



**Action Comics #21**  
Roy Flinchum

**Published:** 2007

**Categorie(s):** Fiction, Fan Fiction

**Tag(s):** Comics DC2 Superman "Lois Lane" Toyman "Red Wolf" Wendigo

*Action Comics*  
*Issue #21: "Wendingo" Pt. 1*  
*Written by; Roy Flinchum*  
*Cover by: Roy Flinchum*  
*Edited by: Brian Burchette*

*A people without a history is like the wind over buffalo grass. - Sioux proverb*

"C'mon man, Red Wolf said we should go." Mark said.

"Phhtt," Rick made a sound with his lips.

Steve turned around from the computer, "That wrinkly old prune is crazy. Who listens to him anymore?"

Rick opened another beer. "Yeah, who listens to that old Indian crap anymore anyway?"

Mark stood, "Look, I know it's crazy and were all like modern guys and stuff. But look, were all moving to Metropolis next week for college and who knows where the rest of our lives are going to take us. Let's do this so we can say at least once in our life we did something as part of our Native American heritage."

Steve stood from the computer. "All right, we'll pack some gear in the morning and go hiking up to the caves, but I'm not burning any of that old shaman's voodoo incense or anything."

The cold north wind bit into the small Indian reservation. Doors and window were shut tight against the cold and the outside world. Only a hand full of young people remained on the reservation and most of those would be gone in few short years. The reservation was slowly dying, being swallowed up by the white mans world.

The old Shaman watched from the shadows as the young boys left the house that morning. He grinned and wrapped himself tighter in the old bear skin coat.

Mark, Rick and Steve stood at the cave entrance. A light snow had begun to fall. A slow steady breeze whipped the flakes into long tendrils that whirled around the trees.

“Ok, we’re here Pocahontas, now what?” Rick asked, turning to Mark for an answer.

“The Shaman said he would meet us here and give us the mark of the warrior brave.” Mark answered.

Steve pulled the scarf down from his nose and mouth that protected him from the cold. “You didn’t say anything about a ceremony!”

“It’s not, really, look he’s a harmless old man and he wants to do this for us, and if you guys weren’t such butt-holes you might think it would be nice to carry something of your Indian heritage with you.”

Rick pursed his lips and slapped his hand to his mouth back and forth, “Whoo whoo whoo whoo” he taunted.

Steve pushed him into the cave. “Shut up and get in there, we’ll wait a few minutes for him here, if he doesn’t show we’ve got to get going, I’ve still got packing to do.”

Red Wolf watched through the nearby trees. He held a small piece of white bone wrapped with leather and feathers between his fingers. With a circular motion in the air he muttered under his breath, “wee-tek-oh hemeseestse ehaveseva’e ka’eskoneh”.

“An Indian, a cowboy and a priest walk into a bar.”

“Shut up Rick!” Mark punched him in the arm.

“You guys cut it out! What is that?” Steve asked pointing to the back of the cave.

From the darkness of the cave two small pinpoints of light emerged. As they got closer the boys could see a creature with glowing eyes set deep into the recesses of its emaciated skull. It stepped from the shadows, standing almost twelve feet tall, its yellow flesh pulled taught over its skeletal body. Fingers ended in long pointed talons, its legs ended at the ankles in stubs. It smelled of rotting flesh. Its breath was fetid as it washed over the boys, the supernatural chill sunk into their bones and in an instant they were frozen, caught in suspended animation like a fly in amber.

“Kent! Office! Now!” Perry White was a man of few words. And the words he did use, he always made them count. “People get their news downloaded, sent to them on the phone and crawled across the bottom of their TV screen. If a newspaper is going to supply them with news we need to be clear and to the point.” That was last Monday’s pep talk.

Clark entered Perry’s office carrying his notepad and pencil. One never entered Perry’s office without a pad and pencil unless they wished everyone to wait while they went back to their desk and got one. Then everyone would have to listen to Perry’s speech on preparedness.

“Look at this Kent.” Perry pointed at the TV mounted in the top corner of his office. He grabbed the remote and while turning up the volume jabbing it at the screen like the cowboys in the old westerns slinging the bullets from their guns.

On the screen Cat Grant regurgitated the day’s headlines.

“... state three young men still missing from Indian reservation as a massive snowstorm blankets the area. On this the third day of the search, efforts are being called off due to weather conditions. At this point

officials are not considering it a rescue search. This is Cat Grant for WGBS Headline News.”

Perry turned the sound back down and pitched the remote into a pile of papers on his desk. “We ran this story when the search started three days ago and they found some of those boys equipment. You were AWOL again, Troupe covered it.”

“Sorry Mr. White, I was ... ” Clark started but Perry cut him off mid-sentence.

“Don’t know, don’t care Kent. I’ve long since stopped questioning your disappearing acts. I want you to fly up there to this Indian Reservation and get the human side of this story. There’s more to this than just lost teenagers, Kent. The Indian culture is vanishing; if it weren’t for Casinos most people wouldn’t even realize there were still Indian reservations. Talk to the people; tie the missing boys in with the culture disappearing, that kind of stuff. Find out what it’s like for your whole culture to disappear. Y’know, like yours.”

Clark pushed his glasses back up on his nose with his index finger. “Excuse me Mr. White?”

“You know, your roots, small town America vanishing farmers, that whole thing. Sorry, if I offended you Kent.” Perry put his hand on Clark’s back and ushered him out his office door. “Toughen up a little, boy, don’t take everything to heart. “Lots of people in this world are loud-mouths and don’t care what they say to anybody.”

“Where’s Lane!” Perry bellowed into the bullpen.

Clark left the newsroom and turned down the long corridor walking to the large window at the end. He raised the blinds and opened the window, loosening his tie he turned to take one last look around.

“Mr. Kent!” Clark stopped and looked around; Jimmy Olsen called to him as he ran down the hallway! “Mr. Kent, “What were you doing at the window?” Jimmy asked.

“Oh, uh just getting some fresh air. You wanted something Jim?” Clark asked.

“Oh yeah, Chief is sending me with you to the reservation. He wants some shots of the surrounding countryside, real Ansel Adams stuff he said.”

“Oh, yeah that’d be great. Listen, I’m going to fly up there early and get to know some of the locals, they’re Indians so they might be afraid of the camera.” He said playing on the stereotype. “You catch the first flight and let me know when you’re landing and I’ll come get you.” Without him knowing it Clark had led him into the elevator. He pushed the button for the lobby and deftly stepped out. “See you when you get there Jim”, he smiled and waved as the doors closed.

The Indian village sprawled out beneath the man of steel as he descended from the sky.

He sped between a couple of old wooden buildings built close together and Clark stepped out from the other side. The town was certainly not deserted but it was even smaller than Smallville. A few people that looked to be around Clark’s mother’s age huddled against the cold and walked stiffly by, they stared at Clark. “I need a coat.” He thought. He walked across to the local trading post.

Inside it smelled like leather and wood. A potbelly stove in the center of the store radiated warmth and crackled and spit. Several old people gathered around the stove. Their boisterous talk had quieted when Clark came in. Not that it mattered, he could still hear them, unfortunately Sioux was not a language that he had learned. Clark made a mental note to learn the Native American languages when he got a chance. He picked out a coat, a red one with a large fur parka.

“Excuse me”, He asked, “Is there a hotel somewhere locally? I’m a reporter from Metropolis; I’m here to get a story about the missing boys.”

The old men seemed to ignore him.

“Did any of you know the missing boys,” No one answered but the popping of the burning wood in the stove.

“Did you know any of their families; are they here, on the reservation?” Clark pressed.

“There are a couple of rooms across the street at the restaurant.” The old man nodded toward the door.

Clark paid for his coat and walked toward the door.

“Beware the Wee-tek-oh.” One of the old men said.

Clark turned, “What?”

Whoever spoke had not moved they only stared at each other in silence.

Lois cradled the phone in her ear and doodled the Superman emblem on the note pad in front of her. She had been on hold now for nearly twenty minutes. “This lead better pan out.” She thought.

“Hello, NASA Web site Tec help this is Chuck can I help you.” said a voice on the other end of the line finally.

“My name is Lois Lane, I’m a reporter for The Daily Planet and I was doing some research on meteor strikes and near earth objects in the 1970’s.”

“Yes Ms. Lane all that info is public information and available for download from our website.”

“I realize that Chuck, and I have tried several times to download even through an FTP server but I keep receiving a “File not found error”.

“Hold on one second Ms. Lane, and I’ll check on that for you.”

“Thanks chuck.”

Lois colored in the “s” part of the emblem. She could have kicked herself

for not thinking of it before. Given that Superman is around thirty years old, no one knows for sure though, thanks to his reluctance to tell. He's as much told us he came to earth as a child that would mean some kind of space vehicle. Since no one has come forward in that time and claimed to have found an alien spacecraft, I can only assume that whoever did find it kept it a secret. The arrival of his craft would have likely been attributed to a meteor. So it's just a matter of finding that information and eliminating everything that's not a possibility. At least knowing the area that his craft came down in would give her some clue as to where and how he grew up and possibly who he really is. "I mean I like him and all", she thought, "but come on, I'm Lois Lane, no one is keeping a secret from me."

"Ms. Lane," Chuck came back on the line.

"Yes."

"I'm sorry, but that information is no longer available on our server."

"Really, Chuck? Say his name, makes him trust me." Lois thought. "Can you tell me why?"

"Well Ms. Lane the file log shows that the file was downloaded a few weeks ago and then it appears to have been erased."

"Chuck, do you have the IP of the location it was downloaded to?"

"Yes Ms. Lane, it was 216.39.58.39."

"Thank you Chuck." Lois hung up and typed the numbers into the address bar of her web browser. *YOU DO NOT HAVE PERMISSION TO ACCESS THIS SERVER*

"We'll see about that." She grabbed her purse from the back of the chair and walked briskly to the elevator."

"Lois!" Perry called after her.

"On my desk chief!" She called back as the elevator doors closed.

Perry picked up the article from the desk and skimmed the title. "Mayoral Outcome Contested", he'll fix the title he thought. He glanced at her monitor and saw the error message and hit the back button. The NASA web site came up.

"Lois what are you into now?" He wondered. Whatever it was he was sure it would make one hell of a story.

Clark quickly checked into a room across the street from the trading post. Towaka, the old woman at the counter had stared at him the whole time. Straight at his glasses, it made him uncomfortable, like she could see through his disguise. He fidgeted with them more than usual. The room was small and musty. Years of dust and neglect sat on top of everything. The only window was on the back side of the building away from the center of town. Clark opened the window and the cold breeze blew in bringing a few flakes of new snow with it. Clark removed his glasses and laid them on the dresser next to the window. Just as he was about to super-speed out the window there were the sounds of a scuffle from downstairs.

Clark stared at the floor, and focused past the floorboards. Downstairs an old Indian wrapped in animal skins was turning over the few chairs and tables that were there. Towaka was at the counter was screaming something at him in Sioux.

"Is there something I can help with here?" Clark said, as he stood on the landing leading into the restaurant. No danger of anyone recognizing me here, Clark thought. Felt good to not have to pretend for once too.

"Red Wolf here likes to come into town every so often and tells us all how were are not true Indians cause we use white man magic." Towaka said.

"Are you all right?" Clark asked. "I'll be fine as soon as that crazy old shaman goes back into the woods."

Clark walked over to the Shaman, "I think it be best if you left sir."

Red Wolf glared at Clark. "The white man devours our ways, you are

ese'he ma'heono, you come to us as white man to help him destroy the old ways, but Wee-tek-oh will destroy you!" Clark didn't notice the small stone axe that Red Wolf carried, not until he brought it crashing against Clark's temple and he wasn't fast enough to stop it.

It sounded with a loud crack and Clark's vision blurred as he became dizzy. The sensation was not at all like flying, so why was the ground rushing to meet him he wondered as he crashed to the floor.

Lois got out of the cab and looked at the paper she held in her hand. This was the address that the tech guy from the planet had traced for her.

"Figures", she thought, "why can't these leads ever take me to Metro Towers or Trump Plaza? No I get the abandoned hollowed out crack house."

"Hey lady! You staying or what?" The cab driver yelled from the safety of the cab. Lois turned and handed him a ten and before she could say 'keep the change' the cab driver sped off, leaving her alone in front of the old deserted building. "Thanks Captain Courageous." She mumbled.

The place was boarded up tight from the front so she went around to the back of the building where someone before her had loosened several boards already. She pulled the board away and made her way inside. She pulled the pen flashlight from her purse. The light cut a swath through the darkness. This floor of the building looked like it had once been a comic book store. Empty racks lay in the dust and faded posters of Technicolor heroes rolled slowly away from the walls. Lois swept her light around; certainly there was no computer here, at least anything before 1980. Wait a minute, there that was new. She swung her light back around. A thick black cord ran down from the ceiling and into the floor it was shiny black, not covered in dust. There didn't appear to be a door into the basement from inside. Behind the counter the dust had been disturbed as if the counter had been swiveled to one side. One key on the old register didn't have any dust on it.

"What am I in a Nancy Drew book?" Lois thought. She pushed the key and the counter slid across the floor to reveal a set of stairs leading down

into the darkness. "I guess I am", she thought as she made her way down the stairs.

"Mr. Kent, are you ok? Mr. Kent?"

Clark felt like he was coming out of a deep sleep. He was in his room and Jimmy sat in front of him dabbing at his forehead with a damp cloth. The cloth was stained red. Clark's hand went up to touch the wound.

"Easy there brave, you took a pretty big blow from that fella's tomahawk."

"Jim, what are you doing here, when did you ... "

"I just got in; stepped through the door in time to see you get KO'd, what were you doing?"

"Oh uh, nothing just trying to help." Clark took the cloth and held it to his head, to hide the fact it was already beginning to heal. "What happened to the Shaman?"

"The crazy old man ran out the door, nearly knocked me down as he ran out. Listen Mr. Kent, I don't mean to be rude, but you're not exactly Clint Eastwood, what were you thinking?"

"I guess I got caught up in the moment Jim." Clark faked a swoon. "Listen Jim, I just need to lie down for a while do you mind?"

"Yeah, sure, I'll just be next door if you need me." Jimmy backed out of the room slowly closing the door behind him.

Jimmy unpacked in his room and pulled out his laptop. He had asked Towaka about what the shaman said. He typed in Wendigo on google search. *A wendigo is a monster of Native American legend. Depictions of the wendigo in literature and lore vary widely, but in general, it is associated with severe wind and cold and usually claims its victims during the night. The*

*wendigo typically stalks hunters or travelers in the woods. Many of the behaviors and attributes of the wendigo suggest that it is a personification of harsh conditions in dangerously freezing winters.*

Jimmy clicked the next tab and continued reading.

Lois' flashlight beam splashed over new computer terminals and workbenches. "Well somebody has been working down here." Lois said. Large fluorescent overhead lights sputtered to life bathing the whole room in a blue white glow. In the middle of the room connected to wires and cables sat a spacecraft. The body was blue with a red nose cone and red fins. Around the craft were several tables on which sat crystals of varying sizes and colors.

"Indeed I have Miss Lane." Winslow P Schott said as he walked down the stairway closing the trap door behind him.

A super-speed exit from his room, and Superman floated above the thick forest. He stared at the landscape sprawled beneath him. Infrared spectrum showed nothing unusual, the usual forest fauna. If the lost boys were there they were not giving off any heat signature. X-ray scan revealed a few interesting veins of rock strata but nothing out of the ordinary. Superman touched the barely visible wound on his forehead.

"Nothing like what happens with kryptonite so that only leaves magic" he thought.

Superman flew down into the forest for a closer look "WWBD he thought: *what would Batman do?*"

He floated inches off the ground he stopped closed his eyes and listened. The snowfall had gotten heavier and he could hear the flakes as they hit the leaves of the trees, he blocked that out. The slight breeze scraping through the trees, he blocked that out. The slow thump, thump of hibernating mammals, and the rapid pitter patter of others sheltering against the snow, he blocked that out. What was left was a slow steady,

ka-thump, kathump. Superman quickly opened his eyes in time to see the old shaman leaping down upon him from the trees above, tomahawk raised into the air. Superman dodged to the side barely missing the stone axe. Red Wolf fell into the snow, but was back up on his knees quicker than a man of his age should be. Superman advanced on him.

“Red Wolf stop”, he said. “Why do I have a feeling you’re somehow responsible for those missing boys!”

Red Wolf reached into a small leather pouch at his side and threw a small pinch of powder at the man of steel. A small explosion erupted at his feet and a thick black smoke circled around him choking him. Red wolf sailed through the air and struck Superman feet first knocking him to the ground. From another pouch the shaman brought forth the small piece of bone, leather and feathers he had used earlier. “Wee-tek-oh hemeseestse ehaveseva’e ese’he ma’heono ”, he shouted. The old man’s flesh dried and cracked pulling taught over him as he grew taller. His eyes sunk back into his head and long talons sprouted from his fingers. His feet shriveled to stubs and long canine like teeth sprouted in his mouth.

“I am WENDIGO” It shouted! And you sun spirit will make a fine meal for the winter! With a swoop of its claw-like hand it swatted Superman aside sending him flying backwards splintering trees as he went.

Superman picked up a trunk from one of the splintered trees and hurled back at the monster. “I hate magic.” He muttered. “Wendigo! What have you done with the boys?” Wendigo easily dodged the tree but didn’t expect the man of steel following behind it. With a with a barrel rolling right hook he slammed the Wendigo into the snow.

The Wendigo pointed its long bony finger from the snow and Superman was thrown backward by a hail of shards of ice. He instinctively held up his arm to his face and the ice sharpened by magical forces sliced through Superman’s flesh.

The Wendigo stood over him, the snow surrounding them spattered with Superman’s blood. “I will feast on your flesh Sun Spirit as I will devour mankind!”

“Red Wolf” Superman struggled to rise. “You can’t let this happen.”

The Wendigo picked up Superman by the neck and held him above him. “Fool! Red Wolf is gone! He summoned me to punish those that would leave but he has been consumed by my hunger! As will you!”

A foul wind sprang from the Wendigo’s mouth and washed over Superman. He could feel the blood in his veins slow and turn to ice. His muscles that could push around continents, stiffened and hardened. His blue eyes darkened and glazed over. His mind slowed and he thought nothing. Superman stopped being. Frozen, suspended trapped by the Wendigo’s icy hunger.

**To be concluded!**

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