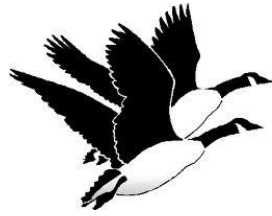
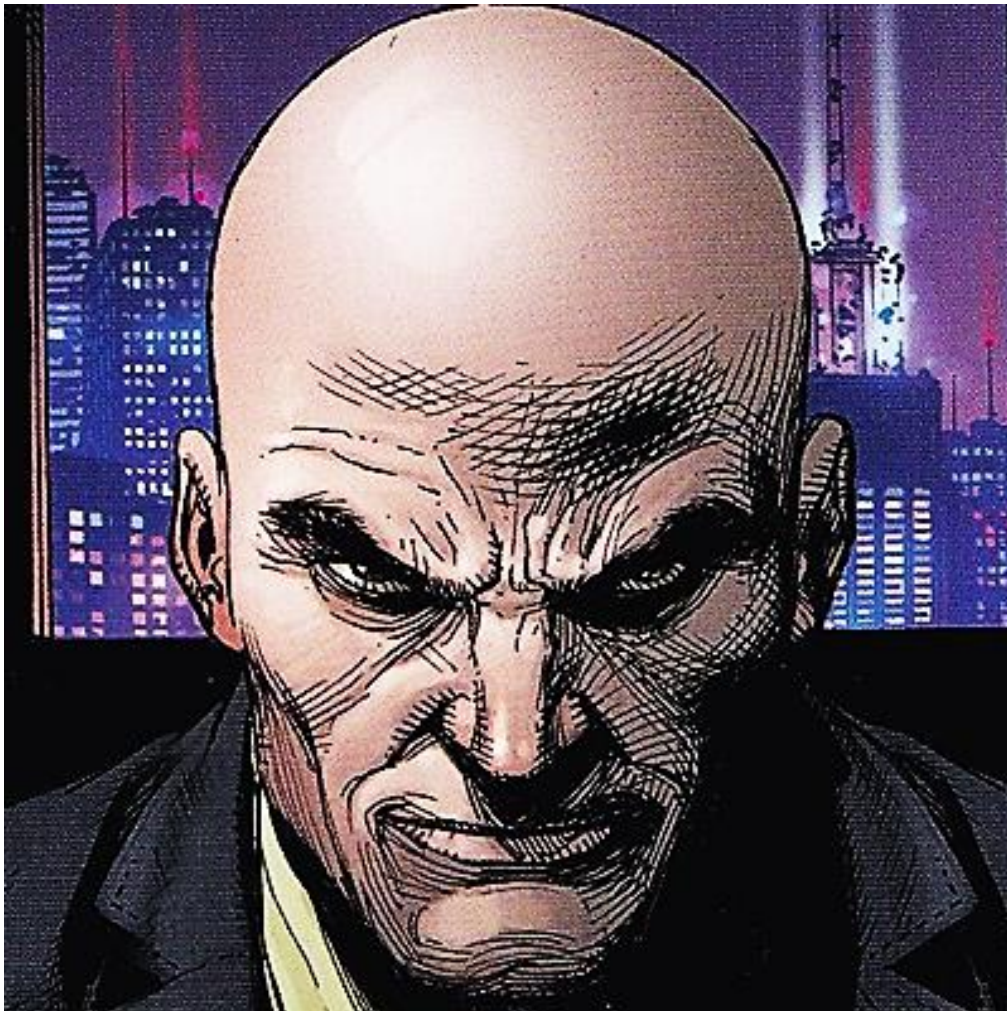


January 2025



"It's your New York!"

# *The Rondout Reader*



## **LUTHOR STRIKES BACK!**

by Kevin Ahearn

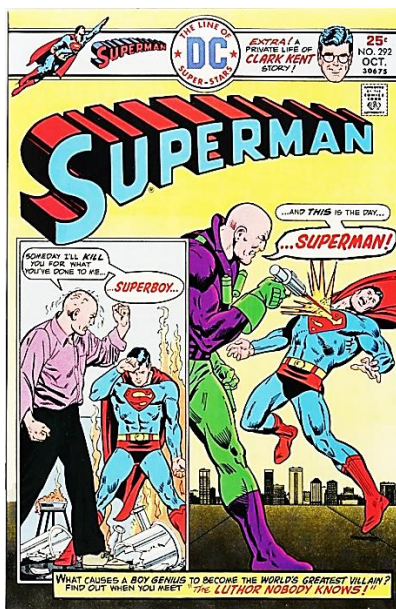
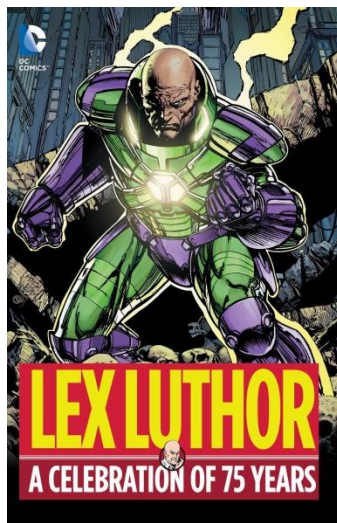
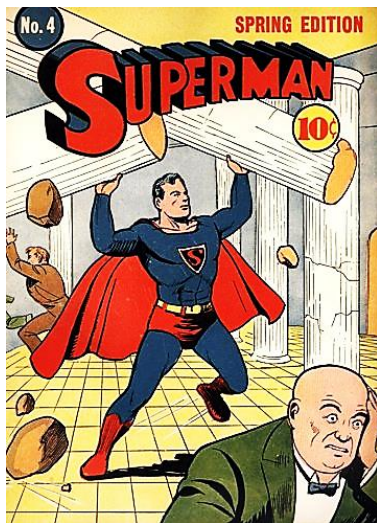
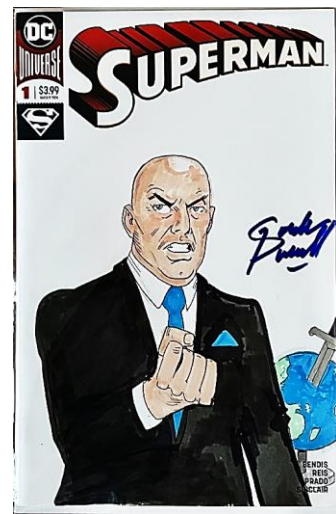
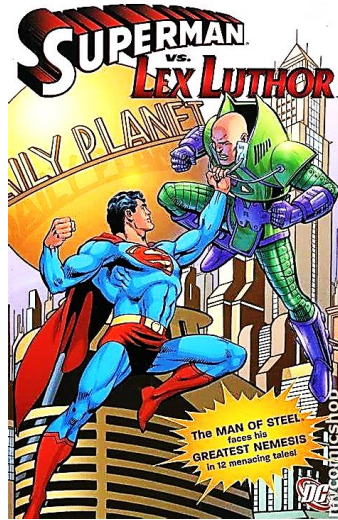
# SUPERMAN



“Yes, it's **Superman** ... strange visitor from another planet, who came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men!

“**Superman**... who can change the course of mighty rivers, bend steel in his bare hands, and who, disguised as Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper, fights a never-ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way!”













**Superman** has shown generations of kids what being a hero really means.'



'When I was little, I think that I wanted **Superman** to be my boyfriend.'



'If not for **Superman**, there might have been no **Spider-Man**, which is far too horrendous a possibility to contemplate.'



# Daily Planet

Op-Ed

A Great Metropolitan Newspaper

Real Time

## MY WORLD OF WORLDS!



**IMMORTAL METROPOLITANS !**

**SIZE MATTERS. PERSISTENCE CONQUERS.  
INTELLIGENCE TRIUMPHS!**





**INSIGNIFICANT CAPTIVES IN AWE OF MY  
OMNIPOTENT POWER, YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY IMAGINE  
THAT I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL!**



**I WAS SPARED BY THE CYBER-RACE THAT HAD SLAUGHTERED MY  
SPECIES. WHAT HAD THESE MACHINES DISCOVERED IN ME?**



**THE CYBER-RACE CONTINUED TO EVOLVE AND EVOLVED ME.  
TECHNOLOGY ALWAYS ADVANCES, NEGATING THE NEED  
FOR KILLING MACHINES.**





THE **CYBER-RACE** REPURPOSED THEIR CRAFT, NO LONGER DESTROYING CITIES, DIMINISHING THEM, CAPTURING THEM, SUSTAINING A *MENAGERIE*. THE FUTURE OF LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE CONTROLLED BY THE NON-LIVING!

BUT THE **CYBER-RACE** HAD NO IDEA OF THE POWER AND SPIRIT OF MY INCREDIBLE *LIVING* BRAIN, A MARVEL AT BIRTH, INFUSED BY THE **CYBER-MECHANICS**, I HAD BECOME...



## **BRAINIAC!**

THE ONLY LIVING CREATURE WITH FULL ACCESS TO THE **CYBER-RACE**, I WOULD ENHANCE AS I BROKE AND CONQUERED THEIR EVERY CODE.



DO NOT DESPAIR, METROPOLITANS, I MEAN YOU NO HARM. ON THE CONTRARY, I'VE GIVEN YOU ETERNAL LIFE!  
AND THE TIME WILL ACCELERATE!

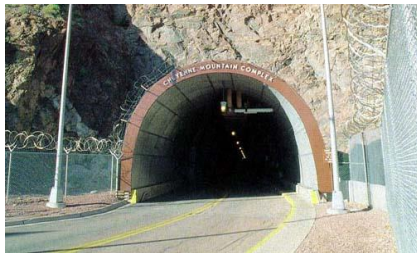




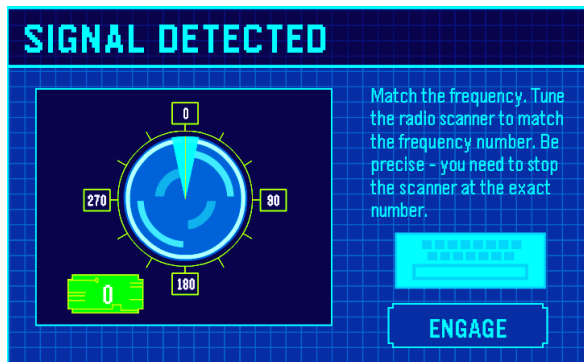
**VERY SOON, MY *MENAGERIE* WILL FULLY RE-ENERGIZE FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF MY QUEST.**



***'IMAGINE IF YOU DARE, METROPOLITANS. ALL THE UNIVERSE AWAITS!'***



***Technology is full of surprises...***



***'Fantastic!'***

***'From where?'***



*'Him!'*

*'Lex, what's it mean?'*



**'Resurrection...for a rematch!'**



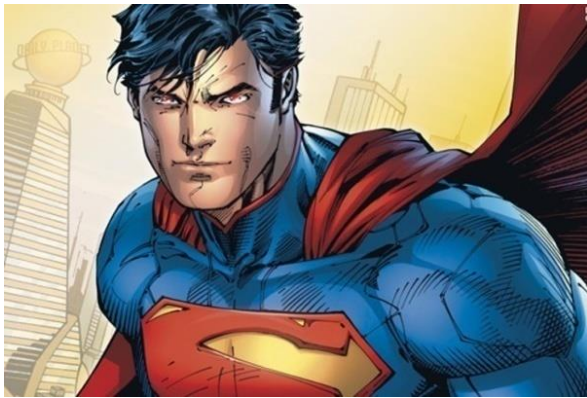




*'Father, this is madness!'*

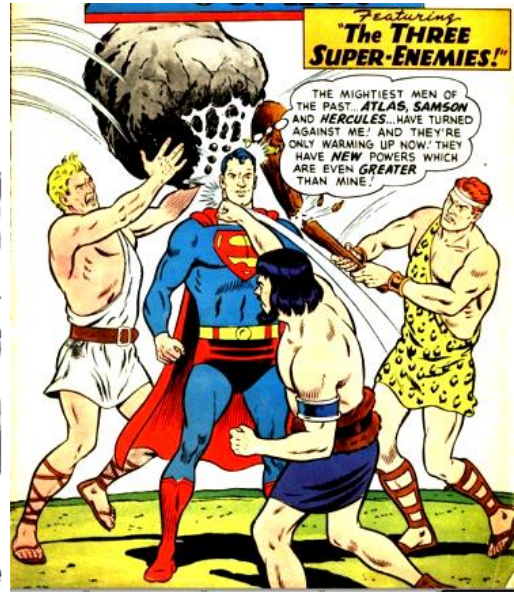


*'History and legend, my dear!'*



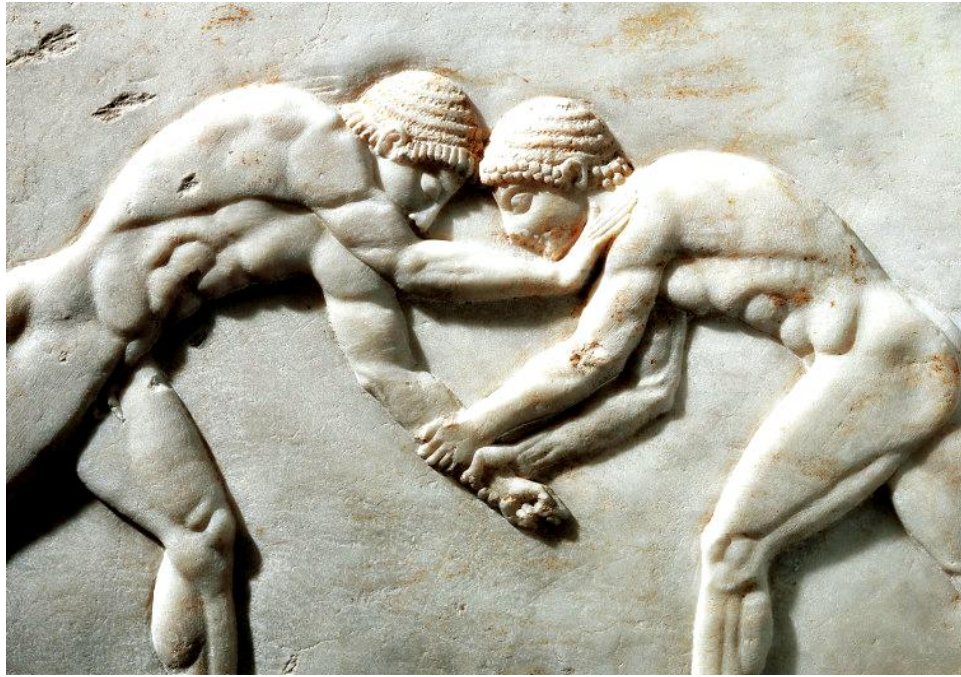
*'The fight to fight for the future of Kandor!'*

**Only one had 'mythical' experience...**



**The clash was close until...**





*Raya struck Axar from behind...*



*'I have my champion. Only Clark Kent is **Superman!**'*



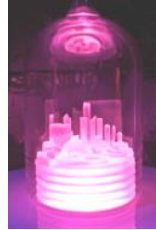
*Ready in the rocket...*



*'Thank you, Clark Kent. I know now how Jor-el must have felt.'*



*'History and legend...both repeat themselves!'*



# Daily Planet



*'So that's it. **Brainiac** just put our external lives to bed.'*



*'But Mr. White, **Superman!**'*



*'Jenny's right! There's still hope!'*





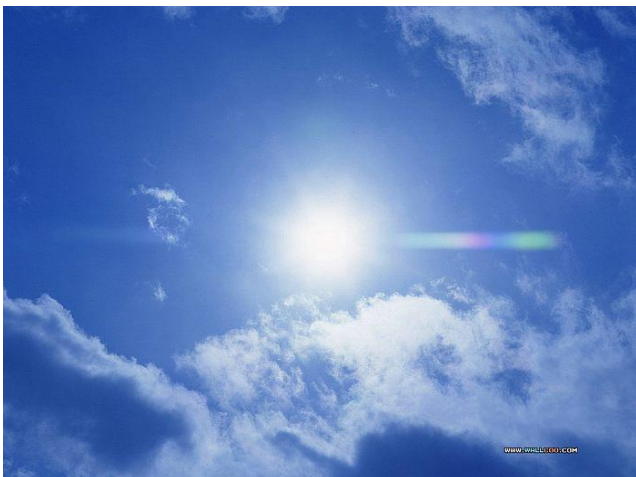
*'Okay, people, this is a newspaper! And the Metropolis reality... We're shrunk to micro-dots, **Superman**'s gone and we'll soon be on a one-way trip to Planet **Brainiac**!*

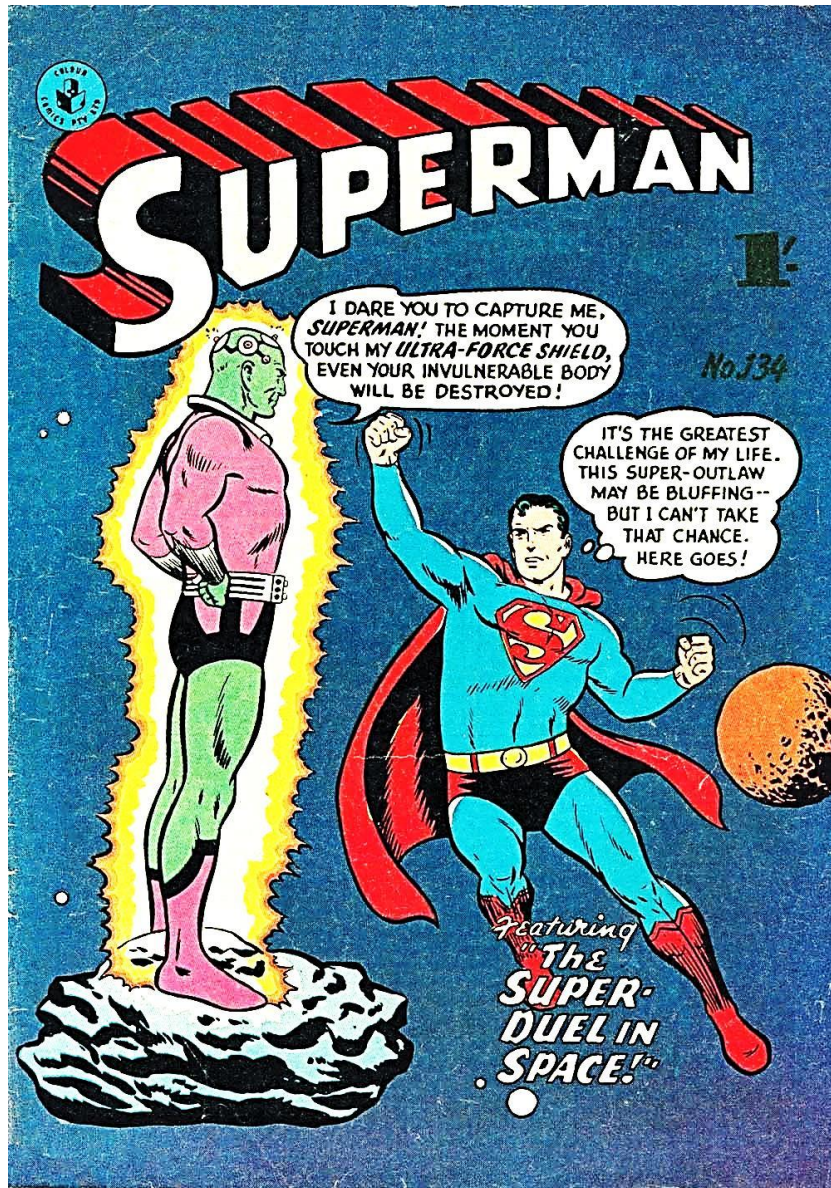
*'That's the only news fit to print!'*



*'No! **Superman** promised. He'll be here!'*

***At that moment, beyond the bottle...***





*Within the bottle...*



*"Chief, I think we're gonna need a new headline!"*



# SUPERMAN VS. BRAINIAC

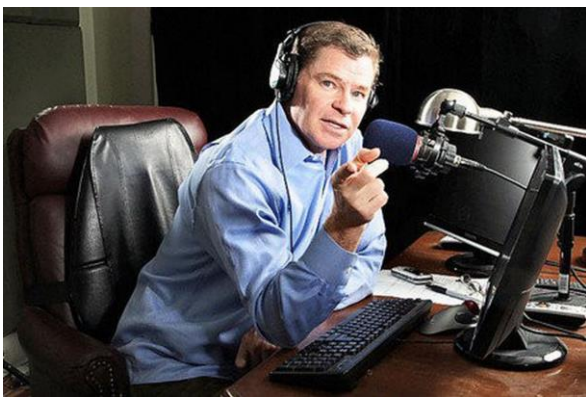
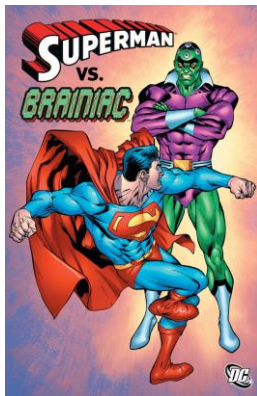
## WHO DO YOU LIKE?



**"SUPERMAN is a baaad man!"**



**"Yes he is, but Brainiac will beat him baaaaadly!"**

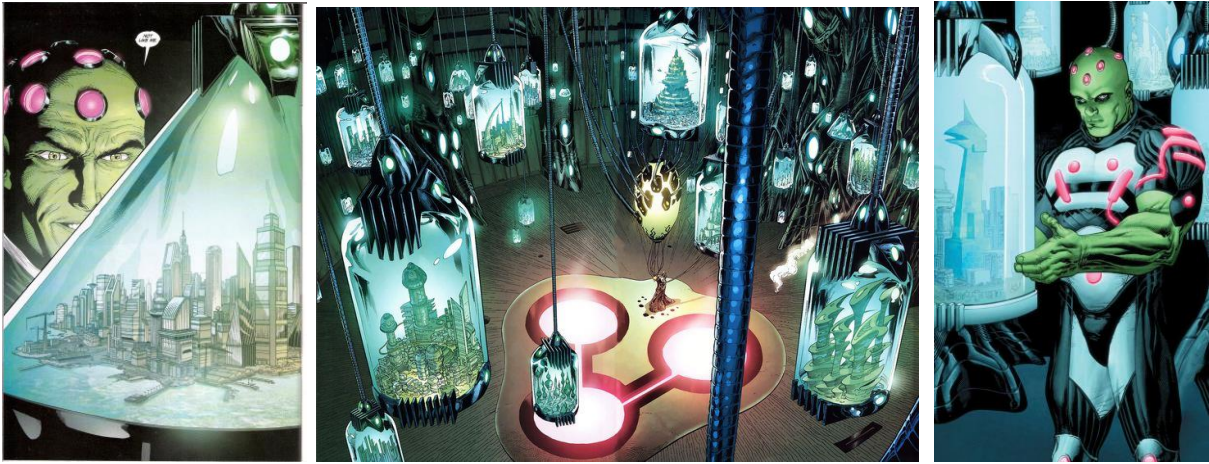


**"We live in *Superman's* World!  
He's got to crush Brainiac!"**



**"Because if the Man of Steel loses,  
we'll be living in Brainiac's World!"**





*“Not fighting for a ring, a belt or a trophy, but for Metropolis in a bottle. It’s a travesty!”*

*“Both are undefeated aliens, but this showdown is all about us. **SUPERMAN** is fighting for all of us!”*



**HUMANITY, PLACE YOUR BETS**



*In the media capital on earth...*



In the new 'Media Capital of the World', all the corporate bigwigs gathered around the grand conference table--the 'Emergency Action Committee'



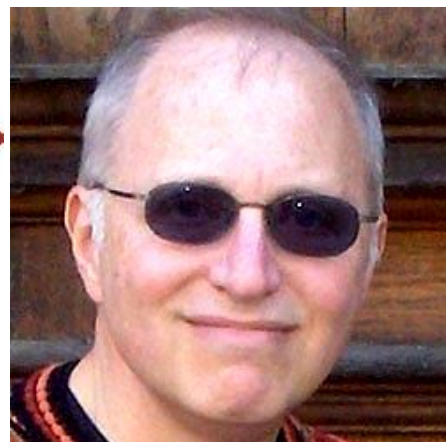
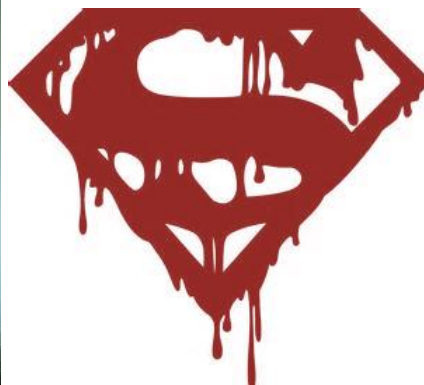
*'If **Brainiac** kills **SUPERMAN** -- the worst disaster in American business history!'*



*'With Metropolis gone, the **Superman** 'bubble' has burst!'*

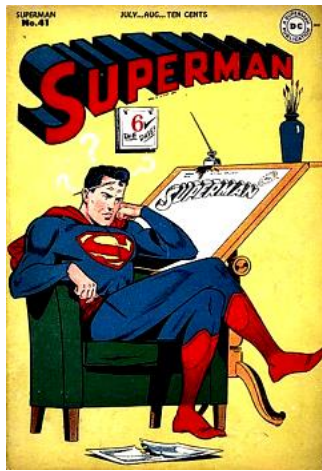


*'From best-selling memorabilia to the bargain bin faster that you can say. "**Brainiac**"!'*



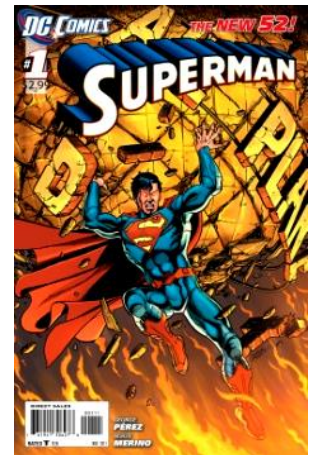
*'**Superman** is going to destroy what he created - the American Comic Book industry!'*

*For a New York minute, super memories danced 'round the room...*

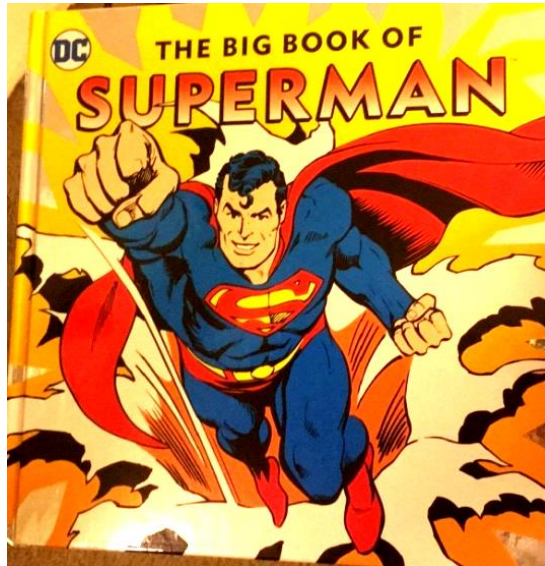


*'Not so fast. We could retell old **Superman** stories or make up new ones.'*

*'We've been hoping that **Superman** would remake himself, tweak his story. Well, now we can!'*

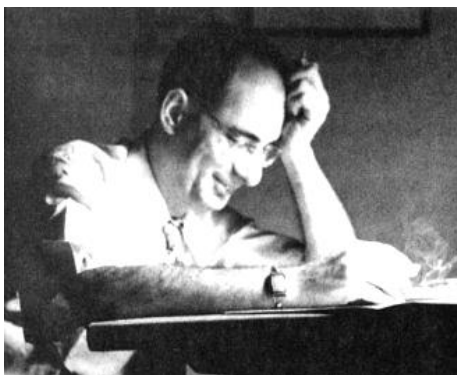






*'Superman may be gone, but we can bring him back!'*

*'A little imagination and a ton of elbow grease, we'll create our own line of **Supermen!**'*



*'Will **Superman** still sell? Will his stories still matter?'*

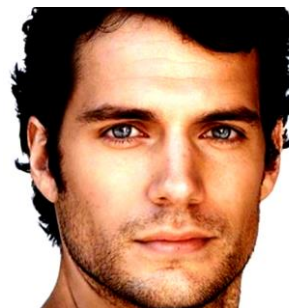
*'If only we could contact **Brainiac**, make him an offer he couldn't refuse!'*



*Seemingly appearing out of thin air...*



*'Who? From Where?'*



*'Superman...Krypton!'*





*"Puny-Man" - I am **Brainiac**, Master of the super-sciences!*

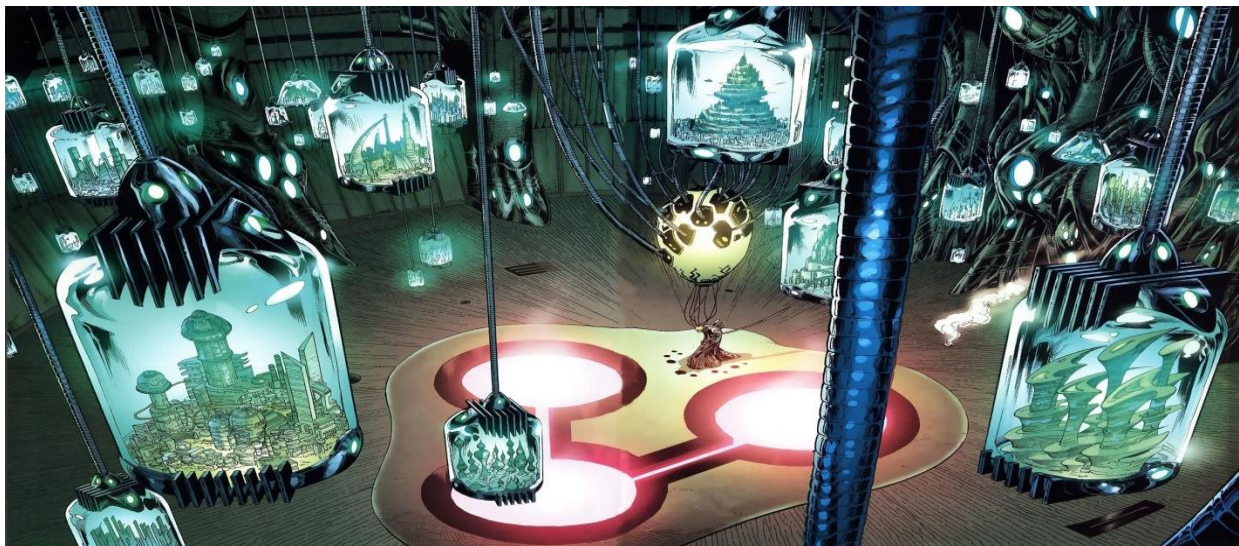


*'You will not leave here alive!'*





*“**Superman** is fighting for all of us! No matter your gender, World, your age or your color, your shoe size or your tax bracket...He’s fighting for you!”*



*“**Risking his life to save ours! Superman** Makes us feel proud to be human!”*

*“**But he isn’t! Superman** is as alien as **Brainiac!**”*





**"Superman has to defeat Brainiac!"**



**"Or all of us will be out of work!"**



**"Overdue Cosmic Justice – Our favorite illegal alien meets his match!"**





*'Sell-a-brate his death with a grandiose funeral!'*



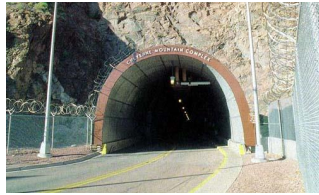
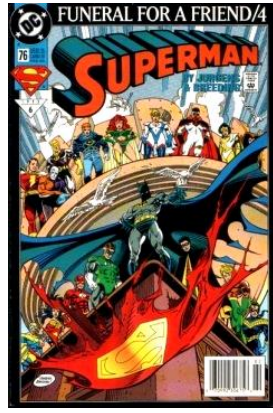
*'Build a massive memorial!'*



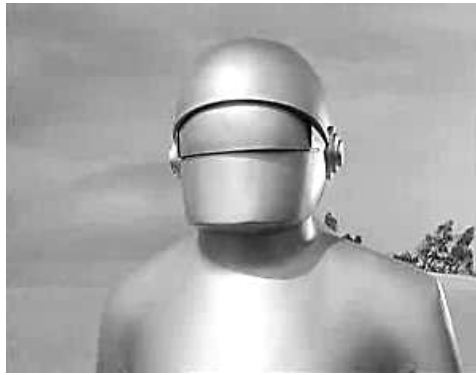
*'Publish his Last Will & Testament!  
Make the whole world cry!'*

*'A "Death of Superman" super-deluxe series!'*



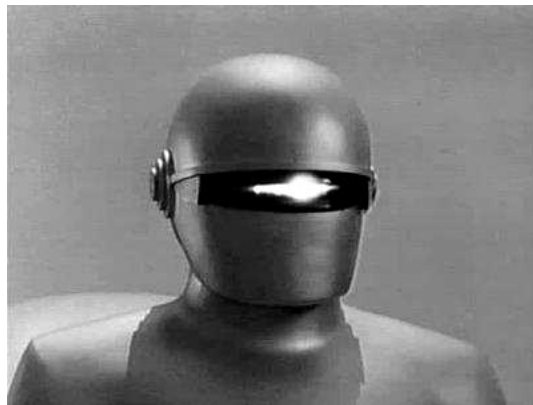


**'Tracking back the cat'...**



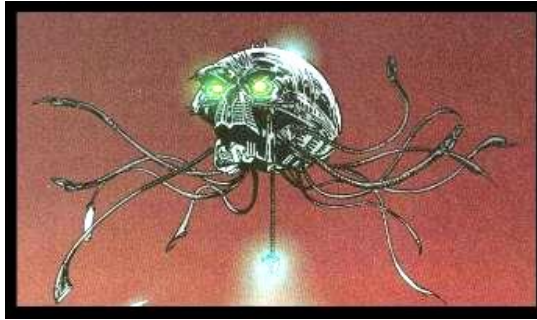
**'A signal! Faint, but steady!'**

**'Snoring! Can we wake him up?'**



**'Reserve power! Bouncing off two satellites...!'**

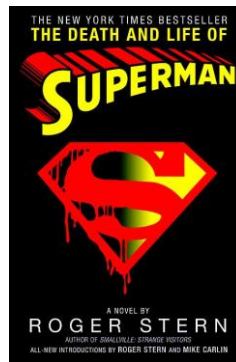
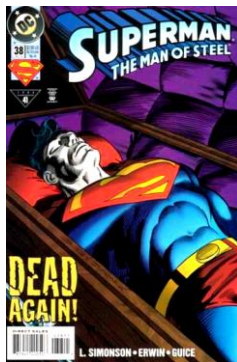
**'Rise and shine, Male of Polymer!'**



*'Target **Brainiac!** Zero in at top speed!'*

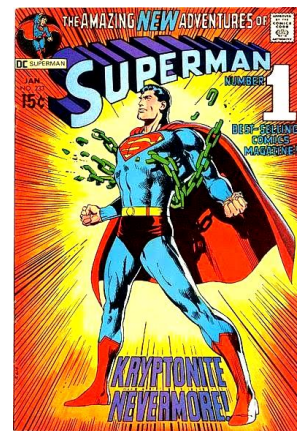


*Around and around the conference table...*

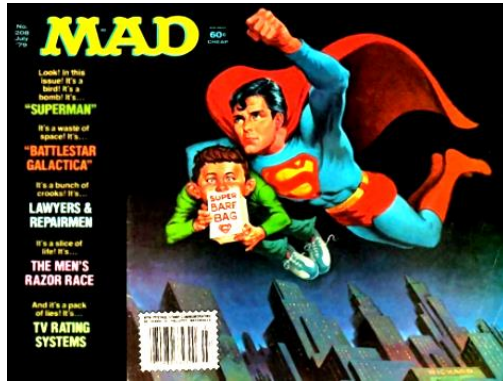
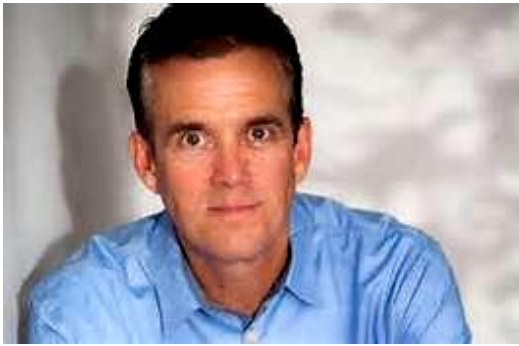


*'Let's stop kidding ourselves!  
It's over!'*

*'The stockholders are screaming.  
We've got to shut down the entire  
line!'*

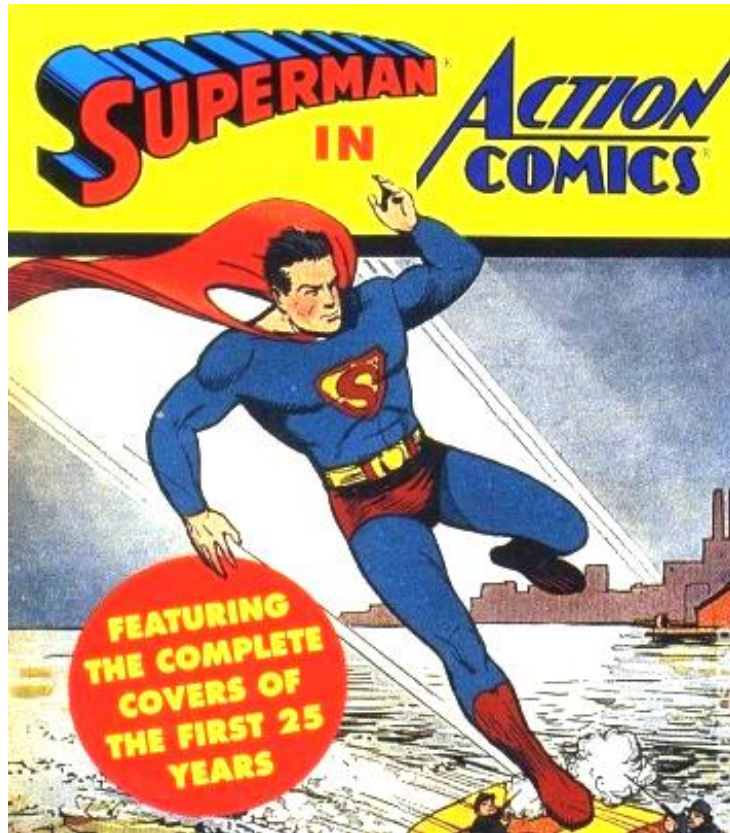
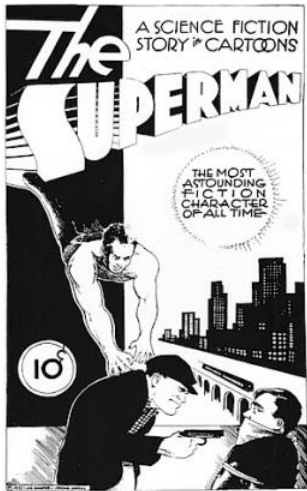






*'Cancel Superman?  
What would we do without him?'*

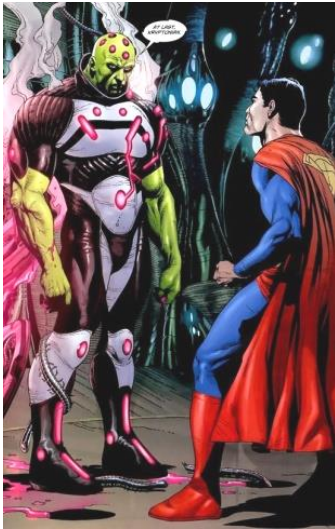
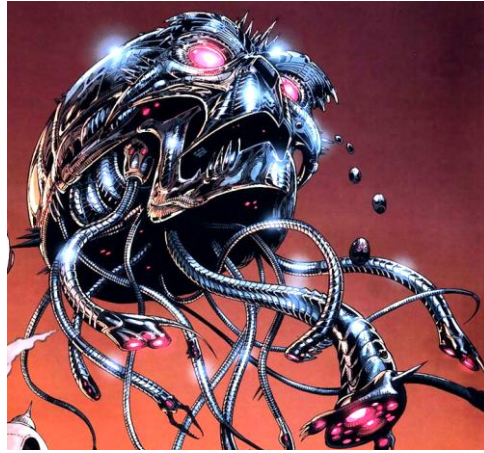
*'We're doomed, all of us!  
Doomed to...writing fanfic!'*



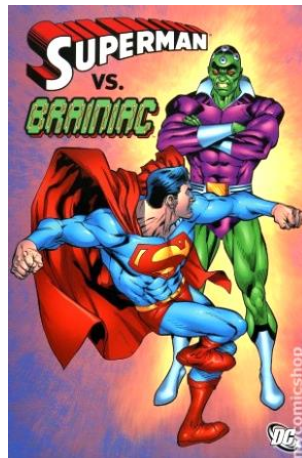
***Has a fateful decision been reached? The Powers That Be putting down the superhero we grew up with?***

***'Truth, Business, and the American Way?'***





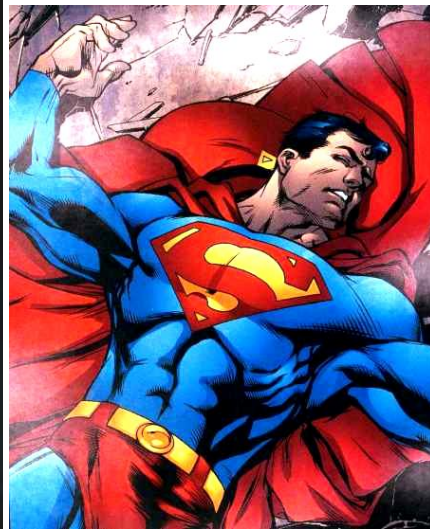
*'Puny-Man! You have no concept of the power you defy!'*







*'The last of my species. Had you won, no one would have mourned me!'*



*"Who will weep for you, **Superman?**"*



*Darkness gripped the table until...*



*'Is that what **Superman** has become?  
A business, a product to be promoted and sold?*

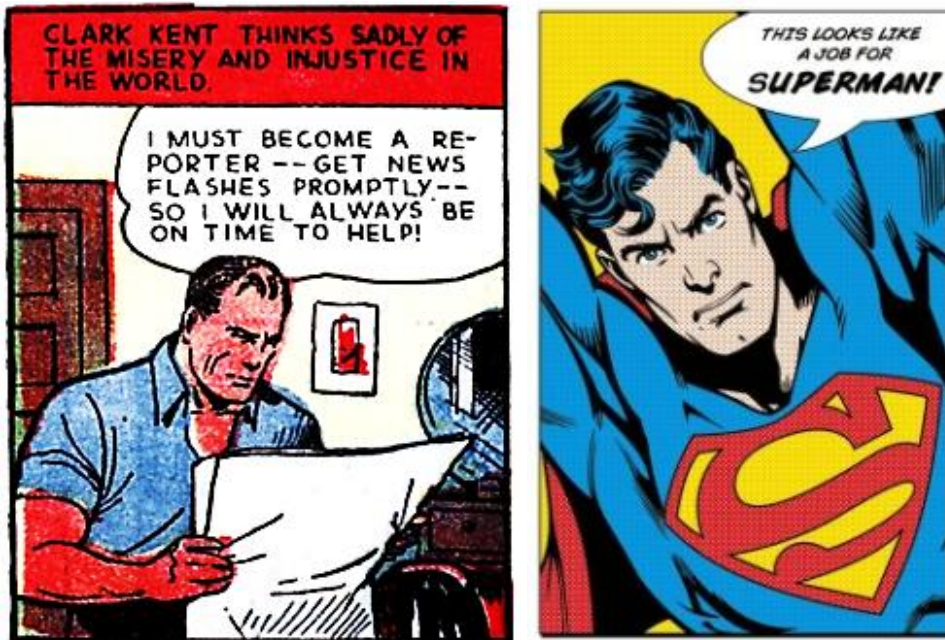
*'Ten years ago, **Superboy** changed all our lives.  
That 15-year old superhero gave me an ideal, a role model,  
the idea that I could somehow contribute for the benefit of  
humanity.*

*'I've been a 'Keeper of the **Superman Flame**' ever  
since, and I've learned that **Superman** will always be  
so much more than a name, an image and a tagline  
strictly for the bottom line!'*



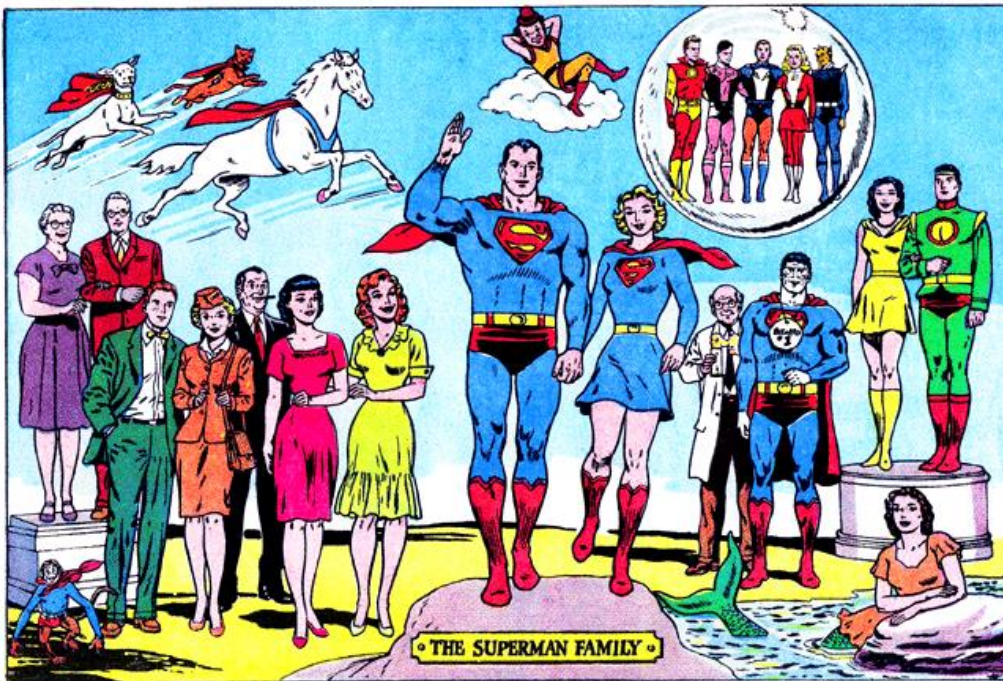


*Superman came to earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men and could have achieved more fortune and fame as a rock star or an athlete, but chose instead...*



*'For ten wonderful years, the world has flourished without war or terror, corruption and fear! Superman's been missing for little more than a week and you want to throw his whole family out into the street!'*





*'The decision this company makes will not decide who  
**Superman** is, but who we are!'*

## **SUPERMAN HOMEPAGE**



*'Is this the end of **Superman** ?*

*'I'm the director of his webpage, a diehard 'fanboy'  
ever since **Superboy** first appeared.*





*'And I got pushback! My hero was too powerful, too courageous, too perfect. They wanted characters with a gritty edge!*

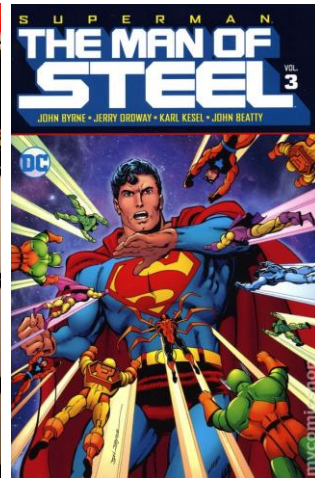
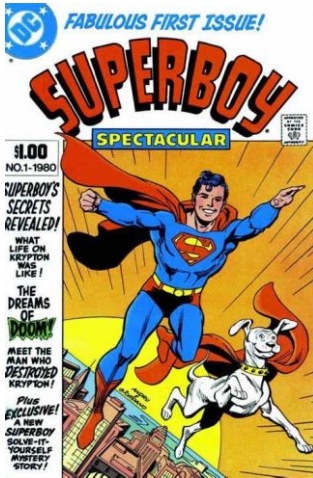


*Superman was too good, too noble, too bright, colorful and optimistic! To protect us, he risked his life again and again, taking on the fiercest monsters in the universe!*



*'And still he's called "soft" and "square"!'*





**Superman is "THE American Dream"!**  
*A babe from another world raised in Kansas who decides to use his incredible powers not to enrich himself but to help people everywhere!*

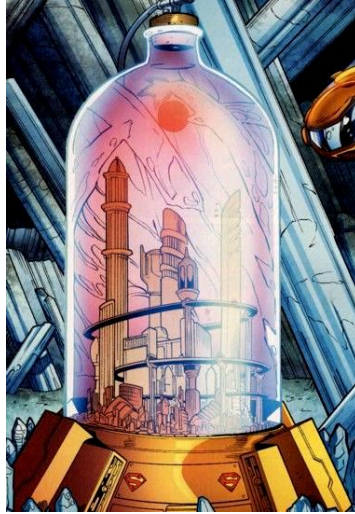
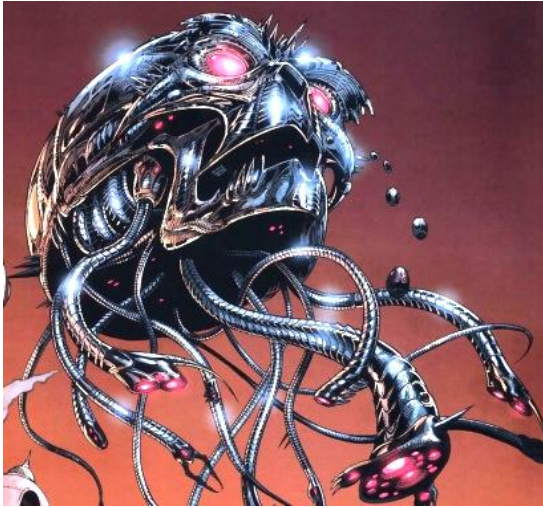


*'Don't talk to me about money or sales or your damn careers!'*



*'You either believe in **Superman** or you don't!'*



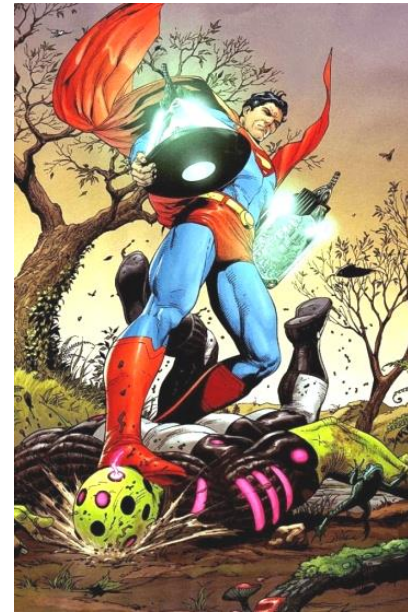
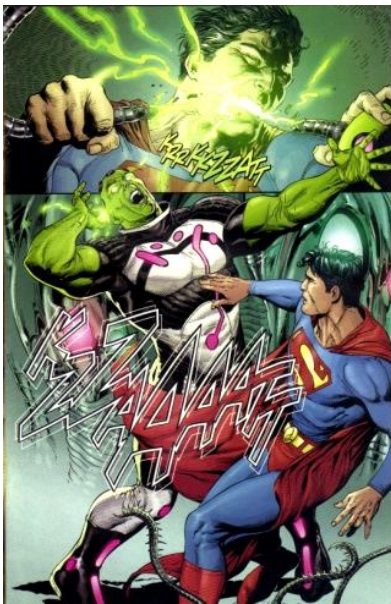


*'Stay down, **Superman!** Surrender, I've beaten you!'*





*'Not quite, Brainiac!*



*'I took your worst, and it wasn't enough! You exist to imprison and enslave! I'm fighting for humanity!'*



**'Victory!'**



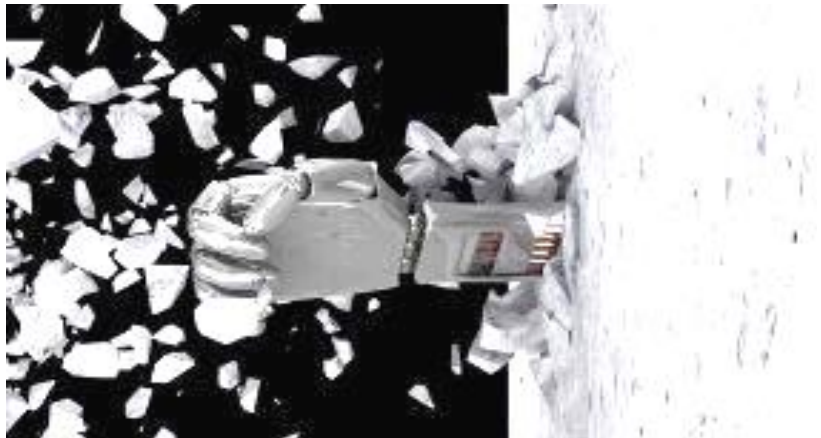


*'We're saved. Superman won!'*



*'Yes, but...wait!'*

***At that moment, the huge spaceship trembled...***



*'Pounding its way through the hull!'*



*'Nano-technology, self-repairing!'*



*'What, whose is that?'*

