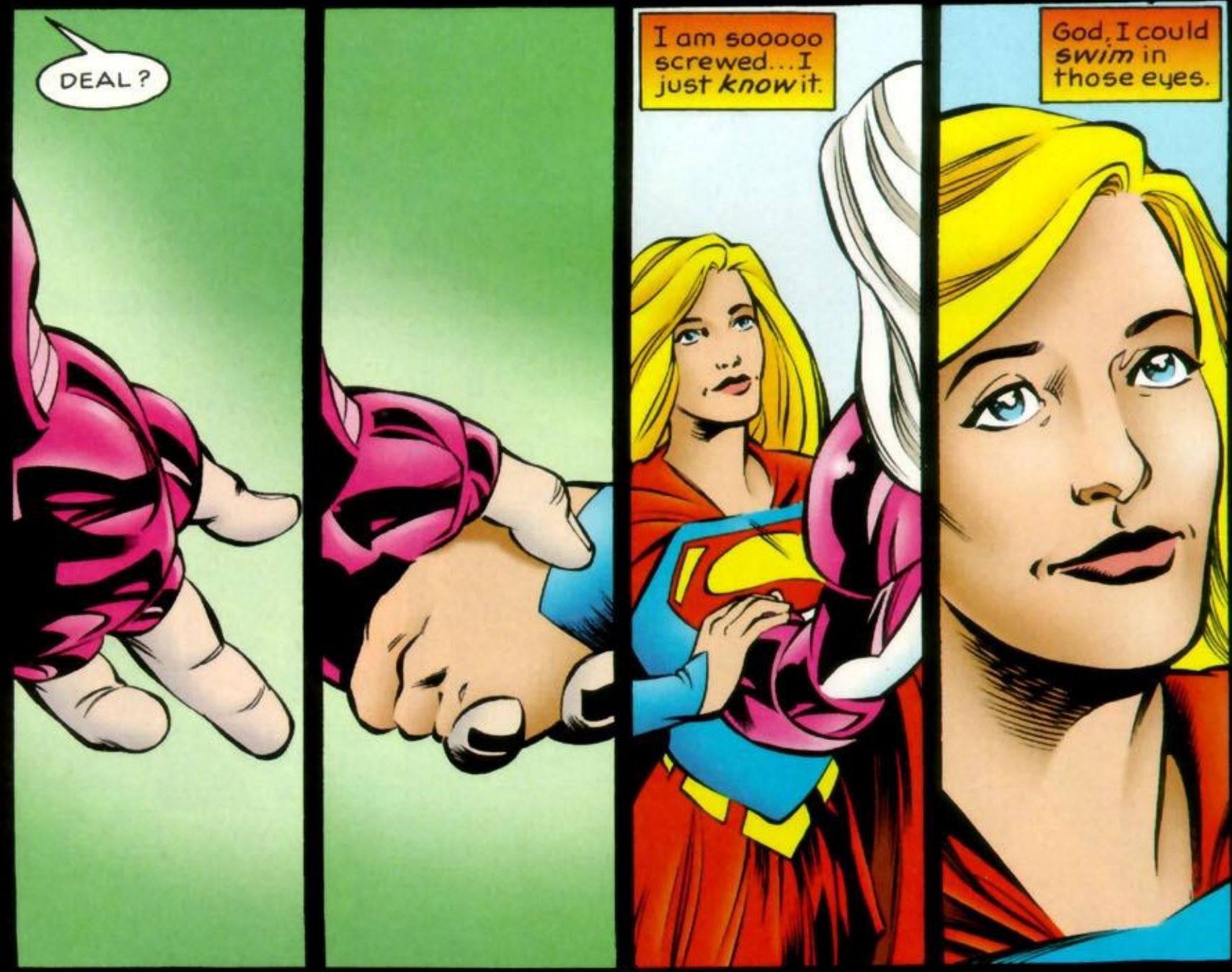
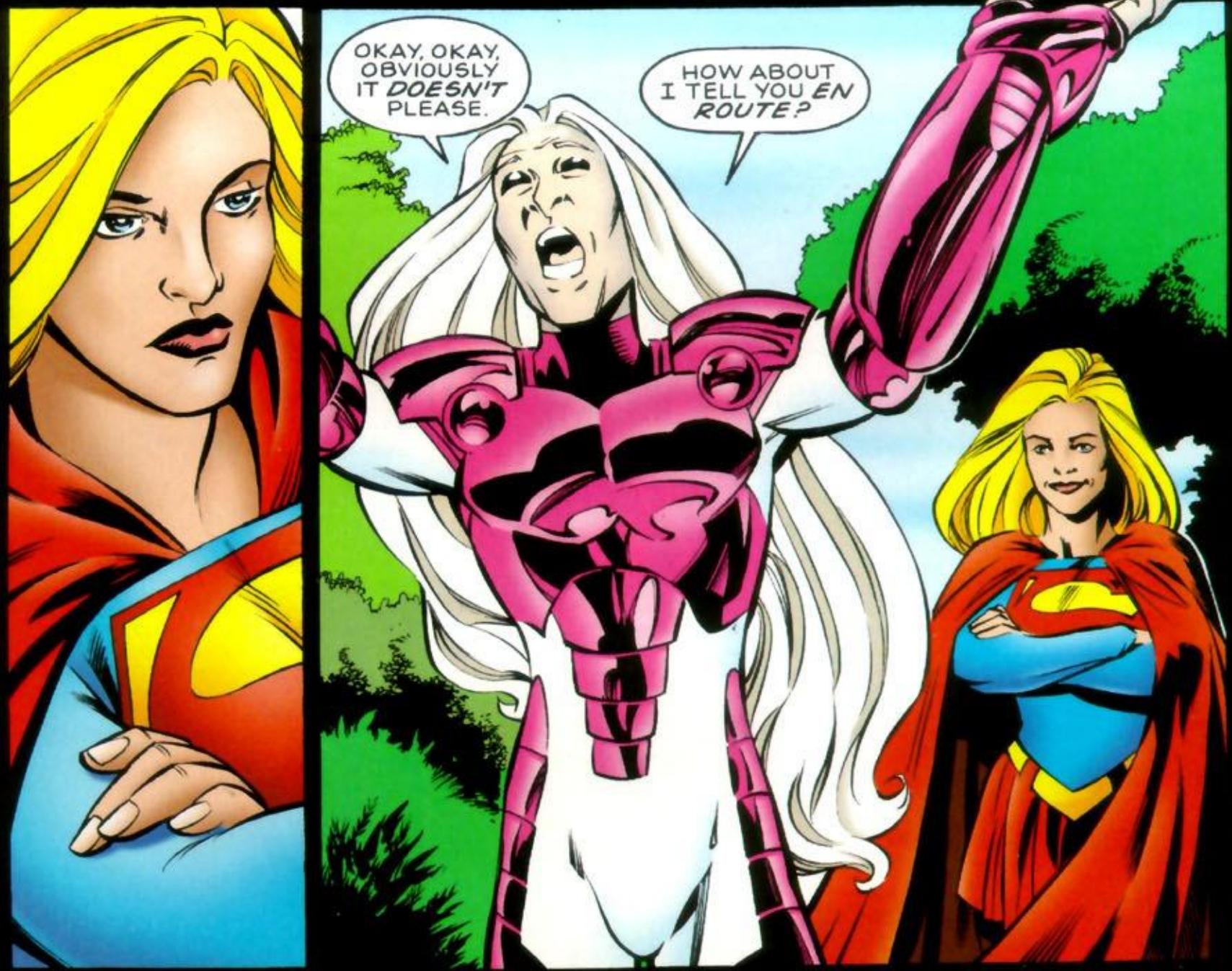
ABOUT THREE-
POINT-FIVE
MILLION.

GOOD LORD.
WHAT IS THAT
GOING TO BUY
YOU?

WE HAD A
DEAL, COMET. FIRST
YOU HAVE TO TELL
ME ABOUT YOUR
BACKGROUND.

MY
FREEDOM.
SO... WHERE'S
THE MONEY YOU
SAID YOU COULD
TURN UP?

THE MONEY
FIRST, IF YOU
PLEASE.



LEESBURG
HOSPITAL...

FRED,
YOU'RE MAKING
A BIG MISTAKE.
YOU CAN'T BE
SERIOUS!

NOW? NOW,
YOU'RE SPEAKING
OF FILING FOR
A DIVORCE, WHEN
YOUR WIFE NEEDS
YOU MORE THAN
EVER...?

CAUTION A

HOS

...ALONG
WITH ALCOHOL,
LINDA AND
GOD.

HOW
DARE
YOU!
IT'S "FOR BETTER
OR WORSE," SON,
NOT "UNTIL I'M
TIRED!"

SHE DOESN'T
NEED ME... EXCEPT
MAYBE AS ANOTHER
CRUTCH TO BE ADDED
TO HER LIST...

I'M HEARING THE DESPAIR
TALKING NOW, NOT THE
MAN I'VE COME TO KNOW.
DON'T YOU DARE WALK
OUT ON HER!

I'M
TIRED OF
IT, AND I'M
THROUGH
BEING HER
"SUPPORT
SYSTEM."

ALL DUE
RESPECT... IT'S
MY LIFE, JONATHAN.
AND I'LL DO WHAT
I HAVE TO DO.

YOU WERE RIGHT,
JONATHAN. IT IS THE
DESPAIR TALKING. BUT
WHAT ARE WE GOING
TO DO ABOUT IT?

MARTHA, YOU
CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW MUCH I WAS
HOPING YOU'D KNOW
THE ANSWER TO
THAT ONE.

WHERE
ARE WE
GOING?

I WAS CONNECTED TO LEXCORP FOR A TIME, AND THEY HAD A DIVISION INVOLVED WITH SALVAGE PROJECTS. THEY HAD A NUMBER OF PLACES THAT THEY HAD TARGETED FOR OPERATIONS, THROUGH TO THE END OF THE CENTURY.

WELL, THERE'S GOING TO BE ONE PLACE WHERE THEY'LL ROOT AROUND IN 1999 AND FIND NOTHING THERE.

NOW... YOU WERE SAYING? OR RATHER, YOU WEREN'T SAYING, BUT WERE ABOUT TO...?

OKAY. UHM... WHERE TO START. MY NAME... WELL... LET'S NOT GET INTO MY NAME AT THE MOMENT.

I WAS A JOCKEY, YOU SEE. ONE OF THE BEST.

IT WAS AS IF... AS IF I HAD SOME SPECIAL AFFINITY FOR HORSES. AS IF WE WERE LINKED SOMEHOW, HORSE AND RIDER. AND THEN ONE DAY... ONE AWFUL DAY...

IT WAS THE BIGGEST RACE I WAS EVER IN. IT WAS THE ONE I'D BEEN BUILDING UP TO MY ENTIRE LIFE.

"I WAS AHEAD OF THE PACK. HOME FREE. AND THEN, SUDDENLY..."

"...IT WAS..."

"THE PAIN, THE SHOCK... LIKE A SURF FILLED WITH HOOVES WASHING OVER ME..."

I'M...
I'M SO
SORRY...

IT HAPPENS.

"ANYWAY, THEY TOLD ME THAT I WOULD NEVER WALK AGAIN... MOVE AGAIN. I WAS A COMPLETE BASKET CASE."

"MY HEALTH INSURANCE, MY MONEY QUICKLY RAN OUT. I HAD NO ONE IN THE WORLD -- MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS A KID, AND I WAS RAISED BY A SERIES OF FOSTER PARENTS."

"AND WHEN I WAS COMPLETELY AT THE END OF MY ROPE, ONE DAY... THIS..."

"... THIS GUY
SHOWS UP.
A DWARF.

"HAD AN ACCENT
I COULDN'T PLACE.
VAGUELY JAMAICAN.
AND **BEST** OF ALL
WAS HIS NAME..."

MY NAME IS
MR. STUBBS.
I REPRESENT MR.
CARNIVEAN, THE
HEAD OF ATLAS
CORP. WE HAVE
A VARIETY OF
INTERESTS, A
VARIETY OF
PROJECTS...

... AND
MR. CARNIVEAN
FEELS THAT YOU
WOULD BE IDEAL
FOR ONE OF
THEM.

AS WHAT?
HOME PLATE
IN THE SPECIAL
OLYMPICS BASE-
BALL GAME?

**LOOK AT ME!
I'M NOTHING! I'M
A BRAIN IN A SHELL!
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF
PHYSICAL THERAPY DO
YOU THINK WOULD DO
ME THE SLIGHTEST
BIT OF GOOD?!**

YOU
WOULD BE
AMAZED.



"YOU WOULD
BE AMAZED"?
I DON'T LIKE
THE SOUND OF
THAT.



IF I'D HAD
ANY BRAINS, I
WOULDN'T HAVE
LIKED IT,
EITHER.

STAY
ON TRACK,
STALKER. KEEP
ON HER AND
HIM.

NOW
THAT OUR DEAR
ZED SEEMS TO HAVE
PICKED UP AN ALLY, LET'S
SEE WHAT MATTERS OF
INTEREST SHE HAS
TO REVEAL TO
US.





THE AAAL?
THE GROUP I
HELPED START?
I'LL BE DAMNED.
THIS A CALL FOR
DONATIONS OR
SOMETHING?

AND IF
YOU KNOW ANY
REPORTERS, OR ARE
FRIENDLY WITH
THEM...?

ATLAS CORP.
HAS A DIVISION
EXPERIMENTING
WITH GENETIC
ENGINEERING...

OF COURSE.
DOESN'T **EVERY**
MAJOR CORPO-
RATION?

I'M NOT
JOKEING. IT
WAS LIKE...
LIKE SOMETHING
OUT OF
A SCIENCE
FICTION
FILM.

"IT ALL BECAME
KIND OF A **BLUR**
TO ME. I SUSPECT
THEY EVEN KEPT
ME DRUGGED UP.

"THEY STRAPPED ME
DOWN TO TABLES, RAN
ME THROUGH THESE HUGE
ANALYZING TUNNELS, LIKE
MRIS, BUT **BIGGER** AND
MORE **FRIGHTENING**.

"AND THERE WERE
SURGICAL PROCEDURES...

"ALL I KNEW
WAS THAT
I'D WAKE UP
LATER FEELING
LIKE THERE
WAS SOME
SORT OF
BURNING
SENSATION IN
MY VEINS, BUT
I DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT
IT WAS.

"AND I'D HAVE WEIRD DREAMS...
I'D DREAM OF THE ACCIDENT AT
THE TRACK, EXCEPT THE HORSES
WOULDN'T BE STAMPEDING
OVER ME...

"INSTEAD, THEY **GROUPED**
AROUND ME, REARING UP
ON THEIR HIND LEGS, AS IF
... AS IF **WELCOMING** ME."

"AND THEN, AT ONE POINT, I WOKE UP. AND THERE WAS STUBBS STANDING THERE, STARING AT ME. AND STUBBS SAID..."

YOU CAN GET OUT OF BED NOW.

ARE YOU...
SURE?
LEGS FEEL
SO...

...SO
WEAK...
THEY...

MY...
MY GOD.
WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE
TO ME?

WE DECIDED THAT YOUR PARTICULAR CASE WAS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO TEST CROSSBREEDING WITH ANIMAL GENES. AND YOUR AFFINITY FOR HORSES MADE THAT PARTICULAR SPECIES AN IDEAL CANDIDATE.

"ALL THINGS
CONSIDERED...

Ba-RAASCH!

"...I TOOK MY
NEW STATUS
RATHER WELL,
I THINK."

THWCK

THEY TRIED TO MAKE ME PART OF THIS ELITE UNIT OF THEIRS... CALLED THE STABLE, WHIMSICALLY ENOUGH. BUT I WANTED OUT.

THEY SAID I COULD BUY MY WAY OUT OF THE CONTRACT. OTHERWISE, I HAD TO WORK FOR THEM.

ISN'T THAT ILLEGAL? INDENTURED SERVITUDE OR SOMETHING?

BELIEVE ME, THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT LEGALITIES. SO I WENT ON THE RUN, AND I'VE BEEN CONTINUING TO RUN FOR...

WAIT. OKAY, THIS IS IT. STAY HERE.

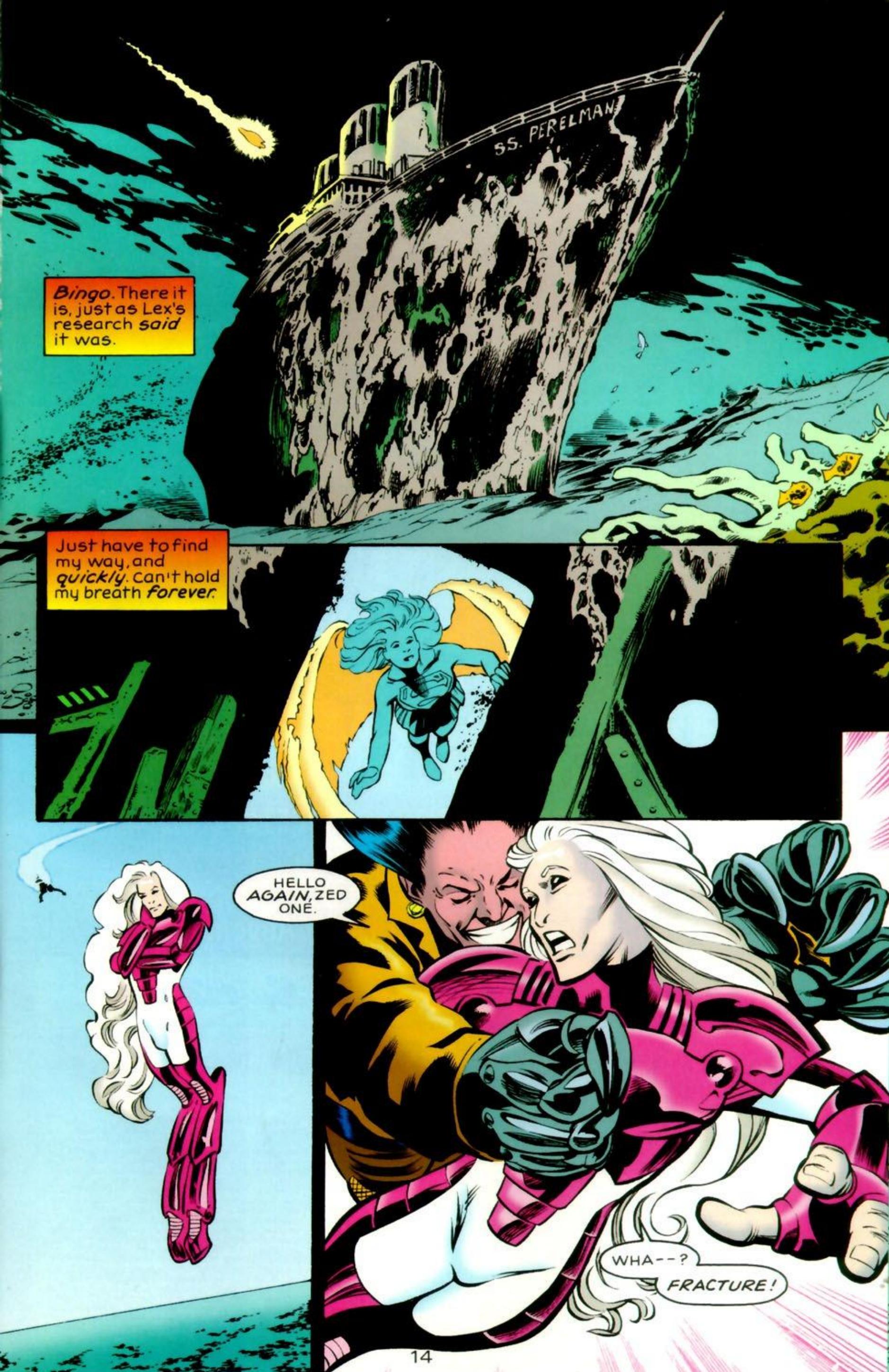
UHM... OKAY.

I descend quickly into darkness. Within moments, I wouldn't be able to see anything.

But then I flare out my wings and I've got more than enough light.

They're becoming easier and easier to manipulate.

I just hope that I'm not being manipulated, as well.



















The sound and the fury will follow *shortly*, though by that time we'll be *long* gone...but Comet pauses long enough to answer my question, rather *succinctly*:

EVERY WHICH WAY.



NEXT: STEEL

We're going to cover most of the Despero appearance in SUPERGIRL #17 this month, as well as talk about Wally and the wings!

Dear Mr. David:

Oh my God oh my God oh my God. Wings. And I thought the eyes were intense. I've never written a letter to a comic before because basically I only read comics I like. I never have anything to say but "Hey, I like your comic," and I always figured you guys get enough of that. But then, Keith Giffen complained in BOOK OF FATE #12 about not getting enough support, so I thought maybe I'd start writing letters (but to paraphrase Steve Martin, writing about comics is like dancing about architecture). On the other hand, I have to say something about wings of angelic fire, not to mention "Hi, I'm God" from page 18. (By the way, someone should tell The Spectre about this.) But there's nothing intellectual to say about comics, it's just an indescribable and awesome beauty they have. So, I'll just pull a Kerouac and say "awwww..." She is God(ess), tu es Peter, and now that SPECTRE is ending, SUPERGIRL is indisputably the best title in the DCU (before now, it was a tie).

Wings of fire. Wings of fire. Wings of fire.

I know you've said you're keeping the costume, but any time you want to give her a new one and take her over to VERTIGO, you know I'll back you up. Or maybe the costume is part of what makes her so awesome. I'll settle for taking her to VERTIGO. Actually, I'll be overjoyed with whatever you do.

I've sworn to mail this whether it makes sense or not. If any title in the DC Universe can make me write a letter, it's this one.

"Hey, I like your comic." Keep it up for a few years and it'll be a masterpiece, up there with SPECTRE and SANDMAN.

There are no words. Just wanted to let you know this issue (#17) gave me one of the most transcendent experiences I've ever had from graphic fiction. Thanks.

JASON CUNNINGHAM
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

You're welcome, Jason.



Dear Mr. Berganza:

It does not escape me month in and month out the importance that Peter David places on SUPERGIRL's supporting cast. Without all the subplots and personal mysteries, this title would only be half of what it is. As with Linda herself, both sides — the extraordinary and the everyday — are necessary to complete the package.

SUPERGIRL #17 was a particularly good example of Mr. David alternating in an interesting way between the "A" story — the reemergence of Despero — and the "B" story — Linda's growing obsession with her

angelic nature, i.e., her back pains and her sculpture. It was a solid piece of storytelling the way that these plots dovetailed so naturally into Linda's transfiguration at the end.

I also appreciated the other tie-ins with rebirth — Despero's baptism in the lake, and the scene at the hospital with our divinely mysterious Wally quieting the fears of the infants and reflecting upon the symmetry of our cradle-to-the-grave existence. You would think that Wally and his grandfather, being at opposite ends of the same cycle (and thereby close to one another in mind and body), would better understand each other's viewpoints. But Wally can't comprehend the old guy's fear, and his grandfather can't understand Wally's lack of same. I guess if the cycle of life were reversed, we would all fear growing young as much as we fear growing old. Just imagine shrinking back to nothing, losing all those familiar wrinkles, being unborn...

Finally, let me say that Leonard Kirk is DC's artistic find of the year. He's right at that wonderful-to-watch stage where his work is just coming into its own, getting more distinctive and striking with each issue. The nine-panel grid he used for the "talking" scenes worked really well in restricting our attention, then allowing our perspective to "open up" on the action pages, creating, on the whole, a really nice visual contrast to the issue. In other words: the book looked gorgeous!

MARK J. KIEWLAK
NANTICOKE, PENN.

Mark, thank you for your very insightful and kind words on the issue and characters. Wally will continue to develop and surprise us in issues to come. (As if he hadn't been doing enough of that already!)



Dear Eddie:

Linda's life certainly does yo-yo in fascinating ways—especially in dealing with her parents. As of SUPERGIRL #17, it looks like her father may be the first to come around to the merging of Linda with Supergirl. And maybe the accident will get Sylvia back on track, accepting the possibility of hope at the very least.

I admit I get a strange feeling from Andy's seeming fascination with Linda. If Andy sticks around, she promises to make things more complicated for our girl (like she really needs that).

As for this latest transformation of Supergirl's powers...what can I say? As an angel, on page 22, she doesn't exactly look like she's a comforting manifestation. Changes, changes, changes. Is her life ever going to balance out?

SARAH BEACH
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

As in real life, Sarah, things don't always balance out. And a hero's life is always full of conflicts.

You've also seen that Andy isn't going to make Linda's life any easier, and with the plans Peter has in store for her, she's not going anywhere.



Dear SUPERGIRL:

As usual, another fine job with issue #17. Not a single issue of SUPERGIRL has ever let me down. And I still have more back issues to get. But since I'm sure you get the same compliments letter after letter, I think I'll just move on to the questions and suggestions:

1. Is Supergirl vulnerable to Kryptonite? Basically, I'm wondering if she has the same weaknesses as the "classic" Superman, even though she is half human?

2. Will all of the Super-people (Supergirl, Superman, Superboy, Steel) ever team up in one book? If not, how about just a Superboy and Supergirl team-up? It would be one of the all-time comics highlights to see her push him around.

3. Will Power Girl be back anytime soon?

4. Any chance of ever seeing a Supergirl figure? All of the other Super-Team members have their own.

5. What is the deal with her back?

Well, that's it for me. And great job on Despero. He is one of my favorite villains, and there was no better book to see him in.

PETER HAUGE
PIPER4557@AOL.COM

Thanks for the "list" letter, Peter. Here goes:

1. Nope. And she's all human.
2. You've seen them working together during the Millennium Giants storyline, and you'll see them working together again before long, as with Steel next issue.

3. Define soon.
4. How about an animated-style figure? Close enough?
5. Wings of fire, of course.

Sorry for the teasing, but for some of the team-up requests, check out the TEAM SUPERMAN SECRET FILES worked on by a whole slew of talented people. We'll keep you posted about all other appearances and team-ups. Promise.



Dear SUPERGIRL Staff:

Hmmm...First Grodd, Chemo and Silver Banshee, then the Extremists (who were definitely dead before,

sorry), and now Despero...er, I mean L-Ron...no, Despero. Whoever. This title seems to have become a last refuge for displaced super-villains, and while it's nice to see all these old faces again, I can't help wondering when Supergirl will get to face some villains of her own, whether new ones or revamped "old" Supergirl foes. Maybe you could do something with Blackrock, last seen in a bar somewhere back in JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #44 — if anyone could make him interesting, it's Peter David. Supergirl needs her own rogues gallery now that Buzz is gone.

The supporting cast is getting better every month, though. First Mattie, Cutter and Dick, and now God. Cool. Though I always thought He'd be taller....

TONY INGRAM
LONDON, ENGLAND

God's the kid next door? Stick around, Tony, Wally's story isn't even close to being finished.



Dear Eddie:

SUPERGIRL #17 was an interesting issue as Linda, a.k.a. The Girl of Steel, went toe to toe with Despero and tried to patch things up with her "adoptive" dad while her Mom was in the mud. It was sad, though, to see Sylvia getting drunk in sorrow with the shocking fact that her daughter is Supergirl. It was also surprising to see Fred thanking L-Ron for saving his wife after she had almost been killed by Despero.

On a brighter note, it was also great to see Linda and her "boyfriend" Richard in the hospital visiting Richard's recovering mother. Having Ma and Pa Kent visit, too, was the icing on the cake!

Once again, the story was great. Peter David, Leonard Kirk and Cam Smith have done a great job on the nineties version of the Girl of Steel! Keep up the sensational work, super-dudes!

ERIC ISAAC
AISAAC3703 VIA DC ONLINE

We're very glad you like this take on Supergirl, Eric. We sure like it!



In other Supergirl news:

Don't forget to pick up a copy of TEAM SUPERMAN SECRET FILES, highlighting Supergirl, Superboy and

Steel. Let us know what you think.

Also, keep your eyes open for the SUPERGIRL trade paperback collecting the first nine issues of the series by Peter David, Gary Frank and Cam Smith, as well as the SHOWCASE story by Peter, Terry Dodson and Karl Story. And look, and ask, for the beautiful Supergirl painted poster by Joe DeVito. It's Supergirl flying out of flames, and it's breathtaking.

NEXT MONTH:



We switch gears from love to hate as Supergirl and guest star Steel try to ease racial tensions at a college. But, will doing so create tensions between them? Join Peter, Leonard, brand-new inker Robin Riggs, Pat, Gene, Digi Cham, Frank and Mike for SUPERGIRL #23!

Maureen McTigue
— infinitely impatient

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Love is in the air for Supergirl this month, thanks to Leonard Kirk, Robin Riggs and Patrick Martin.