



Action Comics Annual #1
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Action Comics
Annual #1: "This Looks Like a Job For... "
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[EDITOR'S NOTE: This story takes place before the events of *Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative*]

The *Daily Planet* has over one million readers and a staff dedicated to bringing Metropolis only the finest, most accurate news stories possible. Clark Kent is one of the top reporters in the industry but sometimes even he gets stumped for the next big story idea.

"What are you working on Smallville?" asked Lois Lane, the beautiful dark haired reporter who was looking over Kent's shoulder.

Clark had been sitting at his desk for over an hour trying to come up with just the right angle. At Lois's ribbing, he sighed deeply and turned around to see her smiling face.

"Nothing, nothing at all Lois. How are things going?" Kent meekly said. He wouldn't dare let her know that he was having trouble with a story.

Lois walked around to the front of Kent's desk and hopped up on it to sit with her legs crossed mockingly. The huge newsroom was filled to capacity with reporters and various other staff members but none seem to notice the two rivals playful antics.

"Now Clark you know how I like to keep ahead of the game. My stories all done and in Perry's hands. He wanted me to come over to see if I could help you finish before today's deadline." She smirked. Lois flirtingly tilted her head back a little, causing her button up blouse to fall partially open exposing just a little amount of cleavage.

"Um..No thanks Lois, I'll be fine." Clark stuttered trying not to look at her exposed skin.

"Fine!" She said straightening up. "Be that way, don't tell me what your working on! This may just be the first time Clark Kent doesn't have the 'big' story!"

As Lois walked away in a huff disappointed that she wasn't able to use her charm and feminine wiles to lull Clark into revealing his article. Clark bowed his head and smiled to himself.

Three blocks away gunfire suddenly erupted. With a jerk Clark sat up in his chair and quickly stood up. Without drawing attention to himself he made his way to the nearby supply closet. After making sure no was looking in his direction he went into the tiny room. The supply closet was filled with all the materials needed in today's modern workplace but none of that interested Clark Kent. He simply walked over to the window and slid it open. With a practiced ease he pulled his shirt open to reveal the colorful red and blue costume beneath. With the joy that he always felt every time he changed, Clark jumped out the window. In a blur of motion Kent peeled his clothes off and then tucked them into the specially designed pocket inside his red cape. Within the blink of an eye he had made the fantastic change into Superman!

A streak of red shot across the Metropolis skyline as thousands of citizens looked up to see the city's familiar champion go into action. As he rounded the corner of the busy intersection he was greeted by the sounds of more gunfire as a half dozen Metropolis Police officers opened fire on a giant ten-foot tall mud monster.

Landing beside the nearest officer Superman quickly scanned the creature that was slowly advancing toward the small group of officials.

"Superman! Are we glad to see you!" said the law enforcement official. At the same time he took careful aim and fired his weapon once again without much effect.

"What's going on here officer? Where did this creature come from?" Superman asked.

"Not sure sir. It just appeared out of nowhere and started tearing the city apart!" the young policeman said.

"Let me see what I can do." Superman said before he once again took to the air and headed straight for the wet, dripping monster.

With a loud shriek the mud creature swung its huge fist around and connected with the Man of Steel in a powerful splash of mud and goop. Unable to stop his momentum, the man from Krypton shot back and smashed into the big glass windows of a nearby jewelry store. Pulling himself from the tangled mess of broken glass and metal the Man of Steel shot back out onto the streets in a blur of red and blue motion.

"This makes no sense. My x-ray scan shows that this creature has no skeletal structure nor does it have any internal organs at all. This creature should not and cannot be alive!" Superman said as he angled back toward the giant creature.

"But he is Superman!" said a voice from behind the Metropolis Marvel "And it's up to me to stop it!"

Before Superman could intervene a slim figure wearing a purple body suit with green shorts shot past him and wrapped himself around the huge monster of mud. Contorting his body in incredible ways, the newcomer stretched his pliable limbs until they covered the creature with several layers of the rubberized hero. The words "Elastic Lad" were written across the front of his uniform.

"Jimmy?" Superman surprised to see his friend in such a manner. "What are you doing here and how did you get super powers?"

"Easy on the secret I.D. buddy! The name's Elastic Lad, see it's written right here!" Jimmy Olsen said pointing at his chest with his finger while at the same time squeezing the creature with all his might.

With a loud squishy sound the constricting Elastic Lad pulverized the giant mud monster in a splash of dirt and mud covering all the nearby

police officers and bystanders, including Superman himself.

"Wait a minute! None of this is making any sense!" The Man of Steel said, landing next to the mud covered red headed boy." How can you easily defeat a creature that shouldn't even exist with powers that you couldn't possibly have!"

"Gosh Superman I don't know." Olsen said while scratching his mud caked hair. "When I woke up this morning I found this suit folded up on my living room chair and when I put it on I found that I could stretch like a rubber band. I knew that I had to use my powers to be a superhero!"

"You found this suit?" Superman shook his head in astonishment. "Jimmy, none of this seemed suspicious to you?"

"Ah, give the kid a break Superman. He just wants to be a superhero like you." Said a child like voice out of thin air.

"Oh no. Not him." Superman winced in sudden realization." Mr. Mxyzptlk!"

"Taadaaa!!" said the little imp as he materialized in front of the astonished crowd. " In the flesh and back for more fun and games Supes!"

The little man wore a small purple derby hat with an orange formfitting suit that ended with two oversized purple shoes much like what a clown would wear. He had on purple gloves and his white hair shot out both sides of his head in a splash of wiry tangles. It was obvious by his manner that the three foot nine inch tall man was quite insane.

"What's your game this time, Mxyzptlk?" Superman said, cursing himself for forgetting that the required ninety-day exile of the incredible imp had already expired.

"No game muscle-head. This time I'm all about helping!" Mr. Mxyzptlk said while creating a small golf ball and clubs out of thin air. He quickly swung the club, hitting the ball out of sight. Seconds later the sound of a shrieking cat followed by a car alarm going off could be heard from the distance. "Ooh! Sliced that baby."

"Knock it off!" the frustrated Man of Steel said. "Explain yourself and tell me when your going home."

"Your Pal here had himself a little dream last night about being a big time crime fighter like his idol!" said Mxyzptlk while he formed a Groucho style cigar and mustache on his face. "So he said the secret word and I granted the kid his wish!"

"Now let's see." The imp said as he straightened up and started to tap his chin in deep thought." It's about time for an Earthquake. A really big Earthquake!"

As the skyscrapers of Metropolis began to shake violently Superman rushed Mxyzptlk and grabbed him by the arms.

"Stop this right now, Mxyzptlk!" The Man of Steel said through gritted teeth. "Before someone gets hurt!"

"Ahh, let the kid have some fun! You've had your chance, let someone else shine!" Mxyzptlk said jerking out of the Metropolis Marvel's grasp "Now get lost Super-boob!"

Superman instantly materialized on the other side of the world in desolate Antarctica.

"Great Scott!" Superman cursed." I've got to get back to Metropolis! No telling what that little clown will do while I'm gone!"

Superman shot away in a streak of color as he headed back to his beloved city.

Back in Metropolis, Elastic Lad was desperately trying to contain the damage as the very Earth violently shook. Even as Superman reentered the city limits Elastic Lad had stretched his pliable body between two collapsing buildings and was trying in vain to keep both weakened structures erect.

"Can't hold them together." The stretching youth weakly said. "Not... strong enough!"

Superman shot down to the nearest one and used his super cold breath to create a giant ice barrier around the base of the teetering building, effectively bracing it momentarily. Next, he sped around the second skyscraper creating a strong updraft, which righted the remaining disabled building. Instantly the city stopped its ground moving convulsions and all the damage disappeared.

"Super jerk! Let the kid have his fun!" Mxyzptlk said while transforming into a cartoon donkey with a striped tie around his neck." Hey! I think it's about time for some Dinosaurs!"

Clicking his front hooves together the impossible imp vanished in a puff of smoke as a loud roar reverberated through the steel canyon of downtown Metropolis.

The twenty foot tall Tyrannosaurus Rex stomped through the busy intersection smashing several stalled cars and scattering the large crowd that had gather during the Earthquake. Its enormous tail trailed behind and shattered the corner deli that had been in business for over thirty-five years. Clark and Lois had eaten lunch there on several occasions.

"Great!" The Man of Steel said. "Stay here Jimmy. I know you want to help, but this is something I am better suited for."

"Fine by me!" Jimmy said while backing away from the dinosaur as a rushing crowd of panicked people swept past the two costumed figures. "I'm in no hurry to be something's dinner."

Flying above the screaming mob Superman shot straight for the deadly beast. As the T-Rex bent its giant head to feast on the fleeing citizens, the Metropolis Marvel blasted it with a powerful right-handed uppercut that sent the seven-ton creature flying backwards through the air and into a newly constructed parking garage. Even as the enraged animal tried to right itself the Last Son of Krypton grabbed some steel girders, and using his heat vision fashioned large handcuff-looking bracelets together.

Implementing his newly created shackles, Superman hogtied the forty

foot long Dinosaur much like a rodeo cowboy would his defeated prize bull.

"Just what don't you get about 'Let the kid have some fun' "? Mxyzptlk said appearing beside the Man of Steel. This time in the shape of a purple monkey. "The kid is tired of being your Pal! He wants to be his own hero!"

"This has gone on long enough!" Superman said frustratingly. " So far no one has been hurt but if you keep this up some one will."

"Hurt, smurt! You know you're really a big wienie sometimes!" The Imp said as he transformed into a three-foot long hot dog with Superman's face. " You know, it looks like rain... .no I mean an alien invasion!"

Shadows started covering the streets and buildings of the large city. Gazing up Superman saw hundreds of sinister looking flying saucers hovering above the Metropolis skyline.

"You think that Jimmy can handle all this?" Superman said while pointing to the deadly looking floating machines. "Your not good enough to make him that powerful."

"Says you Super Bum!" Mxyzptlk said obviously insulted by the caped hero's remark. "Given the chance the kid would make a great hero!"

"Your 'Plastic Kid' couldn't fight his way out of a plastic bag!" Superman continued gesturing wildly with his hands. " What kind of power is stretching anyway? Talk about stupid! Stretch Boy is a total loser created by a washed up has been!"

"It's Elastic Lad and you know it!" The little imp said as his face turned a bright crimson. "If he had the proper training in time he could be a very powerful hero!"

"Pliable Lad is a joke just like you." Superman continued." He's a useless kid created by a useless midget!"

"Elastic Lad." Mxyzptlk mumbled. " His name is Elastic Lad! Elastic Lad just like it says on his uniform!"

The fifth dimension imp snapped his fingers and Jimmy instantly transported to stand beside the two arguing combatants.

"It says so right here." The frustrated Zrffian said while pointing at the freckled faced photographer's chest. " See, K-L-T-P-Z-X-M-L-A-D ! Right there it says so!"

Superman smiled. It took the imp a couple of seconds to realize what he had done during his mindless fit of anger.

"Ah, crap!" The imp bowed his head in defeat. Instantly the invasion, the tied-up dinosaur and Jimmy's costume and powers all disappeared.

"I believe, according to the rules, that since you spelled your name backwards you now have to return to the Fifth Dimension for another ninety days." Smirked Superman.

"You miserable do-gooder! Mister Mxyzptlk said through gritted teeth. " You tricked me! But how?"

"Using my super speed I changed the letters on Jimmy's costume while you were calling me names." The Man of Steel folded his powerful arms. " I beat you fair and square."

"Alright, alright already." The Imp said." I'm going, but don't be surprised when you see me in three short months! Boy have I got a Christmas present planned for you!"

Mxyzptlk pinched his nose with his finger and thumb and began holding his breath. His head started to inflate like a child's balloon. As the shape shifter inhaled air his head kept getting bigger and bigger until it was as big as a medicine ball. Suddenly, when it looked like his head couldn't expand any more, it exploded in a splash of confetti which showered the Man of Steel with little paper cutouts in the shape of his 'S'!

"Superman?" Jimmy Olsen said in bewilderment.

"Yes Jimmy?" Replied Superman as he turned to look at his pal.

"This has been too weird!" Olsen said still stunned from the day's events.

"Yes Jimmy, it has." The Man of Tomorrow said with a smile.

Later, inside the busy newsroom of the Daily Planet, Clark finished printing his last page for the day's late edition. Hurrying over, Lois snatched the still warm papers from the eyeglass-wearing Clark Kent's hands.

" 'A Day in the Life of Jimmy Olsen' by Clark Kent!" She said disgustingly as she read his cover page.

"With photos by Jimmy Olsen." Clark said with a smile while pointing to the close up of Superman and Jimmy standing beside the destroyed parking garage.

"Of all the... ." Lois stuttered.

"Great piece, Kent!" Managing Editor Perry White said as he came out of his office after reading the story in his email.

"Thanks, Perry!" Clark said proudly." It was all due to Jimmy and Superman's actions today that resulted in the safe... ."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever Kent." The gruff Editor said, cutting Clark off. He turned to return to his office and ran into Jimmy Olsen.

"How'd you like that close up Chief?!" Jimmy said with a smile that covered his entire face.

"Out of focus and uncentered! And stop calling me Chief!" Perry white slammed his office door shut causing the window blinds to rattle back in forth.

"Hey Smallville, you've got something brown on your nose!" The attractive reporter said as she walked away rubbing the end of her nose.

"I do?" Kent went to clean his nose but Jimmy stopped his hand.

Meanwhile... . . .

The South American jungle was muggy and hot even though it had been raining for two weeks straight. Diego Irigoyen had been searching this area for miles around for the past six months. All his maps and in-depth research had led him to this uninhabited region. The young scientist/adventurer from Mexico had found the large crater quite by accident and it had taken all the money that he was given for expenses to convince locals from the closest town to help him excavate the thick foliage and dirt. After digging for over a month he was rewarded for all his hard work. Pillaging through his belongings he found his long-range satellite telephone. He could barely push the required buttons due to the extreme excitement over his prized discovery. The phone rang eight times before a cracking voice answered.

"Professor Vale? I found it!" Diego said with a smile.

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