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ENGL 108A
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Superman's Relationships in Black and White

Empathy can be very difficult when looking at a character such as Superman. Putting oneself into another's shoes usually comes from experience, but it is very rare that mortals experience the world as Superman does. Relationships are often built off empathy, being able to understand and respect one another. Superman has many different relationships, these include the other heroes such as Atlas and the team members of P.R.O.J.E.C.T seen more as working relationships throughout this book. As Clark Kent, he also has friends that are encountered through his work at the Daily Planet. One of the few people who sees Superman in both positions is Lois Lane. She has been a very important person in Superman's life and now that he is dying he wants to reveal more to her. The panels I am analyzing even show the suspicion and decision making that Lois is going through when she tries to grasp at the new reality she has been introduced to.

The change in views throughout these panels are slight as the scene is all centered on one situation, their dinner. However, each angle adds a lot to what the panel is trying to convey about the severity of the discussion at the table. In panels that are just small talk we see a much more zoomed out view, taking in the setting and letting the reader know that the details are not as important. As we get closer to the two figures, Lois and Superman, we see the conversation grow from Superman talking about how he changed during his trip to the sun to the very close up of Lois' face as she accuses Superman of lying to her. This transition across the panels, getting closer to our figures gives us more and more detail on their faces as we can see the frustration and cynicism in Lois' eyes, while Superman remains his calm self. Also, as the reader, one can feel the frustration tightening up and coming closer and closer to bursting. This burst of

frustration comes in the last panel as our view zooms out to Lois knocking over the cutlery.

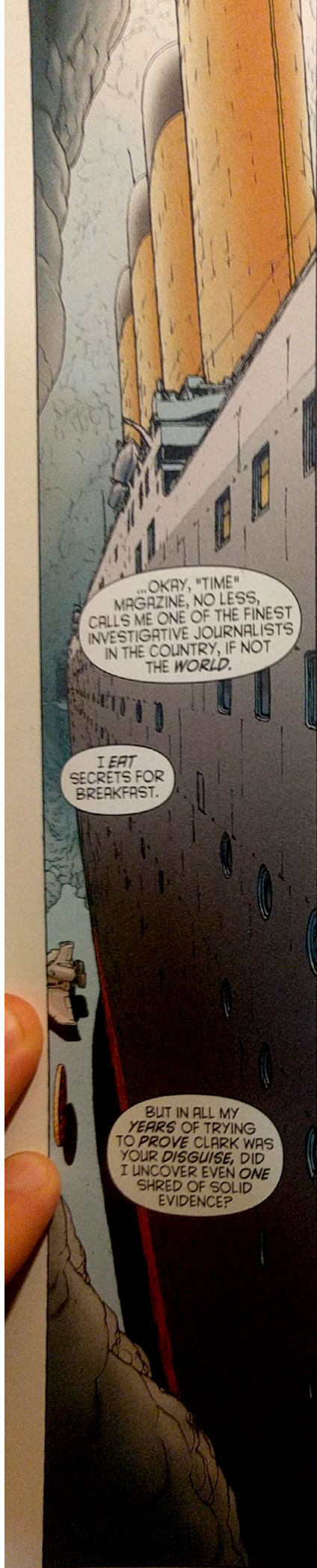
Occasionally we also see the scene from Lois' point of view which gets us "in her head". This gives the reader more empathy towards Lois as she does her internal monologue.

Color is the most important aspect of this series of frames. First of all, the entire scene is much more diluted in color than the rest of the book. Everything is very brown, grey and gold except the two main figures. This puts a lot of emphasis on Lois and Superman and drives us to disregard the other objects in the room. The less bright colors also give way to a more serious tone and force the reader to read it this way. There are three more notable frames in this scene which are Lois' views that turn to black and white. We can link this with the text at the very end of the scene "It was the first time I'd really seen our whole freakish relationship in stark black and white" (Morrison, 43). Often when people look at things in a black or white context they only feel like they have two decisions, right or wrong. Lois must look past the extraordinary world that Superman has laid before her and instead see him for his character. What is hiding behind all of that glamour and is it something that she can love? We see in further panels that Lois continues to block more of Superman out of her vision with her fork. She is trying to fight a battle, trying to understand and empathize with his decision to keep up the lies for so long. In the final black and white panel, we see all of Superman as Lois asks for a further explanation. The images exemplify this by removing the fork from her vision giving a more accepting view. It feels as though this is Superman's final chance to sway Lois into believing him.

From these changes of view and color choices we get a great look into how Lois is feeling during this dinner. This perspective provides insight on how Superman's relationships are so fragile, deceitful and maybe not so black and white as Lois perceives it to be.

Works Cited

Morrison, Grant. All-Star Superman. New York: DC Comics, 2011.



"OKAY, 'TIME' MAGAZINE, NO LESS, CALLS ME ONE OF THE FINEST INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS IN THE COUNTRY, IF NOT THE WORLD.

I EAT SECRETS FOR BREAKFAST.

BUT IN ALL MY YEARS OF TRYING TO PROVE CLARK WAS YOUR DISGUISE, DID I UNCOVER EVEN ONE SHRED OF SOLID EVIDENCE?



IS NO. Y. ARE ARING?

TRADITIONAL KRYPTONIAN FORMAL WEAR FROM THE FOURTH AGE.

I MADE IT MYSELF.



...I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD SEW.

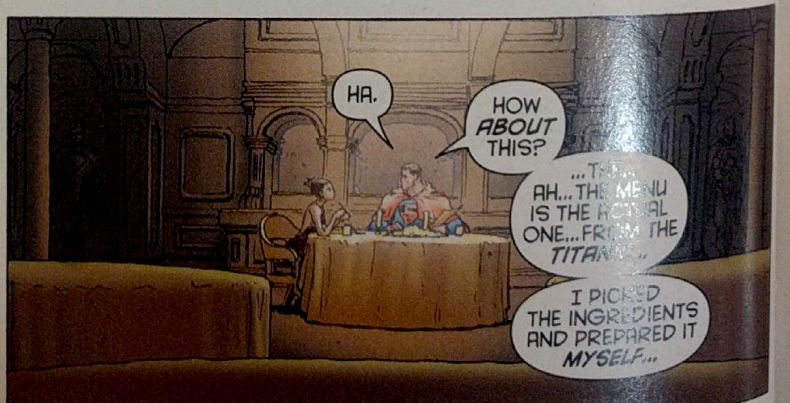
I THOUGHT I SHOULD LEARN.

MY TRIP TO THE SUN DID MORE THAN TRIPLE MY STRENGTH, LOIS. IT TRIPLED MY CURIOSITY, MY IMAGINATION, MY CREATIVITY.



AND IT'S ALSO MADE YOU THREE TIMES MORE HONEST, IS THAT WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE?

SPARE ME THE SUSPENSE, SUPERMAN! WHEN DO CLARK AND JIMMY AND PERRY POP OUT OF THE SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS AND YELL "HAPPY BIRTHDAY?"



HA.

HOW ABOUT THIS?

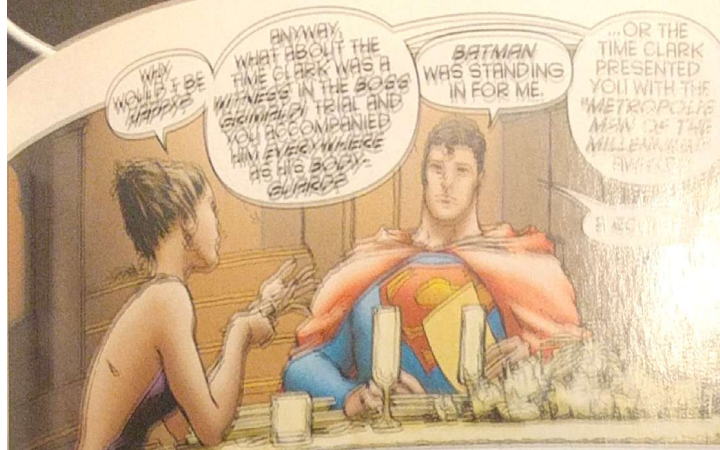
...THE MENU IS THE ACTUAL ONE...FROM THE TITANIC...

I PICKED THE INGREDIENTS AND PREPARED IT MYSELF...



LOIS, PLEASE, I AM CLARK.

AREN'T YOU HAPPY YOUR SUSPICIONS WERE RIGHT ALL ALONG?



WAY
WOULD I BE
HAPPY?

ANYWAY,
WHAT ABOUT THE
TIME CLARK WAS A
WITNESS IN THE BOSS
GRIMMARD TRIAL AND
YOU ACCOMPANIED
HIM EVERYWHERE
AS HIS BODY-
GUARD?

BATMAN
WAS STANDING
IN FOR ME.

OR THE
TIME CLARK
PRESENTED
YOU WITH THE
"METROPOLIS
MAN OF THE
MILLENNIUM"
AWARD?



PLEASE,
I KNOW HOW
IT MIGHT HAVE
SEEMED BUT THOSE
WERE ALL RUSES
TO PROTECT
YOU.

CLARK KENT
AND SUPERMAN ARE
ONE AND THE SAME
PERSON!

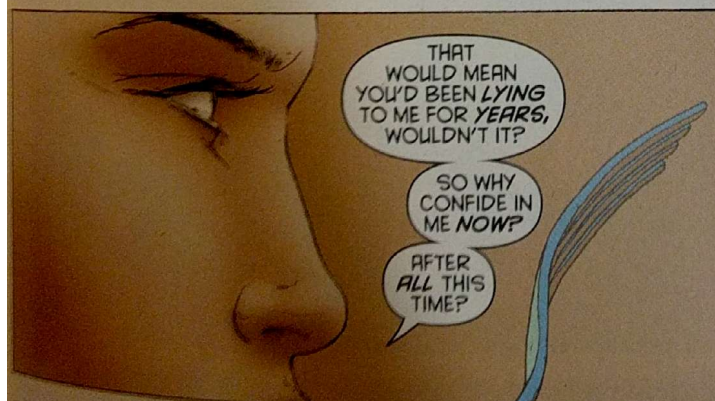
I SWEAR
I WOULDN'T
LIE TO YOU.



DON'T
SWEAR... BECAUSE
IF YOU WERE
CLARK...

IF CLARK
KENT WAS SECRETLY
SUPERMAN OR THE
OTHER WAY AROUND,
WHATEVER.

IF IT
WAS ALL A
"RUSE."



THAT
WOULD MEAN
YOU'D BEEN LYING
TO ME FOR YEARS,
WOULDN'T IT?

SO WHY
CONFIDE IN
ME NOW?

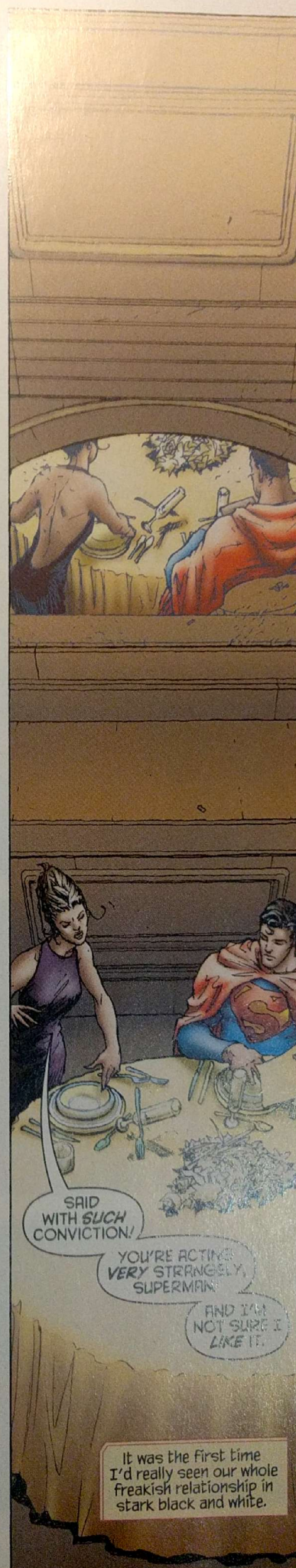
AFTER
ALL THIS
TIME?



I...

I CAN'T
TELL YOU WHY,
LOIS.

YOU HAVE
TO... TRUST
ME.



SAID
WITH SUCH
CONVICTION!

YOU'RE ACTING
VERY STRANGELY,
SUPERMAN!

AND I AM
NOT SURE I
LIKE IT.

It was the first time
I'd really seen our whole
freakish relationship in
stark black and white.