ANNOTATIONS SUPREME

Alan Moore's Awesome Comics Universe

Supreme #41-#56, *Judgment Day* #1-#3, *Judgment Day Aftermath*, *Youngblood* #1-#2

In 1996 British comics writer Alan Moore was hired by Rob Liefeld, owner of Maximum Press comics, to resuscitate Maximum Press's moribund series *Supreme*. *Supreme*, which began as an Image title in 1993, starred a big-muscled bruiser modeled loosely on Superman but with little coherent personality or background. Moore, the noted author of the early eighties revamps of *Marvelman* (*Miracleman* in the U.S.) and *Saga of the Swamp Thing* and ground breaking series including *Watchmen*, *V For Vendetta*, and *From Hell*, was given carte blanche to revamp *Supreme* from the ground up.

Moore, who was partially responsible for the wave of "grim and gritty" revisions that swept superhero comics during the eighties, has since had a change of heart about his approach to the genre. The tide of revisionism, he has said, swept away much of what originally made the heroes of comics' Silver Age charming and fun. In an earlier project, *1963* (with Rick Veitch, John Totleben, and Steve Bissette), Moore had presented his versions of the early sixties Marvel Comics line, incorporating quite a few stinging jabs at Marvel demagogue Stan Lee but hearkening back to a simpler, more innocent era. With *Supreme* Moore saw an opportunity to do the same with the most potent of comic book icons: Superman.

Few fictional characters have attained the level of fame of Superman, who first appeared in *Action Comics* #1 in the spring of 1938. Moved into the public eye with a long-running newspaper comic strip (beginning in 1939), a popular radio series, *The Adventures of Superman* (from 1940 to 1953), three television series (*The Adventures of Superman* from 1953 to 1960, *Superboy* from 1987-1990, and *Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* from 1992 to 1995), two movie serials (in 1948 and 1949), a Broadway stage show (1966), five feature films, and countless merchandising and licensing ventures, Superman's name recognition is rivaled only by Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes, and Batman.

Beginning in *Supreme* #41 Moore recast Supreme as an extremely thinly-veiled analog of Superman as Superman was presented during the Silver Age. In the fifties and sixties, under the editorship of Mort Weisinger, Superman's world expanded from his small group of supporting characters to a vast pantheon with an intricate history. Superman stories showed not just the hero's adventures but tales of his lost home world, Krypton, his youthful escapades as Superboy in the small Midwestern town of Smallville, and the fantastic people and artifacts of his world: his Arctic sanctum, the Fortress of Solitude, the Bottle City of Kandor (a surviving Kryptonian city, reduced to miniature size and held in a large glass bottle), and more. By the early seventies, however, a move towards realism and "relevancy" pushed most of these fantasy elements to the background. In 1986 Superman's

publisher, DC Comics, attempted to sever its ties to the sixties stories by hiring writers John Byrne and Marv Wolfman to extensively revise the Man of Steel, stripping away most of the Silver Age trappings. Moore, who says the revision was a case of DC "throwing the baby out with the bath water," has given Supreme versions of almost all of the wondrous Superman iconography of the Silver Age from the Bottle City to the Phantom Zone. He also introduced elements borrowed from Superman's heroic arch-rival of the forties, Captain Marvel, from Marvel Comics, from Superman's pulp magazine forebears of the thirties, and his own unique touches to create an affectionate homage to Superman's brightest era.

When Rob Liefeld and partner Jeph Loeb created a new company, Awesome Entertainment, to publish *Supreme* and other titles Alan Moore was commissioned to provide a similar revamp on their entire comic book universe by means of a massive company-wide crossover. The result, the three issue *Judgment Day* mini-series, expanded on the history created in *Supreme* and introduced many new characters from the dawn of man to the 25th century.

Judgment Day was also intended to spin off a variety of new titles, including two which were to be written by Alan Moore: a new *Glory* series, recasting the Liefeld-created "bad girl" as an analog of Wonder Woman, and a revamped *Youngblood*, a new version of the Image/MaximumPress superhero team. Previews of these new titles appeared in a special entitled *Judgment Day: Aftermath*.

Unfortunately, in early 1998 Awesome Entertainment suffered a series of financial problems that stopped publication of most of the company's titles. As a result *Supreme* was placed on indefinite hiatus after issue #56. Only two issues of the new *Youngblood* have been released, and the *Glory* series has yet to appear. Alan Moore chose to move on, writing a new line of books to be published by Jim Lee's Wildstorm Entertainment in early 1999. However, Awesome Entertainment states that they still intend to publish the backlog of stories they had already purchased from Moore, which include several issues of *Youngblood* and *Glory* and issues #57-#64 of *Supreme*. These stories may see print in mid-1999.

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Issue #41

Part 1: "The Double Exposure Doom"

Page 1: Supreme returns to Earth from space. He sees the planet as two overlapping images, "like a double-exposed photograph." This image, along with the ghostly shadows of the people and cars on the street (superimposing images of "who they are and who they might have been") on pages 2 and 3, is strongly reminiscent of the early stages of DC's 1985 *Crisis on Infinite Earths* storyline, in particular *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #4-#5, when several alternate worlds began to overlap.

Page 2: Supreme uses his "micro-sight" for the first time. This is another name for microscopic vision, a sensory power Superman first used in *Action Comics* #24 (1940) that allows him to see objects smaller than are visible through the most powerful microscopes. Supreme did not have this power prior to this issue.

Page 3: This is the first glimpse of two of the many alternate Supremes that we will shortly meet, Sister Supreme and Superion. Sister Supreme's exclamation, "Jeepers H. Christmas!" is reminiscent of the favorite phrase of Marvel's seventies hero Luke Cage (the Hero for Hire, later known as Power Man): "Sweet Christmas!"

Page 4: Here we see Superion (left) and Sister Supreme (right) in full view. Superion's visor and his reference on page 3 to "the text display on [his] hyper-visor" suggest that he is a high-tech futuristic version of Supreme. Sister Supreme, with her Afro and dialog style, is reminiscent of seventies "blaxploitation" characters like Foxy Brown (played by actress Pam Grier) and of Marvel's Luke Cage.

Superman had many futuristic counterparts, although there was not a black version of Superman until the introduction of John Henry Irons (Steel) in 1993's "Reign of the Supermen" storyline. It is worth noting that in the early eighties Marvel Comics introduced a black female Captain Marvel (Monica Rambeau), who later became a member of the Avengers.

In addition to Son of Supreme and Sister Supreme, we also see Original Supreme, described later in this issue as the first version of Supreme to come into existence (and thus an analog of the early "Golden Age" Superman). His posture suggests that he is leaping rather than flying under his own power; we will learn later that Original Supreme, like Superman in his early adventures, cannot fly.

Page 5-6: One of the strangest of the alternate Supremes makes his appearance here, Squeak the Supremouse, who derives his powers from eating "Supremium Stilton." Squeak's most obvious inspiration is Mighty Mouse, the Terrytoons character who debuted in the theatrical animated short

The Wreck of the Hesperus in 1944. Mighty Mouse was preceded by Supermouse, a similar character produced by the same Terrytoons artists who appeared in seven animated shorts in 1942-1943. Supermouse, who was modeled closely on Superman (for example, he had a blue and red costume rather than Mighty Mouse's red and yellow suit), was replaced by the slightly less derivative Mighty Mouse, possibly out of fear of legal action by Superman's publisher, National, which had already filed copyright infringement suits against several other publishers, most famously Fawcett Comics, the publisher of Captain Marvel. Supermouse, like Supremouse, gained his powers by eating super-cheese. A very similar but unrelated Supermouse character appeared in Standard Publishing's *Coo-Coo Comics* around the same time; in 1948 he received his own title, which survived until 1958.

Pages 7: The swirling space warp through which the various Supremes travel to reach the Supremacy bears a certain resemblance to the Boom Tube, the method of intergalactic (and interdimensional) travel used by the denizens of Apokolips and New Genesis in Jack Kirby's early seventies "Fourth World" cycle (contained in the series *New Gods*, *Forever People*, *Jimmy Olsen*, and *Mister Miracle*).

Part 2: "Land of a Thousand Supremes"

Page 8: Note that the architecture of the golden citadel seems strongly influenced by both the work of Jack Kirby (particularly in the fins and antennae at the city's base) and by the cover artwork of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* (the figure of Supreme holding an enormous white globe is particularly reminiscent of the image of Atlas with the world on his shoulders).

Page 9: We learn that Original Supreme was the first Supreme to arrive in the Supremacy after being "revised." Superion also mentions that Original Supreme can't fly.

Page 10: Supreme meets Macrosupreme, a giant stone Supreme. Macrosupreme, who complains that his existence lasted "one short month, with not even a second appearance!" may have been inspired by a story entitled "The Skyscraper Superman" in *Action Comics* #325 (1965), in which Superman was temporarily stripped of his powers and transformed him into a towering giant.

Macrosupreme also warns Supreme of Darius Dax, Supreme's arch-nemesis, who is a counterpart of Lex Luthor, Superman's arch-enemy.

Page 11: Supreme is introduced to Supreme the Fifth, "the Supreme Supreme!" who is apparently modeled after Superman as he was portrayed between 1958 and 1968. During this period Superman was portrayed as having nearly godlike powers: he was capable of moving planets with relative ease. The crown may be inspired by a two-part story from *Action Comics* #311-#312 (1964), in which

Superman forced the United Nations to proclaim him king of Earth as part of an elaborate ruse to defeat an alien invader.

Page 13: Original Supreme recounts his origins as the son of Jack and Joanne Crane of the town of Littlehaven. In the earliest version of Superman's origin the young Kryptonian orphan who would become Superman was found by "a passing motorist" and apparently raised in an orphanage (*Action Comics* #1, 1938). His foster parents, the Kents, were first mentioned in the revised version of Superman's origin that appeared in *Superman* #1 in 1939.

Superman's childhood hometown eventually was established as the town of Smallville. In recent years, Smallville (whose precise location previously was never revealed) was established as being in Kansas.

Panel 1: Original Supreme says that he was born in 1920. *Superman* #181 (1965) gave the same date for Superman's birth, although Superman appeared older than 18 when he made his debut in 1938.

Panel 2: As we'll discover next issue, the current Supreme, like Original Supreme, gained his powers by being exposed to radiation; unlike Superman or Supreme the Fifth, he was not an extraterrestrial. The "belt buckle" found by Original Supreme calls to mind the gimmick of forties heroine Liberty Belle, who had a belt buckle made of a piece of the Liberty Bell; when her friend Tom Revere rang the bell in Philadelphia it caused a sympathetic vibration in Belle's buckle and triggered a burst of adrenaline. Liberty Belle first appeared in *Boy Commandos* #1 (1943) and later starred in DC's eighties series *All-Star Squadron*, set in 1942.

Panel 3: In his secret identity as Ethan Crane, Original Supreme was a newspaper reporter like Superman's alter ego Clark Kent.

Original Supreme's hometown was Omega City. Superman makes his home in Metropolis, a fictional east coast city. In Superman's earliest adventures the city's architecture and geography were closely based on Joe Shuster's one-time home of Toronto; the name was inspired by Fritz Lang's classic 1926 silent film *Metropolis*, about a city of the future. Later artists based Metropolis on New York City, particularly Manhattan. In recent years, Metropolis, New York, and Gotham City (also originally based on New York) have been established as separate entities with their own distinctive geography, although DC remains reluctant to specify the exact locations of Metropolis and Gotham.

Panel 5: Original Supreme says that when he was written out in 1941 "everything connected" with him appeared in limbo with him, including the *Daily Record* building in which he'd worked. The

Daily Record corresponds to the *Daily Star*, the newspaper for which Clark Kent and Lois Lane worked in their earliest adventures in 1938-1941.

The year 1941 corresponds to a period of extensive change in Superman's development. It was at this time that the newspaper Clark Kent worked for changed from the *Daily Star* to the *Daily Planet* and his original editor, George Taylor, was replaced by Perry White. Perry debuted in the second episode of Mutual Radio Network's *The Adventures of Superman*, a radio serial that began in February 1940; Perry was added to the comic book cast later that year in *Superman* #7. 1941 also marked the introduction of Superman's young friend Jimmy Olsen, who first appeared in *Superman* #13 (although a similar-looking but unnamed copyboy appeared in *Action Comics* #6, which recent sources have cited as Jimmy's real first appearance). It was also during this period that Superman gradually gained the power of flight, rather than simply the ability to make tremendous leaps.

Original Supreme says that the second revised Supreme appeared in 1945. This second revision may be related to the introduction of Superboy in 1945. In early versions of Superman's origin he did not assume his costumed identity until he was an adult, but the Superboy strip that debuted in *More Fun Comics* #101 showed him adopting his colorful costume as a very young boy, albeit with all the powers he would possess as an adult. As established in John Byrne's 1986 revision, the current version of Superman did not develop his powers until he was almost an adult, and had no career as Superboy.

Panel 6: Original Supreme notes that all the later Supremes were more powerful than he. Superman's powers increased rapidly in the forties, quickly making him much stronger than he was in his earliest appearances.

Supreme the Fifth describes himself as the "last son of the exploded planet Supron" just as Superman was the last son of the planet Krypton. Superman's home planet was not named in the first brief account of Superman's origin which appeared in *Action Comics* #1 (1938); it was first described in the opening episode of the newspaper comic strip in January 1939. In later years, an extensive body of lore about Krypton's geography, culture, and history appeared in the Superman and Superboy strips and in a backup series entitled "The Fabulous World of Krypton."

As we see in the next issue of *Supreme*, the current Supreme is a human transformed by a Supremium meteor and not an extraterrestrial. His revision date may be symbolic of the transfer of the editorship of the Superman books from Mort Weisinger, the sometimes tyrannical editor who had shaped Superman's mythos since 1945. Control of *Superboy*, *Action Comics*, and *Adventure Comics* passed to Murray Boltinoff in 1968 and editorship of *Superman* and was transferred to Julius Schwartz in 1971. Beginning in *Superman* #233, Schwartz and writer Denny O'Neil made an

effort to modernize Superman by reducing his powers and removing many of the trappings of the past fifteen years.

P. 14: Fifties Supreme, who appears on page 17, apparently distinguishes the fifties Superman C who was drawn primarily by artist Wayne Boring C from that of artist Curt Swan, who took over in 1958 and remained Superman's primary artist until 1982. Swan, who passed away in 1996, is credited with establishing a visual design for Superman that, with some minor variation, remains the standard today.

The three Sergeants Supreme are similar to the three Lieutenant Marvels, Tall Billy, Fat Billy, and Hill Billy, minor supporting characters in the Fawcett Comics Captain Marvel comics of the forties; they first appeared in *Whiz Comics* #21 (1941). The original Captain Marvel, who debuted in *Whiz Comics* #2 (1940), was a young boy named Billy Batson who transformed himself into the adult superhero Captain Marvel by saying the magic word "Shazam;" he was one of the most popular characters of the forties and Superman's principal sales rival. The Lieutenant Marvels were three other youngsters, each also named Billy Batson, who discovered that they also could become super-powered by saying Billy's magic word, forming a sort of Marvel auxiliary corps. In 1972 they, along with Captain Marvel and his other supporting characters, were acquired by DC Comics. Their last appearance was in *Crisis on Infinite Earths*; they do not exist in DC's current *Power of Shazam* series. The Sergeants Supreme appear next in the second story in issue #52A.

P. 15: Sirius the Stallion Supreme is an analog of Comet the Super-Horse, a flying, super-powered horse who was the pet of Superman's cousin Supergirl in the sixties. Comet was a member of the Legion of Super-Pets, an organization of heroic super-powered animals based in the 30th century. Comet, who debuted in *Adventure Comics* #293 (1962), once was a centaur who was cursed by an evil wizard to become a real horse, albeit endowed with magical powers. He was able to temporarily transform himself into a human whenever he was in sight of a comet. By the eighties, the original Comet was all but forgotten, but a new Comet (with a very different origin) debuted in 1998 in the current Supergirl series (*Supergirl* (3rd series) #19).

Original Supreme's call of "Up! Up and over!" is a riff on "Up, up, and away" Superman's trademark cry from the *Adventures of Superman* radio series. Contrary to popular belief, Superman very rarely used this exclamation in the comics; it was adopted by the radio show, along with the accompanying sound effects, to indicate when Superman took flight.

Page 17
Panel 1: The character in the right foreground clapping is not named, but his appearance is reminiscent of the seventies work of Jack Kirby on his so-called "Fourth World" series. The rocky

fellow at the left foreground bears a striking resemblance to Ben Grimm, the Thing, a member of Marvel's Fantastic Four.

Panel 2: Supremes White and Gold are clearly inspired by a classic 1963 Imaginary Story entitled "The Amazing Story of Superman-Red and Superman-Blue" (*Superman* #162), in which an experiment involving Kryptonite split Superman into two identical Supermen distinguished only by their costumes. The two Supermen pooled their resources and set out to complete the various tasks Superman had been unable to accomplish alone, including restoring the planet Krypton and wiping out war, crime, and famine on Earth.

Imaginary Stories were the brainchild of Superman editor Mort Weisinger in the early sixties; they were first introduced in *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*, but soon appeared in the regular Superman strip as well. These stories, which appeared frequently until 1971, speculated what would happen if Superman were to die, marry, or retire, or what would have resulted if important events had happened differently (e.g., if Krypton had never exploded). In the seventies Marvel Comics launched an ongoing series with a similar premise entitled *What If*? DC continues to explore similar concepts in the nineties under the *Elseworlds* banner.

Fifties Supreme is seen in the grips of a violet Supremium transformation, just as Superman of that era was often transformed by red Kryptonite.

Kryptonite, the generic term for radioactive fragments of the planet Krypton that are harmful to Superman (and other Kryptonian survivors), was first introduced in the *Adventures of Superman* radio series in 1943. Its conception dates back to an unpublished Superman story by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster from 1939 or 1940 that introduced a similar substance called "k-metal," although Kryptonite did not appear in the comic books until 1949 (*Superman* #61). It was colored red in its initial comic book appearance, although this may have been a printing error (it was described as green in the radio show and was green in all subsequent comic stories).

In the late fifties and early sixties it was established that there were several varieties of Kryptonite, including green Kryptonite, which sapped Superman's strength and could eventually kill him, and red Kryptonite, created when a hail of green Kryptonite meteors passed through a "strange cosmic cloud," which was not lethal but caused Superman to experience bizarre (though thankfully temporary) changes, such as losing his super-powers on half of his body, becoming a giant ant, or splitting Clark Kent and Superman into two separate individuals. Red Kryptonite was introduced in two 1958 Superboy stories (*Adventure Comics* #252 and #255) and quickly became a staple gimmick of the Superman series. In the current continuity, the only known type of Kryptonite is the lethal green variety, although in *Superman* (2nd series) #49-#50 (1990) Superman was

temporarily stripped of his powers by a piece of ersatz red Kryptonite created by Mr. Mxyzptlk; this "red-K" was empowered by Mxyzptlk's magic and was not actually Kryptonite.

Fifties Supreme tells Supreme the lion-head transformation will wear off in 24 hours; red Kryptonite effects generally lasted 48 hours, although there were samples whose effects lasted for a shorter or longer period.

Superman was transformed into a similar humanoid lion in *Action Comics* #243 (1958), although the change was caused by a potent "evolutionary serum" administered by a descendant of the sorceress Circe and not by red-K.

Page 18
Panel 1: Here we see Supreme's ancillary characters, Lady Supreme and Kid Supreme, who had their own Image/Maximum Press titles. Kid Supreme is modeled after the current version of Superboy, who is an imperfect clone of Superman. Lady Supreme has no direct equivalent in the current Superman mythos; in previous years, there was a Superwoman (Kristen Wells, a historian from the 28th Century introduced in Elliot S! Maggin's 1981 prose novel *Miracle Monday*), but her powers were different from Superman's.

Panel 2: Kid Supreme's fiancée Sally Supreme is reminiscent of Supergirl, although Supergirl's most direct analog is Suprema, who will appear in issue #46. Supergirl was not introduced until the late fifties, although DC trademarked the name as early as 1945. Fawcett Comics, however, introduced a female version of Captain Marvel, Mary Marvel, in 1942; her first appearance was in *Captain Marvel Adventures* #18.

Panel 3: In the background, we see Fat Supreme and what appears to be a rhino-Supreme, perhaps more violet Supremium transformations. Both will be seen again in the second story in issue #52A.

Panel 4: In the background behind Supreme and Supreme the Fifth we see the following characters:

Far left: a dark-haired female Supreme with a red headband who may be another Suprema or Lady Supreme variant.
Left: a long-necked dinosaur Supreme, perhaps another violet Supremium transformation.
Far right: another male Supreme variant, bald except for a Mohawk hairdo. The Mohawk is reminiscent of Gladiator, the leader of the Shi'ar Imperial Guard in the Marvel universe. The Imperial Guard was designed by artist Dave Cockrum as a Marvel version of DC's Legion of Superheroes; in the eighties John Byrne established Gladiator as a counterpart of Superman possessing many of Superman's powers.

Page 19
Panels 1-2: Supreme-of-the-Future, with his enormous head apparently denoting advanced intelligence, closely resembles a guise Superman adopted in *Action Comics* #256 (1959), when he posed as Ultra Superman from the year 100,000. He also resembles the 30th century hero Evolvo Lad, a member of the Heroes of Lallor, who could evolve himself to gain super-intelligence at the cost of becoming physically frail. Supreme-of-the-Future reappears in the second story in issue #52A, although in that story he inexplicably has green skin.

Panel 3: At the left we see one of the Sergeant Supremes and a bald Supreme with blank white eyes and a pointed head; it is unclear if this is an alien Supreme or another violet Supremium transformation, but he resembles the Coneheads, alien characters who appeared on *Saturday Night Live* in the seventies.

Page 20: Besides the fly-by of alternate Supremes we get our first glimpse of Supreme's supporting cast, all of whom are directly analogs of Superman's friends:

Diana Dane = Lois Lane, girl reporter and Superman's long-time love interest
Judy Jordan = Lana Lang, Clark Kent's childhood sweetheart from Smallville
Billy Friday = Jimmy Olsen, cub reporter and Superman's pal
Lucas Tate = Perry White, Clark Kent's editor at the *Daily Planet*.

Page 22: As Ethan Crane, Supreme enters his new continuity. Instead of a newspaper reporter, he's a comic book artist for Dazzle Comics. Ethan draws a series called *Omniman*, who we'll soon see is an analog of Supreme himself. Lucas Tate is his editor and Diana Dane writes *Warrior Woman*, a comic book version of Wonder Woman (whose "real" analog in Supreme's world is the heroine Glory). Note that Ethan, like Clark Kent, wears round-rimmed glasses.

Page 23
Panel 2: The cab driver, with his long dark hair, bears a certain resemblance to Alan Moore himself.

Panel 3: The headline of the newspaper seen through the window refers to Youngblood, another superhero team created and owned by Rob Liefeld. Alan Moore later started a new *Youngblood* series as a spin-off of his work on *Supreme* and the *Judgment Day* mini-series.

Panels 4 and 6: Ethan Crane's address is shown to be 202 West Park, Apartment 5A. Clark Kent resided in similar apartment buildings; in the comics, he lived at 344 Clinton Street, Apartment 3-B, while in the fifties television series he lived at the Standish Arms, Apartment 5-H.

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Panel 3: In his apartment, Ethan Crane discovers his Supreme costumes in a hidden closet. Clark Kent had a similar secret closet in his apartment which contained his Superman uniform.

Panel 5: The photograph on Ethan's drawing board is of himself and his parents in front of the Littlehaven General Store. Superman's foster parents, the Kents, were originally farmers but later moved into a house in Smallville, where Jonathan Kent opened a general store. In current Superman continuity, the Kents are still farmers living outside of Smallville.

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Issue #42 "Secret Origins"

Page 1
Panel 1: This is the first appearance of this continuity's version of Supreme's pal Billy Friday, shown here as the writer of *Omniman*. Unlike Superman's impetuous but good-natured pal Jimmy Olsen, on whom he is loosely based, Billy is an arrogant, pompous elitist.

Panels 1-2: The comic book Ethan and Billy work on, *Omniman* (who is also an analog of Superman), apparently has his own version of Supergirl, called Omnigirl. Ethan notes that Diana Dane is planning to write a backup feature starring Omnigirl; Supergirl had a similar long-running strip in *Action Comics* beginning in *Action Comics* #253 (1959).

Panel 3: Ethan's blithe diary entry about saving a crashing airliner ("something came up on my other job that needed attending to") is very similar in tone to the story "In Dreams" in Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* #1 (1996), which starred Samaritan, another analog of Superman.

Page 2
Note the clever integration of the title of the story, "Secret Origins," into the panel as a street sign. This is a visual trick established by Will Eisner in his seminal forties series *The Spirit* that is often repeated by modern comic creators as a conscious homage to Eisner.

We learn here that Supreme, like Superman prior to the 1986 revision, had adventures as a super-powered youngster. As a boy, he was called Kid Supreme.

The billboard shown here is very similar to a sign that hung on the Smallville water tower announcing that Smallville was Superboy's hometown.

Page 3
Panels 5-6: The crater Ethan Crane finds in the woods is the spot where a Supremium meteor crashed years earlier, as we'll shortly see.

Page 4
Here we are presented with the first of what will be a recurring series of flashback stories intended to evoke the simpler styles of earlier eras.

Panel 2: Like Superboy, who had his dog Krypto, the young Ethan Crane had a dog, Radar. Unlike Krypto Radar started out as an ordinary dog. Krypto, who first appeared in *Adventure Comics* #210 (1955), was young Kal-El's puppy on Krypton. Superman's father Jor-El launched Krypto into space to test the prototype of the rocket which would later carry Kal-El to Earth. Krypto's

ship survived the destruction of Krypton and eventually passed through the "space warp" created by Kal-El's rocket. When the ship arrived in our solar system, Krypto gained super-powers like Superman's. Krypto later tracked down his one-time master, who was now living in Smallville. Superboy and Krypto eventually devised a disguise to protect Krypto's "secret identity." They applied a wood stain to the fur on his back so he could masquerade as Clark Kent's dog; Krypto could lick off the stain at super-speed when he needed to leap into action as Krypto the Superdog.

Panel 3: Ethan Crane's parents' names are Joe and Joanne. The first names of Clark Kent's adoptive parents changed several times during the forties; the 1942 prose Superman novel written by George Lowther gives them the names Sarah and Eben Kent, while in the comics they were briefly called John and Mary. It was not until 1951 (in *Action Comics* #158 and *Superboy* #12) when their names were established as Jonathan and Martha, which they remain today.

Since this story suggests that Ethan was a normal boy before being exposed to Supremium, rather than an extraterrestrial like Superman, it is interesting that Joe and Joanne are established as his adoptive rather than biological parents. This may have been intended as foreshadowing of a plot development that has not come to fruition in the stories published to date.

Page 5
Unlike Superman (or the Supreme the Fifth as seen last issue), whose powers came from his extraterrestrial origins, Ethan was an ordinary boy transformed by the Supremium meteor. This is reminiscent of Ultra-Man, the evil Superman of Earth-Three (a parallel world introduced in *Justice League of America* #29), who gained new powers each time he was exposed to Kryptonite. Other characters to receive their powers in a similar fashion are the villain Vandal Savage and his nemesis the Immortal Man, two Cro-Magnons made immortal by a radioactive meteorite, and the Golden Age Green Lantern, whose power ring and lantern were made from a piece of a mysterious green meteorite called the Starheart.

The meteor also calls to mind the fictional history created in the seventies by author Philip José Farmer in his biographies of Tarzan and Doc Savage (*Tarzan Alive* and *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*). According to Farmer, the crash of a meteorite in Wold Newton, England in the year 1795 irradiated several passing coaches carrying noblemen and their wives. The descendants of those men became the leading (fictional) heroes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Sherlock Holmes, Professor Challenger (of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*), Tarzan, Doc Savage, the Shadow, and others.

The origins of the Supremium meteor itself are revealed in issue #52B. That issue also establishes the year Ethan was exposed to Supremium (and thus the date of this flashback story) as 1925.

Before John Byrne's revision of Superman in 1986, most Kryptonite was portrayed as being completely harmless to ordinary humans; only a rare isotope of green Kryptonite could hurt non-Kryptonians. In the current continuity (as first shown in *Action Comics* #600), Kryptonite affects Superman more severely than humans, but its radiation is also quite harmful to ordinary people.

The weird, Bizarro-like dialogue for young Ethan is typical of the way small children were depicted in the Superman comics of the fifties and sixties. In his 1981 prose novel *Miracle Monday,* writer Elliot S! Maggin suggested that the broken sentences were characteristic of young Clark Kent's rapid learning of the English language: owing to his superb memory, he memorized vocabulary words much more quickly than he learned the rules of grammar.

Page 6: Professor Wells is modeled on Professor Phineas Potter, a resident of Smallville and the uncle of Superboy's childhood sweetheart Lana Lang. Professor Potter's out-of-control inventions were the source of many of Superboy's adventures. Moore's character was presumably named after seminal science fiction author H.G. Wells, although according to issue #46, his first name is Erwin.

Page 7: Ethan begins to manifest his superhuman powers, which include x-ray vision ("Sight Supreme"), super-strength, and the ability to fly. This sequence is similar to the scenes of a young Clark Kent discovering his powers in various versions of Superman's origins.

Page 8
Panel 1: In the earliest Superboy stories, beginning with his first appearance in *More Fun Comics* #101(1945), Superboy was depicted as an eight year-old boy. Beginning in *Superboy* #8 (1950), a "Superbaby" strip was added that showed him performing this type of super-feat at an even younger age. Supreme is shown here as having a similar career as "Supremite."

Panel 3: Before his 1986 revision, Superman's costume originally was created as a play-suit by Martha Kent, who wove the suit from the fabric of three colorful blankets in which the baby Kal-El had been wrapped aboard his rocket ship. Since the fabric was from Krypton, it became invulnerable on Earth just as did Superman. Although Martha was unable to cut the indestructible fabric, she was able to unravel loose threads after persuading young Clark to weaken them with the heat of his x-ray vision, thus enabling Martha to weave them into the playsuit. The suit stretched as Superman grew older; the costume he wore as an adult was actually the same as the one he wore as a child. Since Supreme isn't from another planet, it's instead established that little Ethan's clothes also were affected by the Supremium radiation, making his costume similarly indestructible.

In current continuity, Superman's uniform, except for the cape, is protected by the same "bio-electric aura" that makes Superman impervious to bullets, preventing it from being easily ripped or torn (as first established in *Man of Steel* #2). The costume itself has no special properties. It was

designed by Jonathan and Martha Kent, and its insignia was based on an Indian symbol (shown in the 1997-1998 mini-series *The Kents*).

Panels 4-5: We see here that Radar has developed powers similar to Ethan's, just as Superboy's dog Krypto gained super-powers like Superboy's in Earth's environment.

Page 9
Panel 1: Kid Supreme's use of hair dye to disguise himself in his heroic identity is at least a slight step up from Clark Kent's glasses, I suppose. Steve Ditko's hero the Question (introduced as a backup feature in Charleton Comics' *Blue Beetle* series in 1967 and now part of the DC lineup) also altered his hair color as part of his disguise, as does the DC heroine the Black Canary, although she uses a blond wig to cover her black hair, rather than dye.

Panel 2: The passerby's cry, "Look up there in the sky! Is it an eagle? Is it an autogyro? No! It's Kid Supreme, the Lad of Laurels!" is obviously a play on the classic line, "Look, up in the sky! Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Superman!" which was part of the opening for the *Adventures of Superman* radio series and of the long-running television series that followed it. The term "Lad of Laurels" is analogous to "Boy of Steel," the most common nickname applied to Superboy. An autogyro (or autogiro) is a rotary-wing aircraft using a conventional propeller for forward thrust and an unpowered free-rotating rotor for lift; invented in the early twenties, it was the ancestor of the helicopter.

Panel 3: Kid Supreme's secret workshop under the Crane house, complete with robot decoys of himself, is very similar to the laboratory Superboy maintained under the Kents' house in Smallville. Superboy also employed a secret tunnel so that he could enter and leave the house without being seen.

Panel 5: Here we're introduced to Judy Jordan, Ethan Crane's childhood sweetheart. Judy is the counterpart of Superman's childhood sweetheart Lana Lang, who first appeared in *Superboy* #10 (1950). Like Lois Lane, Lana was infatuated with Superboy and somewhat contemptuous of Clark Kent, although she often suspected Clark and Superboy were the same person. As an adult, Lana eventually moved to Metropolis, joining the cast of the Superman series in *Superman* #78 (1952) as a rival for Lois Lane. She later became Clark Kent's co-anchor on the WGBS evening news. In current continuity, Clark revealed his powers to Lana shortly before leaving for Metropolis, making her one of the few people aware of his dual identity. She recently married another childhood friend, Pete Ross, and currently lives in Smallville (*Action Comics* #700).

Panel 6: This is our first glimpse of a young Darius Dax, the counterpart of Superman's arch-enemy Lex Luthor.

In Luthor's earliest appearances in 1940, he and Superman first met as adults and Luthor had a full head of red hair. However, beginning in 1960, Luthor was established as having met Superboy while both men were teenagers, turning to crime after losing all his hair in an accident he blamed on the Boy of Steel (first shown in *Adventure Comics* #271). In the eighties the bald Lex Luthor was established as the Luthor of Earth-One (home of the seventies and eighties version of Superman), while the redheaded Luthor (who was given the first name Alexei in *DC Comics Presents* Annual #1) was described as existing on the parallel world of Earth-Two, the home of the Golden Age version of Superman. Alexei Luthor was slain by Brainiac in *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #9 (1985). The current version of Luthor is not a mad scientist but a ruthless businessman who conceals his illegal activities behind a respectable front; he bears a greater resemblance to the Marvel villain Wilson Fisk, the Kingpin, than to his earlier comic book incarnations.

Darius Dax is an amalgam of both the Earth-One and Earth-Two Luthors; physically, he is the spitting image of Alexei Luthor, but his early clashes with Kid Supreme are reminiscent of the Earth-One Lex Luthor.
The villain Master Meteor is described in issue #51 as an extraterrestrial collector of rare meteorites who menaced Kid Supreme; he later encountered the adult Supreme as the Supremium Man. He may be based on the Kryptonite Kid, an alien boy whose skin emitted Kryptonite radiation, who fought Superboy and Krypto in *Superboy* #83 (1960) and #99 (1962). The Kryptonite Kid later became the Kryptonite Man, an enemy of Superman. He was killed by Krypto the Superdog in Alan Moore's 1986 Imaginary Story "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" (*Action Comics* #583).

Korgo the Space-Bully was a teenage villain that Supreme battled in his youth; as an adult, he is known as Korgo the Space-Tyrant. At this point in the story, he is imprisoned in Supreme's Hell of Mirrors, as we will see in issue #43.

Page 10
Panel 1: Ethan Crane announces his intentions to leave Littlehaven. In most accounts of Superman's origins prior to 1986, Clark Kent did not leave Smallville until his parents died, around the time Clark turned 18. In current continuity, the Kents are still alive. Similarly, Ethan Crane's parents apparently survived for some years after Ethan left Littlehaven, although issue #49 reveals that they died sometime before Supreme's departure from Earth in 1969.

Panel 2: This is Ethan's adoptive sister Sally Crane, who later was transformed into Suprema, the counterpart of Supergirl, Superman's cousin from Krypton, the so-called "Girl of Steel."

In the Silver Age Superman mythos, Supergirl did not arrive on Earth until *Action Comics* #252 (1959), when Superman was already an adult. Her real name was Kara Zor-El, the daughter of Kal-El's uncle Zor-El and aunt Allura and a native of Krypton's Argo City. After Kara arrived on Earth, Superman advised her to hide her existence and helped her to establish the identity of a young orphan girl, Linda Lee. In *Action Comics* #264, she adopted by Fred and Edna Danvers and moved to the small town of Midvale (1960).

The original Supergirl was killed in *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #7 (1985) and subsequently written out of existence by Superman's 1986 revision. There is a Supergirl in the current comic books, although she is not from Krypton and does not have the same powers as Superman. The current Supergirl was originally a protoplasmic shape-changer called Matrix from another dimension who was brought to Earth by Superman after all life was wiped out in her home dimension (in *Superman* (2nd series) #22). Superman left her in the care of his foster parents, Jonathan and Martha Kent, while she recovered from her injuries. She has recently become merged with a teenage girl named Linda Danvers. Another version of Supergirl appears in the current Superman animated series; she is Kara In-Zee, the sole survivor of Argo, a planet in the same star-system as Krypton which was knocked out of its orbit by its sister planet's destruction. Rescued from Argo by Superman, Kara took up residence in Smallville, where she poses as Clark Kent's cousin. On Earth, Kara has powers nearly identical to Superman's, but she is less vulnerable than he to Kryptonite.

Panel 5-6: The Citadel Supreme is Supreme's version of Superman's remote hideaway, the Fortress of Solitude. Before John Byrne's 1986 revision, the Fortress of Solitude was located somewhere in the Arctic Circle, carved out of solid rock by Superman. In *Action Comics* #261 (1960), Superman was shown to have built a Fortress first in space (an installation not unlike the Citadel Supreme) and then in the center of the Earth before finally establishing it in the Arctic. In the current continuity, the Fortress of Solitude, which was created by the Kryptonian artifact called the Eradicator, is located in Antarctica. We will learn more about the Citadel Supreme in issue #43.

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Panel 2: Ethan is shown working with Judy Jordan as a radio announcer. Clark Kent never worked in radio, but Billy Batson, the alter ego of Captain Marvel, was a radio reporter during the forties. Clark Kent did work in television, however: in *Superman* #233 (1971) Clark Kent became the anchor of the WGBS evening news, later with Lana Lang as his co-anchor. When Superman was revised in 1986, Clark once again became a newspaper reporter (*Man of Steel* #2), and as of this writing he remains a feature columnist.

The name of the station for which Ethan and Judy worked, K-ZAM, probably is a reference to Captain Marvel's magic word "Shazam." Billy Batson worked for station WHIZ, named after *Whiz Comics*, the series in which he first appeared.

Panel 4: Unlike Clark Kent, Ethan Crane apparently served in World War Two. Clark Kent, like his co-creator Joe Shuster, was declared 4-F for poor eyesight. According to a story in *Superman* #25 (1943), Clark tried to enlist in the U.S. Army, but during his examination he became so nervous that he accidentally used his X-ray vision to read an eye chart in the next room rather than the one in front of him; he was promptly rejected. Afterwards, he decided that he could do more good "as a free agent" than as a soldier.

P. 12: Now an old woman, Judy Jordan runs the Kid Supreme Museum. There was a similar Superboy Museum in Superman's hometown of Smallville, with various exhibits commemorating the exploits of Smallville's most famous "native son."

P. 13
Panel 1: Exhibits in visible in the Kid Supreme museum include:

A Neptunian Flying Saucer
The Iron Earthworm of Abysius the Pepper Man
The Growth Gun of Mr. Big
Korgo the Space Bully's Power Belt
A green gauntlet with what appears to be a stopwatch. This resembles the giant golden gauntlet used by the king of an other-dimensional realm to bring Superboy and the Legion of Superheroes to his world in *Adventure Comics* #375-#376 (1968).

Panel 2: Radar's first collar, with its red cape, is displayed in the museum. Krypto the Superdog had a very similar cape, emblazoned with the red-and-yellow Superman shield. Krypto's cape was fashioned from a piece of the same red blanket used to make Superman's costume, and, like Superman's costume, was indestructible.

The black spherical object surrounded by cooling fins is not identified, although it seems significant.

Page 14: The flashback story "The Hoaxers from Beyond History" introduces the League of Infinity, a counterpart of DC's Legion of Superheroes, an organization of super-powered teenagers in the 30th century. The Legion originally was inspired by the legends of Superboy; they first met the Boy of Steel and inducted him into their ranks in *Adventure Comics* #247 (1958).

Panel 1: The situation shown in the splash page (Ethan Crane and Supreme as separate entities) is reminiscent of many Superman covers over the years that showed Superman and Clark Kent as separate individuals (e.g., "Clark Kent's Incredible Delusion" from *Superman* #174 or "The Real Clark Kent!" from *Superman* #198).

The Kid Supreme logo shown here is closely based on the original Superboy logo.

Page 15
Panel 3: The Tremendoid, the robot Darius Dax uses in this story, is similar to one used by a young Lex Luthor in an alternate reality story in *Legion of Superheroes* (2nd series) #300 (1983). Luthor used countless robots of various sizes and shapes throughout his villainous career.

Panel 4: Ethan Crane's dilemma C how to rescue Judy without revealing his secret identity C is the classic problem in countless Superboy and Superman stories. Although Superboy's powers were virtually limitless, he was often forced to use them in convoluted ways so no one could connect him with Clark Kent, particularly important because some of his friends already suspected his secret identity.

Page 16
Panels 1 and 2: Like Superboy's robot duplicates, which were tough but far from indestructible, Supreme's Suprematon decoys are not as powerful as their master.

Page 17
Panel 2: This is Future Girl, a member of the League of Infinity. Because of their ability to travel through time, the League members know Supreme's secret identity, just as the Legion of Superheroes knew Superboy's secret identity from historical records (as first seen in their debut appearance in *Adventure Comics* #247).

Panels 3-4: Future Girl, whose real name is Zayla Zarn, has no direct counterpart in the Legion of Superheroes, but the design of her costume resembles that of Legionnaire Saturn Girl (Imra Ardeen of Titan). Saturn Girl's original costume, worn in her first appearance in *Adventure Comics* #247, was a similar combination of yellow and green and had a stylized icon of the planet Saturn as a chest emblem. The lines of Future Girl's uniform more closely resemble Saturn Girl's second costume, which she first wore in the Legion's second appearance in *Adventure Comics* #267 (1959), although that costume was red and white rather than green and yellow.

Future Girl's power to temporarily freeze time around her is similar to that of Legionnaire Kid Quantum (first seen in *Legion of Superheroes* (4th series) #33, 1992) and to that of the villain Chronos, the Time-Thief, an enemy of DC's size-changing hero the Atom.

Panel 4: Future Girl says she is from the 25th century. The Legion of Superheroes exists in the 30th century in the DC universe, although some early stories described it as existing in the 21st century.

Panel 5: The League of Infinity is said to consist of teen heroes from many eras of history who "banded together to fight crime across time!" The members of the Legion of Superheroes, by contrast, were all natives of the 30th Century except for Superboy, Supergirl, and Mon-El (Lar Gand of the planet Daxam, who Superboy once believed to be his older brother).

Here, we meet three other members of the League:

Giganthro: a white-furred giant from the Miocene epoch; Giganthro's origins are discussed in greater detail in *Judgment Day* #2
Bill Hickok: a cowboy and gunslinger from the American West
Witch Wench: an enchantress from the 17th century.

Page 18
Panel 3: Kid Supreme enters the League's Time Tower. The infinite staircase of time is a novel approach to time travel; the Legion of Superheroes relied on time bubbles and other mechanical time machines. Superboy generally did not need a time machine; he was capable of traveling through time under his own power by exceeding the speed of light, an ability Superman first demonstrated in *Superman* #48 (1947).

Panels 4-5: We will see this scene from the older Supreme's perspective in issue #52B.

Page 19
Panel 1: Here we see statues of some of the League's enemies the League of Infamy:

Dino Man: a fluke of evolution combining the characteristics of humans and dinosaurs; his origin is shown in *Judgment Day* #2.
The Tomorrow Tyrant: possibly a counterpart of the Legion of Superheroes' nemesis the Time Trapper, or of Marvel's time-traveling villains Kang the Conqueror and Immortus.
Morganna La Fey: a evil sorceress in the Arthurian cycle who was King Arthur's half-sister and the mother of Mordred, Arthur's arch-foe. Her name was originally Morgan Le Fey; it was rendered "Morgana" in the 1981 film *Excalibur*, in which the character was portrayed by actress Helen Mirren.

The League of Infamy is similar to the Legion of Super Villains, an organization of 30th century evildoers which repeatedly challenged the Legion of Superheroes. The LSV, which first appeared in *Superman* #147 (1961), initially had three members: Lightning Lord, Saturn Queen, and Cosmic King. In later years, it was reorganized several times with many more members.

Panel 2: Witch Wench refers to Kid Supreme as "Boy of Bronze." This is a play on "Man of Bronze," a nickname for the thirties pulp hero Doc Savage, although it seems less appropriate for the WASPish Kid Supreme; Doc Savage's nickname came from his deeply tanned bronze skin.

Doc Savage, who was featured in 181 pulp novels (most of them written by author Lester Dent under the house name "Kenneth Robeson") from 1933 to 1949, was a hero trained from an early age to exercise the full potential of his mind and body: he was both a physical marvel and a brilliant scientist and inventor with a high-tech arsenal of his own invention. Savage, to whom Street and Smith house ads sometimes referred as "Superman," was one of the principal influences on the creation of both Superman and Batman.

Page 20
Panels 1-2: In the adventures of the Legion of Superheroes (and other superhero comics of the era) members' faking each others' powers was a common plot device. In Superboy's first meeting with the Legion in *Adventure Comics* #247, for example, he used his powers to imitate those of the three Legionnaires: Cosmic Boy's magnetism, Lightning Lad's lightning, and Saturn Girl's telepathy.

Panel 2: "Kid Achilles, hero of ancient Greece" is another member of the League of Infinity. Achilles was a hero of Greek legend, the son of the goddess Thetis, who was dipped in the river Styx as an infant to make him invulnerable. Because the heel by which she held him did not enter the water, however, that part of his body remained vulnerable, giving rise to the expression "Achilles heel."

Panel 3: Future Girl identifies Kid Supreme's native time as 1933. In issue #41, Original Supreme said he was born in 1920. Since Kid Supreme seems to be about 13 years old in this story, we may assume he was also born in or around the same year.

Page 21:
Panel 6: Kid Supreme wonders if he'll ever see the League of Infinity again. The Legion of Superheroes was initially a throw-away concept in Superboy's strip in *Adventure Comics*, but they eventually became a regular feature, starting with *Adventure* #300 (1962), and before long made Superboy a supporting character in what was once his own strip.

Page 22: Here we're introduced to Hilda, Judy Jordan's granddaughter. As we'll later see, there's much more to Hilda than meets the eye.

P. 23
Panel 2: Dax's epitaph is from the poem "Adonais" by Percy Bysshe Shelley, written in 1821 as an elegy to John Keats. The complete stanza reads:

> Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep C

He hath awakened from the dream of life C
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And a mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.
(XXXXIX.343-351)

More of the stanza is printed in issue #52A, when we learn the circumstances of Darius Dax's death in 1968 and the significance of his cryptic epitaph.

Judy Jordan refers to Supreme's recent return to Earth. In this continuity, Supreme left Earth to explore the universe in 1969 and has only just returned (coinciding neatly with the entry of the newest Supreme into continuity). The circumstances behind Supreme's decision to leave are recounted in the flashback story in issue #49.

Panel 3: Ethan claims to be an acquaintance of Supreme, just as Clark Kent often claimed to be a friend of Superman's.

Panels 3 and 4: Hilda's innocent crayon drawing will prove very significant later, beginning in issue #50.

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Issue #43 "Obscured by Clouds"

The title of this issue is borrowed from a 1972 French film directed by Barbet Schroeder; the film is best known for its soundtrack by the British rock band Pink Floyd.

Page 1: The issue opens with a page from *Omniman*, the comic book series drawn by Ethan Crane and written by Billy Friday. This scene, with Omniman ripping out his own heart, is a parody of the "cosmic" writers of the seventies, most notably Jim Starlin, who added a dash of psychedelia to the wild cosmology of the Marvel universe created in the sixties by Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. None of the seventies heroes ever ripped out his own heart (although a Japanese *anime* character called Dark Schneider, hero of the animated series *Bastard*, did so near the end of his six-episode series), but Starlin's Adam Warlock ultimately committed suicide to escape his destiny of becoming an interstellar tyrant (*Avengers* Annual #7, 1977).

In this scene, Billy Friday presents Omniman as an intellectual under attack by the ignorant masses. Omniman alludes to the works of three French authors: Jean Genet (an absurdist writer of the fifties), Isidore Ducasse (an 19th century poet best known for his grotesque, nightmarish epic poem *Las Chants de Maldoror* (1868) and who is considered one of the progenitors of surrealism), and "Malarme." The latter is presumably a misspelling of Stephane Mallarme, a 19th century Symbolist poet who rejected objectivity and realism in favor of metaphysics and symbolism. Omniman's antagonist, the "Great Unwashed," derives his name from a derogatory term for the masses coined by British orator Edmund Burke in the 18th century and later popularized by Sir Walter Scott.

Page 2: Moore has clearly positioned Billy Friday as a satire of the "avant garde" British comics authors of the eighties C including Grant Morrison, Neil Gaiman, and Moore himself C who introduced a climate of revisionism to comics. Moore has said in recent interviews that he now believes this revisionism stripped superhero comics of everything that once made them charming and clever; this series may be seen as his attempt at atonement.

Omnigirl is apparently the equivalent of Suprema (or Supergirl) in the *Omniman* series and Omni-Dog the counterpart of Radar (or Krypto the Super-Dog). The "Sunken City of Poseidonis" calls to mind Superman's old flame Lori Lemaris, a mermaid from Atlantis. In the DC universe, there are two Atlantean kingdoms, Poseidonis and Tritonis. Tritonis, which was inhabited by mer-people, was home to Lori Lemaris, while Poseidonis, inhabited by water-breathing but normal-looking humanoids, was the kingdom of the hero Aquaman.

Page 3: Note that some of the architectural elements of Omegapolis are familiar from the Supremacy in issue #41. Supreme picks up the crayon drawing made by Hilda, Judy Jordan's granddaughter, in issue #42.

Supreme uses his "recall supreme." Along with his other powers, beginning in *Superman* #105 (1956) Superman also was described as having total recall of everything he'd ever experienced, dating back to his early childhood on Krypton.

Page 5

Inset panel 1: The Citadel Supreme is described as being constructed in 1939. The first appearance of Superman's Arctic Fortress of Solitude, on which the Citadel is modeled, was in "The Super-Key to Fort Superman" in *Action Comics* #241 (1958). Prior to that story, from 1942 through 1956, Superman had a hideaway located on a mountain side in an undisclosed location outside Metropolis, its entrance marked by an enormous Superman emblem. This hideaway, which first appeared in *Superman* #17 (1942), was generally referred to as Superman's "mountain retreat;" it was only called the Fortress of Solitude in one 1949 story (*Superman* #58). The mountain retreat was later attributed to the Earth-Two (or "Golden Age") Superman. A similar retreat, belonging to Fifties Supreme, is shown in the second story in issue #52A.

The name and concept of the Fortress of Solitude were borrowed from the pulp adventures of Doc Savage, who had a secret retreat, laboratory, and stronghold on a rocky island in the Arctic sea. Doc's fortress was first mentioned in his first adventure, *The Man of Bronze*, in February 1933 and first seen in the pulp novel *The Fortress of Solitude* in October 1938.

Inset panel 2: Supreme recalls that he rebuilt the Citadel Supreme after Darius Dax and Optilux attacked it in 1964. Superman's enemies Lex Luthor and Brainiac first teamed up in *Superman* #167 (1964); the joint attack on the Citadel may refer to Alan Moore's own story "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow" (in *Superman* #423 and *Action Comics* #583), an Imaginary Story in which the Fortress was besieged by Lex Luthor and Brainiac.

Inset panel 3: The key to the Citadel Supreme is a bolt of lightning. The key to the Fortress of Solitude was an enormous arrow-shaped golden key, set into the cliff face below the entrance. Only Superman (or Supergirl) was strong enough to lift the key and operate the lock.

P. 7

Panel 1: The Souvenir Gallery Supreme is much like the trophy room in Superman's Fortress of Solitude. The trophies visible here include (from left to right):

An indistinct bat-winged creature hanging from the ceiling, possibly modeled on the flame dragon, a massive fire-breathing Kryptonian creature Superman encountered in *Superman* #142 (1961). It is also similar to the pterodactyl shown in Superman's Fortress of Solitude in the first part of "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" (*Superman* #423).

A spherical, multi-legged object which closely resembles the Martians in some versions of H.G. Wells's "The War of the Worlds."
A purple creature who resembles a Shmoo, a creature from Al Capp's comic strip *Lil' Abner*.

A figure in a Supreme costume in a glass case. This may be based on one of Superman's most grisly trophies: the body of his friend Ar-Val, a Kandorian youth chosen to take Superman's place after the Man of Steel had temporarily lost his powers in *Superman* #172 (1964). Ar-Val ultimately sacrificed himself to restore Superman's powers and was turned to stone in the process.
An enormous gauntlet identified as the Armageddon Gauntlet confiscated from the End, one of Supreme's enemies (who we discover in issue #45 is currently imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors).
A Junkers Ju-87 "Stuka" (hanging from the ceiling), a German dive bomber from World War Two; it may be a souvenir of Supreme's adventures during the war.
A large statue of a human figure (behind the Stuka) obscured by a dialogue balloon.

Stupendo the Simian Supreme is based on Titano the Super-Ape, a giant chimpanzee who projected Kryptonite rays from his eyes (making him exceptionally dangerous to Superman). Issue #51 says that Stupendo was one of Professor Wells' lab animals in Littlehaven who was accidentally exposed to a sample of Supremium. Similarly, Titano was transformed by the radiation of two colliding meteors, one of uranium, one of Kryptonite. Titano first appeared in *Superman* #127 (1959). There also was an earlier, similar giant ape, King Krypton, who appeared in *Action Comics* #238 (1958). King Krypton was originally a Kryptonian scientist transformed into a giant gorilla by an experiment gone wrong; Kryptonite radiation eventually restored him to normal, but at the cost of his life. All these characters, of course, are inspired by King Kong, the gigantic simian hero of the classic 1933 film.

Panel 2: Here we see statues of the same four League of Infamy villains we saw in the League's Time Tower in issue #42: Dino Man, the Minotaur, the Tomorrow Tyrant, and Morganna La Fey. Also represented are members of the League of Infinity: Kid Achilles, Wild Bill Hickok, Witch Wench, Giganthro, and Future Girl. This area also contains Supreme's entrance to the League of Infinity's Time Tower.

Panel 3: In addition to the trophies noted above, there is also what appears to be a large pink worm in a glass case behind the figure in the case. It resembles an unidentified trophy that appeared in Superman's Fortress of Solitude in Alan Moore's Imaginary Story "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" (*Superman* #423).

P. 8: "The Conundrum of the Cloud-Castle" incorporates elements of a 1958 Superman story, "The Super-Key to Fort Superman" (*Action Comics* #241), the first story to show the Silver Age Fortress of Solitude in its best known form.

In addition to the trophies seen on the previous page, the splash page of this flashback story shows the following trophies:

A giant monocle (probably the same as the trophy shown on page 16, where it is identified as having belonged to the villain Jack-a-Dandy)
A Tremendoid (apparently the same giant robot as that used by Darius Dax in the flashback story in issue #42)
A giant chess piece (a bishop)
A glass case with a spiky pink object (this may be the front end of the pink worm seen in panel 3 on page 7).

Jonas Tate was a reporter who worked for radio K-ZAM with Ethan Crane and Judy Jordan. With his white hair and cigar, not to mention his exclamation, "Great Montezuma's Revenge" he bears a strong resemblance to Perry White, who was inclined to yell "Great Caesar's Ghost!" His portable radio gear is very similar to that used by Billy Batson (alter ego of Captain Marvel), who was a radio announcer in the forties.

Supreme uses a robot double, a Suprematon Decoy, to protect the secret of his dual identity. Superman used similar robot duplicates on many occasions; his first robot duplicate of himself was used in 1952 (*Superman* #76), although it was not until 1957 (*Superman* #110) that they actually demonstrated Superman's powers and 1958 (*Superboy* #63) when they were capable of independent action. Although Superman originally was shown to build his first robot as an adult, later Superboy stories, beginning with "Superboy's Robot Twin" in *Adventure Comics* #212 (1956), showed him using sophisticated robots while still a boy in Smallville.

Page 9
Panel 1: Apparently, the Suprematons can also generate the artificial lightning bolt necessary to open the door to the Citadel Supreme.

Panels 2-4: The mysterious note is another similarity between this story and "The Super Key to Fort Superman" in *Action Comics* #241, in which Superman found a similar note in the Fortress of Solitude from a mysterious intruder claiming to know all his secrets.

Page 10

Panel 2: The Hell of Mirrors, a gateway to a strange mirror dimension, is clearly styled after the Phantom Zone, an other-dimensional world discovered by Superman's father Jor-El and used as a prison by the government of Krypton. In the Zone, convicted Kryptonian criminals spent their sentences as disembodied wraiths, able to see the real world but not interact with it. Superboy discovered the Zone's existence and recovered the Kryptonian Phantom Zone projector in *Adventure Comics* #284 (1961). The depiction of the Hell of Mirrors may owe something to the two-dimensional mirror-prison in which the Kryptonian criminals General Zod, Ursa, and Nom were imprisoned in the 1978 film *Superman* and its sequel *Superman II*, but its most direct inspiration is Looking-Glass Land, a fantastical world shown in Lewis Carroll's 1871 story *Through the Looking Glass*. We learn more about the Mirror-Prison, including its connection to the Carroll story, in issue #56.

We see the following villains imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors:

Vor-Em (the lion-headed villain at left): named in issue #56 and described as a vicious assassin from another world, originally hired by Darius Dax to kill Supreme.
The Televillain: a villain whose "static suit" gives him the ability to travel through television signals; issue #52A gives his real name as Reuben Tube. The Televillain has no obvious antecedents in the Superman or Captain Marvel mythos, but his power is similar to that of the villain in the Wes Craven horror movie *Shocker*.
Shadow Supreme: a dark figure described in issue #52A as an evil, negative version of Supreme created by Darius Dax. Throughout his villainous career, Superman's nemesis Lex Luthor has made numerous attempts to create an evil version of Superman, the best known result being Bizarro, an imperfect copy of Superman who Luthor created in *Action Comics* #259 (1959). Bizarro, however, was primarily a nuisance and was not truly evil; his most direct analog in Supreme's world is Emerpus, the Reverse Supreme, mentioned later in the series. The Shadow Supreme bears a greater resemblance to the "Negative Superman" accidentally created by Lex Luthor in *World's Finest Comics* #126 (1962), who was a black-and-white version of Superman with all of Superman's powers but an evil disposition. Superman, Batman, and Robin destroyed the Negative Superman at the end of his first appearance.
Korgo the Space Tyrant: according to issue #52A, a villain who originally fought Kid Supreme as Korgo the Space Bully and who later became an interstellar tyrant. Korgo had two weapons: a Power Belt which enabled him to defy gravity and his Planet Smasher, a powerful, bazooka-shaped energy weapon. Both are stored in Supreme's arsenal of captured weapons (seen later in this issue).

Panel 4: The Prism-World of Amalynth is described as a planet turned into coherent light by the villain Optilux and trapped within a prism-like gem. Amalynth is based on the Bottle City of Kandor, a Kryptonian metropolis stolen years before Krypton's destruction by the villain Brainiac,

who shrunk the city and put it into a large glass bottle. Inside the bottle, where the conditions of Krypton were artificially maintained, life in Kandor continued much as it had since before the city was stolen. Superman took custody of Kandor in *Action Comics* #242 (1958).

Optilux is an alien who had transformed himself into light and who tried to similarly convert the rest of the universe. Issue #52A gives his real name as Voran Glynn of the planet Sarto. Optilux is loosely based on Superman's enemy Brainiac. Originally a bald, green-skinned alien, Brainiac initially was described as an evil scientist from the planet Yod (in *Action Comics* #242) who stole cities by shrinking them and placing them in bottles; in *Superman* #167 (1964) he was revealed to be a sophisticated android created by the tyrannical computers of the planet Colu. In *Action Comics* #544 1983), Brainiac's original body was destroyed and he became a sentient, immaterial energy being inhabiting a robot body of "living metal." The original Brainiac no longer exists in present Superman continuity, but two new Brainiacs have been introduced. In the comics, Brainiac is a Coluan scientist named Vril Dox who gained tremendous psionic powers by transferring his mind into the body of a human psychic named Milton Fine; Brainiac later had Fine's body altered to resemble his original green-skinned humanoid form. In the current Superman animated series, Brainiac is a mechanical intelligence from Krypton who escaped to Earth shortly before Krypton's destruction.

Panel 5: Supreme wonders if one of the inhabits of Amalynth may have regained his material form. Some of the inhabitants of Kandor did occasionally leave the bottle-city, and Superman occasionally shrank himself temporarily in order to visit the city. Like Superman, who was unable to restore Kandor to its proper size until the late seventies, Supreme mentions that he has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to restore the world to normal. Kandor ultimately was restored to its full size on the distant planet Rokyn in *Superman* #338 (1979).

Page 11

Panel 1: Here we see statues representing some of Supreme's comrades of the Allied Supermen of America, an analog of the Justice Society of America. The JSA, which debuted in *All-Star Comics* #3 (1940), was the world's first superhero team. The members shown here are:

Black Hand: a hero who can project black "hand puppets," solid objects formed from shadows. He is probably intended as a counterpart of Green Lantern, a hero with the power to create solid objects with the energy from his power ring; the original Green Lantern, who debuted in *All-American Comics* #16 (1940), was a founding member of the Justice Society. Black Hand's real name is Andrew Garret.
Glory: an existing Maximum Press heroine who Alan Moore has cast as the analog of Wonder Woman in Supreme's world. Wonder Woman, who first appeared in *All-Star Comics* #8 (1941), was an Amazon princess who, as an infant, was formed from clay by the goddess

Aphrodite. Glory, whose full name is Princess Glorianna Demeter, is a demigod and the daughter of the goddess Demeter.

Storybook Smith: a hero with the power to bring fictional characters to life from the pages of his magic book. Smith, whose full name is Sammy Smith, resembles Johnny Thunder, a JSA member (first seen in *Flash Comics* #1 in 1940) who commanded a magical pink thunderbolt. Smith's power is very similar to that of Kid Eternity (a Quality Comics character who first appeared in *Hit Comics* #25 (1942) and who now is part of the DC stable), who had the ability to summon historical and fictional characters to his aid. Storybook Smith's life and the origins and fate of his magic book are explored in the *Judgment Day* mini-series.

The Waxman: a masked adventurer who used a fast-hardening wax compound to immobilize his enemies. Waxman's real name is "Waxy" Doyle. He bears a strong resemblance to Wesley Dodds, the Golden Age Sandman, who first appeared in *Adventure Comics* #40 (1939) and who starred in the recent Vertigo series *Sandman Mystery Theater*. The Sandman originally wore a bulky green business suit, a purple cape, and a brown snap-brim hat; he disguised his features with a blue and yellow gas mask that also served to protect him from the knockout fumes projected by his gas gun.

Mighty Man: a hero who, except for his blonde hair, bears a strong resemblance to Captain Marvel and Captain Marvel Junior, particularly in his costume's high-collared cape. Mighty Man possesses superhuman strength and the power of flight, and according to issue #48, can fire blasts of energy from his wrist bands. Mighty Man apparently is an amalgam of the original Captain Marvel and the Marvel Comics hero of the same name, who was a warrior named Mar-Vell from an alien race called the Kree. Mar-Vell had blonde hair and drew his powers from his "nega-bands," gold wristbands similar to those worn by Mighty Man.

Professor Night: A masked avenger whose role in *Supreme* is analogous to that of Batman in the DC universe. Some aspects of the character are reminiscent of the Golden Age hero (and Justice Society member) Doctor Mid-Nite and of the Marvel Comics character Moon Knight. Professor Night's real name is Taylor Kendall. We will learn more about him in issues #47 and #48.

Panel 3: Supreme's Imaginary Menagerie is Alan Moore's version of Superman's alien zoo. Whereas the Man of Steel had specimens of genuine extraterrestrial creatures, Supreme's "zoo" is full of imaginary and legendary creatures. Supreme is careful to note, however, that the bubbles are merely windows into these beings' various realms and not actually cages.

Panel 4: This is Luriel, an angel who was once in love with Supreme. In issue #50, Ethan Crane describes an Imaginary Story in which Supreme brought Luriel into the real world and married her, with tragic results. Their affair is reminiscent of that between Superman and Lori Lemaris, a mermaid from Atlantis. As first described in *Superman* #129 (1959), Superman met Lori in college and later

asked her to marry him. Lori rejected his proposal, feeling it was her duty to return to Atlantis; she eventually married a merman named Ronal.

Panel 5: Jonas Tate asks Supreme if one of his Suprematons could have rebelled....

Page 14 ...and Supreme says that only Suprematon S-1 has the capacity for independent thought, which will prove important later in the main story in this issue.

Panel 2: Supreme makes a mental note to create Suprematon decoys of his friends to allay their suspicions about his Ethan Crane robot. Similarly, Superman maintained a Clark Kent room with trophies related to his alter ego, to match the rooms devoted to Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen, and his other friends, so that visitors to the Fortress would not become suspicious about Superman's snub of his "friend" Clark Kent (first shown in 1958, in the aforementioned *Action Comics* #241).

Panel 3: Supreme leads his guests through a gallery of members of the League of Infinity (left) and their enemies the League of Infamy (right). The members shown are the same that we saw in the League of Infinity's headquarters in the previous issue.

Jonas Tate makes a comment directed to his "little boy Lucas." This is presumably Lucas Tate, who later became Ethan Crane's editor, as seen on page 2 of this issue.

Panel 5: In the Time Tower, Supreme encounters Aladdin, another League of Infinity member, complete with his legendary magic carpet.

Aladdin's reference to a meeting of the "Adult League" in 2496 is an allusion to the adventures of the Adult Legion of Superheroes, first seen in *Superboy* #147 (1961), which depicted the teenage Legionaries grown up. While *Legion of Superheroes* #300 (1983) later established that the Adult Legion stories were only a possible future, the relationships and character development established in those adventures set the pattern for Legion stories well into the eighties. We will see the Adult League of Infinity in issue #52B.

Page 15
Panel 4: Like Superman, Supreme maintains a "Hall of Armaments," with weapons confiscated from villains. The "Photoplasmic Converter taken from Optilux" is analogous to the shrink ray Brainiac used to shrink the city of Kandor (first shown in 1958 in *Action Comics* #242).

Korgo the Space-Tyrant's Planet Smasher, mentioned but not shown here, is a powerful energy weapon shaped like a bazooka. It will be seen in issue #52A.

Panel 5: Supreme keeps a sample of "synthetic Supremium" in the Citadel for experimental purposes. Superman stored samples of the various types of Kryptonite in the Fortress of Solitude; an experiment with those samples split him into Superman Red and Superman Blue in the classic Imaginary Story (alluded to by Supreme White and Supreme Gold in issue #41, as previously noted).

Behind the Supremium chamber is a large purple mace-like object which is not identified.

Page 16
Panel 1: Supreme refers to his "Smartness Supreme." Beginning in the mid-forties, Superman was described as having super-intelligence, making him capable of solving complex problems faster than the most powerful computers.

Panels 5-6: Supreme discovers that his old comrades from the Allied Supermen of America are responsible for the mysterious note. The prank played on Supreme in this flashback story is borrowed directly from "The Super-Key to Fort Superman" in *Action Comics* #241, in which Batman infiltrated the Fortress of Solitude to play a friendly prank on the Man of Steel, leaving mysterious notes claiming to know all of Superman's secrets. To hide from Superman, Batman melted down the wax statue of himself with a flare and took its place; Superman realized the trick when he saw the gray and blue wax remains of the original statue.

Page 17
Panel 1: This is our first full glimpse of the Allied Supermen of America. In addition to the members depicted on page 11, we see the following heroes (from left to right):

Alley Cat: a heroine whose costume is reminiscent of the forties heroine Black Cat, who debuted in Harvey Comics' *Pocket Comics* in 1941 and had her own series from 1946 to 1958. Alley Cat also resembles (particularly in her fishnet stockings) DC's original Black Canary, who debuted in *Flash Comics* #86 (1947) and later became member of the Justice Society of America. Batman's nemesis the Catwoman wore a costume similar to the Alley Cat's for a brief period in the late sixties and early seventies; the Catwoman, like the Alley Cat, was sometimes armed with a whip. The Alley Cat's real name is Serena Richards.
Jack O'Lantern: a spectral, pumpkin-headed mystic hero modeled on the ghostly Golden Age hero the Spectre, who first appeared in *More Fun Comics* #52 (1940), and who was a founding member of the Justice Society of America. The Spectre was a murdered policeman who was resurrected as a spirit of vengeance; according to issue #49, Jack O'Lantern is described as a mystical force merged with a dead newspaperman named Jack Bradley. Jack O'Lantern physically resembles Lord Pumpkinhead, a villain from the Malibu Comics series *Ultraforce*. There was also a DC character called Jack O'Lantern, an Irishman armed with

a magic lantern (shaped like a pumpkin), who was a member of the international super-team the Global Guardians.

Doc Rocket: a red-clad super-speedster with powers similar to that of the Flash. Doc Rocket, whose real name is Dr. Rex Richards, is analogous to Jay Garrick, the original Flash, who debuted in *Flash Comics* #1 (1940) and who was a founding member of the JSA. His costume, however, more closely resembles that of Barry Allen, the second Flash, who first appeared in *Showcase Comics* #4 (1956) and who was a founder of the Justice League of America.

Roy Roman, the Mer-Master: an aquatic hero analogous to DC's aquatic hero Aquaman, although physically he more closely resembles Prince Namor, Marvel's Submariner (note also that "Namor" is "Roman" spelled backwards), who debuted in *Marvel Comics* #1 (1939). Aquaman, who first appeared in *More Fun Comics* #73 (1941), was not a member of the JSA, but was one of the founders of the Justice League of America in *Showcase Comics* #28 (1959).

Panel 2: The acrostic clue is a hoary cliche from the Silver Age of comics.

Panel 3: Supreme slips away to give himself an excuse to return as Ethan Crane. Superman played similar tricks countless times in an effort to explain why he and Clark Kent never appeared at the same time.

Page 18
Panel 1: Supreme encounters Joe Crane, his adoptive father, who he had believed dead.
Panel 2: Behind Joe Crane to the left is what appears to be a creature with a single massive eye and spider-like legs. A somewhat similar-looking species, albeit with tentacles rather than spider-legs, was created by artist Keith Giffen in *Legion of Superheroes* (cf. *Legion of Superheroes* (2nd series) #290, 1982).

Panel 3: Here we see Joanne Crane, Ethan Crane's adoptive mother, who he also had believed dead.

We also see several other trophies. From left to right:

"Anti-Supremium Suit Worn in Battle with the Supremium Man": a suit of armor (presumably lead) with a glass helmet, similar to a suit Superman first wore to protect himself from Kryptonite in *Action Comics* #249 (1959). Superman's suit did not have a clear helmet, instead using a television camera to provide Superman with outward visibility. Supreme will use this suit in issues #44 and #45.

A giant monocle which the sign identifies as being used by the villain Jack-a-Dandy. The Jack-A-Dandy, who we will see in the flashback story in issue #48, is the arch-foe of

Professor Night. Jack's most obvious DC counterpart is the Joker, though his top hat and monocle recall J. Wilbur Wolfingham, a Metropolis-based con artist and swindler who crossed Superman's path on a number of occasions.

An enormous statue, apparently of a Greek or Roman figure; the portion of the inscription on the figure's shield may read "Talos." This may be the same figure shown on page 7.
A robot with four tentacle-like arms.
A small rocket ship which may be based on the Supermobile, a vehicle Superman first used in *Action Comics* #481 (1978) to battle the villain Amazo during a period in which the Earth was being bombarded by Kryptonite radiation. A similar Supremobile appears in issue #54, but it is not clear if that craft is the same as the one shown here.

Page 19
Panel 1: This is Judy Jordan as a young woman, now claiming to be married to Supreme.

Behind Judy we see a few more trophies:

A silver rocket
A high-collared red cape in a glass tube (except for its color this is similar to the cape worn by Mighty Man in the flashback sequence on the preceding pages)
A large, beetle-browed creature either made of stone or a statue (this may be the same trophy as the Shmoo-like creature shown earlier; the art is unclear).

Panel 2: Judy claims that Supreme brought her and his parents to live in the Citadel, and that Supreme retired, after their marriage.

Behind her are more trophies:

The large green sphere behind Supreme is identified as a "macro atom" from the body of Gorrl the Living Galaxy obtained in 1966; we will see Gorrl in issue #46
A small cat-shaped trophy with only one eye.

Page 20
Panel 1: Supreme finds himself attacked by himself and Radar, the Hound Supreme.

Note that Radar has speakers on his collar which allow him to talk; although Krypto the Superdog was much smarter than a normal dog, in most stories he could not talk.

Panel 3: The "other" Supreme refers to the villain Optilux, who transformed himself into a construct of coherent light maintained in humanoid shape by a complex network of reflectors (as seen in issue #52A).

Page 21
Panel 2: As the fight continues several creatures in the Mythopoeic Zoo are visible in the background:

A winged elephant
An oversized Venus Fly Trap which is the spitting image of "Audrey Two," the blood-thirsty plant from the classic low-budget horror movie (and Broadway musical) *Little Shop of Horrors*
A four-legged creature with no apparent head.

Page 22
Panel 1: Supreme discovers that Radar is actually a Suprematon. We will see the real Radar in issue #46.

Panel 3: Supreme realizes the truth: his family is really Suprematon robots. Suprematon S-1's creation of Suprematon duplicates of Ethan Crane's friends and family has certain parallels in the Superman mythos: in *Superman* #150 (1962), Superman and Supergirl transformed a distant world into an exact duplicate of Krypton populated with robotic duplicates of its population. Similarly, Joey Cavilieri's prose short story "Mine Enemy Grows Older" showed Superman in the distant future surrounded by android replicas of his long-dead loved ones.

S-1's desire to take on Supreme's identity parallels that of Adam Newman, one of Superman's robots, who attempted to take over Superman's life in *Superman* #174 (1965). The robot attempted to convince Clark Kent that his career as Superman had been a delusion and that Newman was the real Superman.

Page 23
Panel 2: Supreme notes that S-1 is the only Suprematon with the capacity for independent thought. Like Supreme, Superman only had a few robots with that capacity; oddly, all betrayed him in one way or another. One, Superman Robot Z, arranged to give Lois Lane temporary super-powers as part of a plan to demonstrate to Superman how shallow Lois' feelings for him were (*Action Comics* #274, 1961). Another, Wonder Man, was used against Superman in a scheme by the Superman Revenge Squad in *Superman* #163 (1963; interestingly, around the same time Marvel's *Avengers* #9 introduced another character of the same name who also was an innocent manipulated by villains). A third was the aforementioned Adam Newman, and a fourth was the berserk Superman robot in

World's Finest Comics #202 (1971) that rebelled against its master and nearly killed Superman and Batman.

Page 26: A page full of ominous foreshadowing:
Panels 1-2: Hilda recalls the drawing she gave Supreme last issue. She apparently has a preternatural feeling that he has hung the drawing on his wall. This feeling will be explained in issue #52A.

Panels 2-3: Judy Jordan is reading *Life After Death*, the "religious book" she mentioned being given by Darius Dax shortly before his death.

Panel 4: The Jordan house is the only patch of sunlight in a cloudy day: an ominous bit of foreshadowing.

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Issue #44 "The Age of Gold"

Page 1
Panels 1 and 2: Moore intercuts Ethan Crane's conversation with Diana Dane and Supreme's efforts to clean up the remains of his battle with S-1 in the previous issue, cross-cutting images and dialogue for dramatic effect (artist and comics scholar Scott McCloud calls this parallel narration). This is a technique Moore perfected in his comics work of the early eighties, including *Marvelman* (*Miracleman* in America) and *Swamp Thing*.

Panel 3: The cross-cutting continues as we see Supreme walking through the gallery of the Allied Supermen of America in the Citadel Supreme.

Panel 4: Billy Friday's revisions on *Omniman*, the comic book Ethan Crane draws, apparently got out of hand, with the rape of Omnidog (!) and Billy's intention to make Omniman "an anti-Israeli terrorist," for which he was apparently removed from the book. This may be a veiled reference to the resignation of Rich Veitch from DC's *Swamp Thing* in 1988 after his story about Swamp Thing meeting Jesus Christ (originally slated for *Swamp Thing* #88) was vetoed late in production by the DC Comics management.

Page 2
Panel 1: Supreme examines his Allies signal device, which is similar to the communicators once used by Superman and the other members of the Justice League of America. Superman wore his communicator in the hollow belt buckle of his costume.

Panel 3: Diana notes that Ethan seems to have "a real feel" for superhero work. Ah, dramatic irony...

Panel 4: Ethan admits that he still hasn't read any of Diana's *Warrior Woman* stories. This calls to mind the ironic fact that although Wonder Woman (of whom Warrior Woman is a counterpart) is one of DC's flagship characters, her title often verges on cancellation, saved only by her importance to DC's licensing department.

Page 3: Supreme finds himself in the apparently abandoned headquarters of the Allies, still holding his signal device. The headquarters resembles that of the original Justice League of America, the Secret Sanctuary, which was located in a cave outside the town of Happy Harbor, Rhode Island. The JLA later abandoned the Sanctuary for a new satellite headquarters in geosynchronous orbit; the unused Sanctuary later became the base of operations for the Doom Patrol. The current incarnation of the Justice League operates from a citadel on Earth's moon called the Watchtower.

Page 4

Panel 1: Supreme leaves the signal device on the table, which still has placards indicating the names of the Allies.
Panel 2: The signal device's flashing indicates that Supreme has activated it.

In the background we see some of the Allies' trophies:

A figure in a white costume with a red hood and boots, yellow belt, and blue cape; this may be an earlier version of the android body used by the hero Diehard
An object in a glass dome which bears a striking resemblance to the Bottle City of Kandor.

Panel 3: More trophies, this time related to the Allies' opponents:

The inert body of Magno The Super Humanoid, a counterpart of the DC character Amazo, an android constructed by the villainous Professor Ivo to steal the powers of the Justice League of America
The Battle Helmet of Helios, King of the Sun, which bears some resemblance to the helmet worn by the Invisible Destroyer, a villain who first fought Green Lantern in *Showcase Comics* #23 (1959).
A uniform of "the Missile Men of the Third Reich," presumably antagonists of the Allied Supermen of America during World War Two.

Panel 4: Supreme consults the Allied Supermen of America yearbooks, which contain records of their cases from 1941 to 1949. The Justice Society of America, on which the Allied Supermen of America is based, debuted in *All-Star Comics* #3 (1940) and survived through *All-Star Comics* #57 (1951); they were revived in *The Flash* #137 (1963).

Behind Supreme is the Future-O-Scope, a device which allowed the Allies to view other time-eras. Similarly, the JSA sometimes made use of Wonder Woman's Magic Sphere, a device from Paradise Island that allowed them to view events taking place in the distant past.

Panel 5: Supreme looks at a photo of the Allied Supermen's last meeting, a New Year's Eve party in 1949.

Page 5
Panel 1: The flashback story is entitled "The Allies' Last Case!" The Justice Society of America's final Golden Age appearance was in *All-Star Comics* #57 (1951), but it was not until *Adventure Comics* #466 (1979) when their last case was chronicled. In that story, the JSA was said to have disbanded after being brought before a Congressional committee reminiscent of the House Un-

American Affairs Committee; accused of collaboration with anti-American interests, the heroes chose to retire rather than reveal their true identities to the committee.

The Allied Supermen of America present in this story are, reading counter-clockwise:

Supreme
Glory
Roy Roman, Mer-Master
Professor Night
Doc Rocket
The Alley Cat
Super-Patriot
Mighty Man
Wax Man
Die Hard
Storybook Smith
Black Hand

Glory's oath, "Blistering Bilitis," is a play on "Suffering Sappho," a favorite epithet of the Golden Age Wonder Woman. Sappho, a poet and teacher who ran a school for girls on the island of Lesbos circa 600 B.C., was one of the greatest of Greek lyricists. Her romantic lyrics, which are believed to have been directed to other women (including her students), survive only in fragments, but modern scholars consider her an important figure in both the development of poetry and the origins of gay culture. Her school for girls on Lesbos also originated the term "lesbian" as a name for gay women. In 1954 Dr. Frederic Wertham, author of the anti-comics tract *Seduction of the Innocent*, claimed that Wonder Woman was a veritable lesbian recruiting poster; her favorite exclamation no doubt reaffirmed Wertham's suspicions. Here, Alan Moore has substituted a different lesbian icon: Bilitis, a student and lover of Sappho who was the central character in an 1894 poem by French author Pierre Louÿs (*Las Chansons de Bilitis*) and who later inspired the name of the first formal lesbian organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, founded in San Francisco in 1955.

The three "Mayhe-Maniacs" C the Morgue Minder, the Tomb Tender, and the Old Hag C are based on the GhouLunatics C the Old Witch, the Vault Keeper, and the Crypt Keeper C the hosts of the early fifties EC Comics horror comics *Haunt of Fear*, *Vault of Horror*, and *Tales from the Crypt*.

This flashback story is essentially symbolic, dealing with the decline of superhero comics in the late forties and the rise of crime, horror, science fiction, and Western titles. In the early fifties the EC line (which included horror comics and many other genres but not superheroes) briefly rose to prominence only to be discontinued in 1954 in response to the Kefauver hearings on comics and

juvenile delinquency and the charges made by psychiatrist Frederic Wertham that comics were harmful to children. In this story, artists Rick Veitch and Bill Wray mimic the distinctive art styles of Graham Ingels, Jack Davis, and Johnny Craig, EC's principal horror artists.

Panel 2: The reference to "the spirits of New Years-yet-to-come" is, naturally, a reference to Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

This is our first good look at the Golden Age Super-Patriot. With the star on his forehead and the eagle on his chest, the Super-Patriot appears to be a counterpart of Captain America, a character created by Jack Kirby and Joe Simon for Timely, the predecessor of Marvel Comics, in 1941. Captain America, along with Superman, Batman, and Captain Marvel, was one of the most popular characters of the forties. By 1949, Captain America's popularity had faded; shortly before its demise his book was retitled *Captain America's Weird Tales*, becoming a horror anthology in which Captain America didn't even appear.

Panel 3: The heroes prepare to divide into small teams. This was a typical storytelling device, both in the JSA stories in *All-Star Comics* in the forties and the *Justice League of America* stories of the sixties, intended to make it easier for writer and artist to manage a large cast of superheroes.

Page 6
Panel 1: The awful puns were another hallmark of the GhouLunatics and of the EC Comics line in general.

Panel 5: This is the first clear demonstration we've seen of Black Hand's power: like the constructs created by Green Lantern's power ring, his shadow puppets actually have solid form.

Panel 6: Doc Rocket runs at super-speed to create a vacuum. This trick (and other effects such as creating tornadoes) is a trademark of the Flash in all his various incarnations.

Page 7
Panels 2-3: Super-Patriot's dedication to defend America and to punish anyone who assaults the flag emphasize his similarity to Captain America and other patriotic heroes.

Page 9
Panels 1-2: This is our first glimpse of the contemporary Glory. Because she is immortal, she has not aged since her earlier appearance in flashback in issue #43.

Panel 3: Glory refers to a recent crossover between her series and Supreme's prior to the beginning of Alan Moore's tenure on *Supreme* and notes that "some past events seem sort of blurred!" This confusion is similar to Supreme's partial amnesia in issues #41 and #42.

Page 10
Panel 1: Supreme, who still recalls his visit to the Supremacy, suggests that the confusion about recent events may be related to the "reality revision" he learned about in issue #41. Glory, who has not been revised (at least not as far as we know), doesn't know what he's talking about.

Panel 3: The rush of air marks the entrance of Doc Rocket at super-speed.

Panel 4: Doc Rocket appears, carrying the Alley Cat.

Page 11
Panel 1: We learn Doc Rocket and the Alley Cat's real names, Dr. Rex Richards and Serena Richards, and discover that they are now married. As depicted here, they bear a strong resemblance to the original Sandman, Wesley Dodds, and his longtime companion Dian Belmont as they have been depicted in recent present-day appearances.

Panel 2: Joan Garrick, wife of Jay Garrick, the original Flash, also made snide comments about the romantic disadvantages of her husband's super-speed, most notoriously in one wartime adventure (chronicled in 1984's *All-Star Squadron Annual* #3) in which she threatened to tell Jay's JSA teammates "some of the other ways [he's] quick on the trigger." (It should be noted that the aforementioned story *was* approved by the Comics Code Authority.)

Page 12
Panel 1: The Tomb Tender says the name of the town is Gainesville. This is a reference to William Gaines, the publisher of EC Comics (and later of *MAD* magazine).

Note the names of the creative team (Alan Moore, Rich Veitch, Bill Wray, and Todd Klein) on the tombstones.

This flashback story, "Shock Stalks the Suburbs!" is representative of the horror stories that created the greatest trouble for EC publisher Bill Gaines at the Kefauver comics hearings in 1954: tales dealing with real-world problems like marital infidelity, political corruption, drug abuse, and racism.

Page 13
Panels 2-3: The housewife is planning the gruesome murder of her husband so that she can run away with another man. In the original 1954 Comics Code created by the Comics Magazine Association

of America (later known as the Comics Code Authority) in response to the Kefauver hearings, Part C of the General Standards ordered that "[i]llicit sex relations are neither to be hinted at nor portrayed" and that stories should "emphasize the value of the home and the sanctity of marriage."

Panel 4: The murderous woman's lover is a "corrupt police chief." Part A of the Comics Code General Standards specified that "[p]olicemen, judges, government officials and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority."

Panel 6: Jack O'Lantern refers to his "Spook-Senses." The Spectre, the ghostly DC hero on whom Jack O'Lantern is based, had the supernatural ability to sense when murder or injustice was being committed.

Page 14
Panels 1-3: Young Johnny is shown shooting heroin to escape the pressures of his home life. Surprisingly, the Comics Code did not include any provisions related to the depiction of drug or alcohol use, but the CCA did reject any such stories. It was not until the early seventies, after Stan Lee and Marvel Comics defied the Code Authority by publishing a story about drug abuse (in *Amazing Spider-Man* #96-#98) without approval that the Code was revised to permit such depictions so long as they didn't glorify drug use.

Page 15
Panel 1: The mayor of Gainesville is shown as a member of "a race-hate group" (implicitly, the Ku Klux Klan). Again, there was no specific reference to race issues in the Code, but the last story that Bill Gaines submitted to the CMAA in 1955, a science fiction parable on racism, was rejected because the protagonist was a black man. Gaines angrily elected to publish the story without the Code seal (in *Weird Science Fantasy* #29), and subsequently canceled the entire EC line except for *MAD*, which was redesigned as a magazine so that it would be exempt from the CMAA's authority.

It should be noted that although the comic book Superman did not confront racism until the seventies, in the *Adventures of Superman* radio series, the Man of Steel took on a thinly-veiled version of the Ku Klu Klan in the 1946 "Unity House" storyline. At the end of the story, Superman unmasked the group's leader as a former Nazi spy and made a plea for racial and religious tolerance. The story attracted great national publicity and infuriated Samuel Green, the Grand Dragon of the real Klan, but the show's sponsor, Kellogg's, decided to persevere, despite pressure to end the story.

Panel 2: Jack O'Lantern transforms some of the "White Knights" into grass and mows them down with "a spectral lawn-mower." This is very reminiscent of the gruesome fates the Spectre inflicted on criminals in a controversial series of stories by Michael Fleisher and Jim Aparo that ran in *Adventure Comics* #431-#440 (1974).

Page 16
Panel 1: Supreme's recollection of joining the Allied Supermen after his career as Kid Supreme does not directly correspond to DC history. Superman was only an honorary member of the Justice Society of America in the forties, making only two appearances in the original run of *All-Star Comics* (#7 and #36). The concept of Superman's career as Superboy was not introduced until 1945, and not acknowledged in the regular Superman strip until the early fifties. In *Justice League of America* #73 (1969) it was established that it was the Earth-Two Superman who was a member of the Justice Society; the Earth-Two Superman never had a career as Superboy. Likewise, Amazo (of whom Magno is a counterpart) did not appear until *Brave and the Bold* #30 (1960), when he first fought the Justice League of America.

Supreme mentions the wartime Allied Axis Super-Fiends, villainous counterparts of the Allies. In DC history, there was a villainous version of the JSA, the Injustice Society of the World, although it did not appear until *All-Star Comics* #37 (1947). Its members included the Brain Wave, Vandal Savage, Per Degaton, the Icicle, and the Gambler.

Panel 2: Supreme's musings on the postwar period reflect the aforementioned decline in the popularity of superheroes after the end of World War Two.

Page 17: Mighty Man arrives with Waxy Doyle, formerly the Wax Man, who we learn has retired to start a furniture polish business.

Page 18: This flashback story is very similar to the story "Superduperman," a spoof of Superman by Harvey Kurtzman and Wally Wood that appeared in *MAD* #4 (1953), down to the banners and in-jokes in the background and the irreverent slogans that appear on "Supremelvin's" chest.

In the original story, there was a sign in the upper left-hand corner of the first panel reading, "When Better Drawrings Are Drawrn, They'll Be Drawrn by Wood: He's Real Gone." In this story, that sign has been replaced by one that reads, "When Better Drawrings are Swiped, They'll Be Swiped By Veitch."

"Melvin" was *MAD*'s trademark character in its early issues, just as Alfred E. Neuman (who first appeared in *MAD* #24) became in later years.

Even in the heyday of EC Comics, it's unlikely we would see a vibrator labeled "Long John Supremeo."

Note "Gloryoski's" Mickey Mouse shirt and prominent breasts; during the early fifties, the budding chest of Mousekeeter Annette Funicello on *The Mickey Mouse* Show was a memorable facet of Americana.

Page 19
Panel 3: Here we have a Wood-like parody of Professor Night, "Professor Newt," who bears some resemblance to *MAD*'s parody of Batman in "Bat Boy and Ruben."

Panel 6: Another Wood/Kurtzman trademark was bits of "respectable" art tossed into the mix: here we see the central figure from Edvard Munch's famous 1893 lithograph "The Scream."

Page 20
Panel 1: "Supremelvin's" secret identity is "radio reporter Methane Drain" (i.e., Ethan Crane). Note that instead of glasses, he disguises his identity with a monocle.

While Ethan Crane worked for radio K-ZAM, Methane works for, appropriately enough, K-LOD.

Panel 2: "Juicy Jawache" is the satirical version of Judy Jordan and a clear nod to Wally Wood's parody of Lois Lane.

Juicy is reading *Subversion of the Innocuous* by Dr. Frederick of Hollywood. This is an obvious reference to *Seduction of the Innocent*, Dr. Frederic Wertham's infamous treatise on the negative effects of comic books on children.

The comment about "dirty pictures hidden in their clothing wrinkles" really was one of Wertham's accusations; he claimed that comic book artists deliberately drew clothing wrinkles to resemble pubic triangles.

Panel 3: Methane Drane meets "radio reporter Bubby Bugpluck," a satirical version of Billy Batson, the alter ego of Captain Marvel, who was a radio reporter. He is secretly "Meaty Man" (a play on Mighty Man, and more evidence that Mighty Man is intended as an analog of Captain Marvel).

Note that Methane Drane's secret identity is no secret to anyone; this is a point of many Superman satires, including Ben Edlund's parody in *The Tick* and Don Simpson's *Megaton Man* series.

Panel 4: Bubby's comment about his "unnatural vices" again reflects Frederic Wertham's accusations: Wertham decried the homoerotic content of superhero comics, particularly the adventures of Batman and Robin, who he saw as an implicitly homosexual couple.

The figure at the left edge of the panel bears a striking resemblance to William Gaines, publisher of EC Comics and *MAD*.

Panel 5: The *MAD* Superman parody culminated in a battle between Superduperman and Captain Marbles (Superman and Captain Marvel), a reflection of the long-running legal battle between National and Fawcett Comics. In a suit filed in September 1941, National claimed that Captain Marvel constituted an infringement of the Superman copyright. The case was finally settled out of court in 1953, around the time the *MAD* parody was originally published; Fawcett admitted no wrongdoing, but agreed to stop publishing the Captain Marvel series. In the seventies DC Comics acquired the rights to the character, although due to legal objections raised by Marvel Comics DC is forbidden to use the name "Captain Marvel" on the covers of its comics or on any licensed products (all DC uses of the character are instead entitled "Shazam").

Here, Alan Moore gives the Superman-Captain Marvel conflict a more perverse spin, but one that's still perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the early *MAD* series.

Page 21
Panel 1: "Fershlugginner" recalls "Furshlugginer," a favorite expletive in *MAD* stories (as a euphemism for words they weren't allowed to print, no doubt).
Panel 2: The Mayhe-Maniacs gleefully inform the Allied Supermen that "your Golden Age is finished," and indeed the end of the Justice Society's run in *All-Star Comics* in 1951 is seen by many as the closing curtain of the Golden Age of comics.

Panel 4: Storybook Smith thinks about becoming a narrator of horror stories instead of a superhero. As mentioned above, this was the fate of Captain America shortly before his original series ended in 1949.

Page 22
Panel 1: Supreme notes that only he, Glory, and Professor Night remained active after the team broke up. Their DC counterparts, Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman, were the only forties heroes to maintain their own series throughout the fifties.

Doc Rocket mentions that "second stringers like Roman, the Fisherman, and Spacehunter...sort of struggled along" after the disbanding of the Allied Supermen. As previously mentioned, Roy Roman, Mer-Master is the counterpart of Aquaman, while the Fisherman is the counterpart of Green Arrow, an archer who fought crime with trick arrows. Aquaman and Green Arrow, who both debuted in *More Fun Comics* #73 (1943), survived the fifties as backup features in *Adventure Comics*, home of Superboy. Spacehunter is a counterpart of the Martian Manhunter, who debuted in 1955 and starred in a backup strip in *Detective Comics*, which was headlined by Batman.

Panel 2: Detective Gorilla may be inspired by Detective Chimp, an unusually intelligent chimpanzee who solved crimes in his own strip in *Rex the Wonder Dog* during the early sixties. A similar simian detective was the Ape, an intelligent simian detective who fought crime with the help of his human partner Angel O'Day in the late sixties series *Angel and the Ape.* Unlike Detective Chimp, who was really quite clever, Detective Gorilla was apparently something of a bumbler.

The Danger Damsels are apparently a reference to the Holliday Girls, a group of courageous, fun-loving young women from Holliday College who, led by the irrepressible Etta Candy, participated in many of Wonder Woman's adventures in the forties beginning in *Sensation Comics* #2 (1942). Oddly, they disappeared from Wonder Woman's adventures in the early fifties; their last appearance was in *Wonder Woman* #44 (1950), and they did not return until *Wonder Woman* #117 (1960). There are no counterparts of the Holliday Girls in the current Wonder Woman mythos, and the modern Etta Candy is an Air Force officer married to Steve Trevor (who, prior to George Perez's extensive 1987 revision of the character, was Wonder Woman's long-time boyfriend).

Supreme refers to some of the bizarre transformations experienced by Professor Night during the fifties: Negative Professor Night and Polka-Dot Professor Night. During the fifties and early sixties Batman, of whom Professor Night is an analog, underwent almost as many bizarre changes as Superman experienced under the influence of Red Kryptonite. Batman was transformed into a living photographic negative in *Detective Comics* #284's "The Negative Batman" (1960); Polka-Dot Professor Night may refer to the infamous story "The Rainbow Batman" in *Detective Comics* #241 (1957), in which Batman donned a different brightly-colored version of his costume each day to distract passerby from the sling on Robin's arm (which could potentially have betrayed his secret identity). Batman's colorful costumes in that story included a rainbow-striped number, but not a polka-dot one; in *Detective Comics* #300 (1960), however, Batman and Robin did face a villain called Mr. Polka-Dot.

Panel 3: Waxy Doyle notes that Roy Roman and Diehard are now part of other teams, and Mighty Man adds that the Patriot (now a cyborg hero) is as well.

Waxy also mentions that Professor Night "dropped out of sight." The fate of Professor Night and his partner Twilight is revealed in issues #47-#49.

Panel 4: Supreme remarks that Black Hand recently suffered a stroke. The Golden Age Sandman, another JSA member, suffered a series of debilitating strokes in the eighties, a fact first mentioned in *Infinity, Inc.* #1 (1984).

The storybook of Storybook Smith, lost in 1958, is a crucial element of the *Judgment Day* mini-series.

Supreme also wonders about the fate of Jack O'Lantern. According to issue #49, Jack O'Lantern disappeared after the Allied Supermen of America disbanded in 1950; Supreme's last encounter with him took place in 1971. The Spectre, on whom Jack O'Lantern is based, vanished in 1945 shortly after the cancellation of his strip in *More Fun Comics*; the grimness of the character, combined with his near-omnipotence and the vague nature of his powers, limited his popularity. He did not reappear until 1966, when he was revived in *Showcase Comics* #60. Unlike his Golden Age peers, he never rejoined the Justice Society of America, and he eventually became a remote and inhuman cosmic entity.

Page 23
Panel 2: Glory notes that the Alley Cat looks good for a woman of her age. The longevity of DC's Golden Age heroes became something of a headache in the seventies and eighties. For many years, the contemporary heroes have been on a "floating" timeline which says that the characters' early adventures took place roughly ten years ago, whatever the current year may be. However, because of the JSA's ties to World War Two, the JSA members and their contemporaries are more "fixed" in time than the modern heroes. When the Justice Society first met the Justice League in 1963 (*Justice League of America* #21-#22), this was not a problem: the JSA members were in their early forties and still active and athletic. However, by 1980 the youngest of the original group was pushing 60; in 1984 it was established that many of the JSAers were exposed to a burst of "temporal energy" that allowed them to remain vigorous at an advanced age (*All Star Squadron* Annual #3). In recent years, the surviving JSA members have been aged and "de-aged" several times. Three of their members, the Flash (Jay Garrick), Wildcat (Ted Grant), and Green Lantern (Alan Scott) still are active, despite the fact that both are nearly 80 years old.

Supreme asks if he can borrow some of the ASA's trophies, including the Future-O-Scope and Magno, to display in the Citadel Supreme.

Panel 3: Glory kisses Supreme goodbye. In the DC universe, there has been an occasional flirtation between Superman and Wonder Woman C they parted with a kiss at the end of Superman Annual #11 (1984) and shared another kiss in *Action Comics* #600 (1988) C but it has never developed into anything more serious, and Superman's recent marriage to Lois Lane appears to have shelved the issue. The possibility of a romance between Supreme and Glory is explored in issue #50.

Page 24
Panel 1: Supreme has apparently repaired Suprematon S-1 since last issue.

Because S-1 says he will have to instruct them, Suprematons S-2 and S-3 presumably aren't capable of independent thought.

Panel 2: Supreme dons his anti-Supremium suit, which was first seen in the Souvenir Gallery Supreme last issue.

Note in the background that Hilda's drawing of Supreme is still taped to the wall. To the right are the Future-O-Scope and the inert body of Magno, which Supreme removed from the trophy room in the Allies' headquarters.

Panels 3-4: Supreme prepares to investigate the mysteries of Supremium.

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Issue #45 "Featuring Supreme's Pal Billy Friday"

Page 1
Panel 1: As in the previous issue, we begin with a parallel narration, as Diana Dane enlists Ethan Crane to ask a favor of Supreme.

Panel 2: We learn that Billy Friday, who was taken off of *Omniman* last issue, is now planning a new autobiographical comic series.

Supreme is flying towards the Citadel Supreme carrying a figure wrapped in his cape. When Superman flew visitors to the Fortress of Solitude, he would frequently wrap them in his indestructible cape to protect them from the friction of his flight and to keep them warm in the frigid Arctic climate where the Fortress was located, as first shown in *Action Comics* #253 (1959).

Panel 3: Ethan expresses his annoyance at saddling Supreme with the arrogant, obnoxious Billy Friday. Despite this issue's title, Billy is clearly *not* Supreme's pal.

Panel 4: Setting down the figure in the cape, Supreme generates the artificial lightning bolt to open the Citadel's doors, as we first saw him do in issue #43.

Page 2
As Supreme enters the Citadel, we see a massive sword embedded in a block at the right edge of the panel. The sword is not identified, but may be intended to be Excalibur, the legendary sword of King Arthur.

Page 3
Panel 1: Billy expresses skepticism about the stuffed body of Stupendo, the Simian Supreme, citing the Square-Cubed Law as proof that Stupendo could not exist. The Square-Cubed Law is a principle of biology that states that so long as a bipedal creature's proportions remain the same, its mass will increase at a faster rate than its height (i.e., if height is squared mass will be cubed). This suggests that beyond a certain height, a human-shaped creature's bones and muscles will no longer be capable of supporting its own mass.

Panel 2: Supreme reminds Billy that Stupendo was transformed by Supremium, which Supreme describes as a "meta-element" that distorts physical laws in its vicinity. Since Supreme also acquired his powers through exposure to Supremium, this may explain how he is able to exercise his powers in ways that obviously defy the laws of physics.

The Suprematons inform Supreme that his Supremium sample is still in its "white stage." Unlike Kryptonite, which existed in several varieties with different colors and effects, the color and effects of Supremium are apparently based on the energy state of the individual sample.
Panel 3: Supreme expects that the Supremium sample will shortly enter its "violet stage," just as did the violet Supremium which caused bizarre transformations in Supreme and Suprema in years past. As an experiment, Supreme is attempting to accelerate the changes in the Supremium through "particle bombardment" of the sample.

Panel 4: The Suprematons describe the birth of a new creature in the Imaginary Menagerie: an eight-legged chimera with hooves and glossy mane like a horse. It is the offspring of two creatures from Greek myth: a centaur (a creature with the torso of a man and the body of a horse) and a lamia (a vampiric demon, generally depicted as a snake with the head and torso of a woman).

Page 4
Panel 1: One of the Suprematons notes that the villains imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors refuse to approach the glass to make themselves visible. Superman possessed a device called the Zone-O-Phone, which allowed him to see into the Phantom Zone to communicate with its inmates; if an inmate was not willing to speak to him, the inmate could simply move away from the window created by the Zone-O-Phone and retreat to elsewhere in the Zone.

Panel 2: The Suprematons note that it is the beginning of the new year for the inhabitants of Amalynth.

Panel 3: The body of Magno the Super Humanoid, which Supreme retrieved from the Allies' headquarters last issue, has now been moved into the Allies Memorial Chamber in the Citadel Supreme.

Panel 4: We see that Billy has definitely touched the Supremium reaction chamber, which will shortly prove to be a very serious problem.

Page 5
Panel 3: Billy asks Supreme if his experiments are ">black' research for the nuclear conspiracy." Billy's paranoia and intellectual elitism are reminiscent of Alan Moore's colleague Grant Morrison, the writer of the ultra-paranoid conspiracy adventure series *The Invisibles* for DC's Vertigo imprint.

Page 6
Panel 1: The "splash page" for this flashback story, "The Secret of the Supremium Man," shows Supreme transformed into "modern art Supreme" bearing some resemblance to cubism. Cubism, an artistic style founded by painter Pablo Picasso circa 1911, presented fragmented objects, often

constructed from abstract geometric shapes, in such a way that multiple aspects of the three-dimensional object are visible simultaneously.

Like Master Meteor (mentioned in issue #42), the Supremium Man may be partly inspired by the Kryptonite Kid, an alien villain who radiated green Kryptonite and who had the power to turn objects into Kryptonite who fought and nearly killed Superboy and Krypto in *Superboy* #83 and #99 (1960 and 1962), and who later became the Kryptonite Man.

Panel 2: Sally Crane, Ethan's adoptive sister, mentions that Ethan now works in Omega City. As described in issue #41, Original Supreme, the first incarnation of Supreme, made his home in Omega City. Supreme currently lives in Omegapolis; it is not clear whether the city changed its name or whether Omega City and Omegapolis are intended to be two different cities.

Panel 3: Supreme gives Sally Crane a robotic duplicate of Radar, the Hound Supreme. Note that "Radar II" has spots; similarly, Krypto the Superdog used a washable wood stain to make himself spotted in order to preserve his and Superboy's secret identities.

Page 7
Panel 4: Sally sees "ghost people" looking down from the sky. The identities of these "ghosts" will be revealed in issue #52B.

Panel 5: Supreme exclaims "Great Luminous Nebulae!" Superman's favorite epithets were references to his home planet Krypton, including "Great Krypton" and "Great Rao" (a reference to the supreme being in Kryptonian belief); Supreme seems to favor exclamations referring to stellar phenomena.

Page 8
Panel 1: Sally feels dizzy from exposure to the Supremium Man's radiation. This is the Supremium exposure that presumably is responsible for her gaining powers like her brother's.

Panel 4: The reason for Supremium Man's hostility towards Supreme, who apparently has never seen him before, will be made clear in issue #52B.

Panel 5: The Supremium Man's radiations become violet-tinged, causing Supreme to feel strange. This presumably is Supreme's first encounter with violet Supremium.

Page 9

Panel 1: Supreme's first violet Supremium transformation turns him into a Ventriloquist's Dummy Supreme. This is reminiscent of a transformation experienced by the Flash in *The Flash* #133 (1964), in which the villain Abra Kadabra turned him into a wooden marionette.

Panel 3: Note that Sally's hair has turned white just as Ethan's did after he was exposed to Supremium as a boy.

Panel 6: The Supremium Man's taunt ("you don't realize you're no match for me in any decade!") is a hint of his true origins.

Page 11

Panels 1-2: Doc Wells is referred to here as "Doc Erwin." It is not clear if Wells' first name is intended to be Erwin, or whether this is an error that was not corrected prior to publication.

Panel 5: Supreme is transformed into a Picasso-like rendering of himself as seen in the splash page on page 6.

Page 12

Panel 1: ???

Panel 2: ???

[Author's note: I'm certain that both of these images are references to famous paintings; a special prize to anyone who can tell me what they are.]

Panel 5: The Supremium Man says he "fell here from a terrible war in the heavens." Again, all will be explained in issue #52B.

Panel 6: The Supremium Man suggests that there really is only one Supremium isotope spread throughout several points in time, a fact that Supreme will use in the next issue to help him locate Radar and Suprema.

Page 13

Panel 2: The Supremium Man begins to shrink...

Panel 3: ...and becomes a singularity, dropping out of space and time. The graphic used to represent the singularity is reminiscent of the collage effect used by artist Jack Kirby to depict the Negative Zone, a weird antimatter dimension parallel to our own that was first seen in Marvel's *Fantastic Four* #51 (1966).

Panel 5: Sally's hair remains white, but she has not yet manifested any super-powers.

Page 14
Panel 1: Supreme notes that all of his subsequent encounters with Supremium, including the sample used in this issue's experiment, were with an artificial isotope he himself created in the mid-sixties. Similarly, Lex Luthor managed on several occasions to create synthetic Kryptonite to use on Superman when the genuine article was not available; he produced the first such sample in 1950 (*Action Comics* #141).

Panels 1-2: Billy Friday scoffs at the concept of Supreme's secret identity, insisting that "your friends would recognize you, unless they were stupid." Supreme, no doubt savoring the irony, replies, "one would assume so." While Superman's friends and coworkers often noted a resemblance between Superman and Clark Kent, only a few C primarily Lois Lane and Lana Lang C were ever openly suspicious that they were the same man; on many occasions, they uncovered evidence of that fact, only to have Clark convince them (often on the flimsiest pretenses imaginable) that they were mistaken.

Note that the crayon drawing of Supreme made by Hilda (in issue #42) is still hanging on the wall.

Page 15
Panel 1: This is our first glimpse of Supreme's Stadium Supreme, an amphitheater that later will be used to hold the trial of Knightsabre, a member of Youngblood charged with the murder of his teammate Riptide (in the *Judgment Day* mini-series).

Panels 1 and 2: Billy is beginning to undergo a transformation triggered by the violet Supremium.

Billy's transformation in this issue is reminiscent of the many such changes Jimmy Olsen underwent both in the Superman strip and in his own series *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen.* Over the years, Jimmy was transformed into a giant, a devil, an enormous turtle, and many other forms. None of his changes, however, were caused by red Kryptonite, which had no effect on non-Kryptonians.

Page 16
Panel 1: Billy's uncontrollable growth is reminiscent of the gruesome changes undergone by the psychic Tetsuo Shima in Katsuhiro Otomo's manga series *Akira* and its animated film adaptation.

Panel 2: Billy suggests a name for himself: Billy Friday, Elaborate Lad. Jimmy Olsen's most frequent transformation was Elastic Lad; by drinking a vial of a special serum he could temporarily gain the power to stretch himself (like Plastic Man or the Marvel hero Mr. Fantastic). Jimmy first became Elastic Lad in *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #31 (1962).

Page 19

Panels 1-2: As Billy Friday's expansion threatens to crack open the Hell of Mirrors, Korgo the Space Tyrant and Shadow Supreme rant at their captor:

Korgo: "The day is coming, Supreme!"
Shadow Supreme: "Accursed one! Our revenge shall consume you!"
Korgo: "Strike hard, dark one! Soon we shall be free!"

Panel 2: Supreme recalls with horror that the End (whose Armageddon Gauntlet is on display in the Citadel, as seen in issue #43) is imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors, and that he had threatened to destroy the Earth if he ever escaped. We do not see the End in this issue, but we will get a brief glimpse of him in issue #52B.

Page 20
Panels 2-3: The destructive force of Billy's expansion, which smashes several Suprematons, is once again reminiscent of *Akira*, where several unfortunate bystanders including Tetsuo's own girlfriend were crushed to death within his rapidly expanding bulk.

Page 21
Panels 2-3: Supreme heads for the Hall of Armaments in search of Optilux's Photoplasmic Converter (seen earlier in this issue).

Page 22
Panel 3: Supreme uses the Photoplasmic Converter to transform Billy into sentient light, trapping him in the Prism World of Amalynth. This solution is reminiscent of a story in *Superboy* #89 (June 1961) in which Superboy first met Mon-El, a space explorer from the planet Daxam with powers almost identical to Superman's. Mon-El was poisoned by lead, which affects Daxamites the same way Kryptonite affects Kryptonian survivors. With no way to reverse the lead's toxic effects on Mon-El's body, Superboy was forced to send Mon-El to the Phantom Zone; Mon-El survived there for a thousand years as a bodiless phantom before he was freed by the Legion of Superheroes.

Panel 4: Supreme enlists S-1's help in explaining Billy's fate to his coworkers.

Page 23
Panel 1: S-1 poses as Supreme to allow Supreme and Ethan Crane to appear in the same place at the same time as he did in the flashback story in issue #43.

Panel 5: Jonas Tate, enthusiastic about the idea of Billy writing autobiographical comics about his experiences in the Prism World, exclaims, "even Shooter never thought of this!" Jim Shooter is a comic writer who became the regular writer of the Legion of Superheroes strip in *Adventure Comics*

in the late sixties while only 14 years old. He later became editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics from 1978 to 1987, and he was responsible for inaugurating an era of sales-boosting gimmicks including the first major company-wide crossover, 1984's *Marvel Superheroes Secret Wars*.

Page 24
Panel 1: We have another bit of dramatic irony as Diana Dane calls Supreme (as impersonated by S-1) "a bit cold and mechanical." For the first time she notes Supreme's resemblance to Ethan...

Panel 2: ...but notes that Supreme is "obviously a lot taller." Superman, who is listed in DC's *Who's Who* series as being 6'3" tall, often deliberately slouched as Clark Kent to disguise his true height. Since the Supremantons are supposed to be exact duplicates, either Ethan Crane does the same thing or his height and impressive physique are less noticeable in street clothes.

Panels 3-4: Diana asks Ethan if Supreme ever had a female counterpart, and he says her name was Suprema. This is the first reference to Suprema in the current continuity, although we saw alternate versions of her in the Supremacy and have already seen her alter ego Sally Crane.

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Issue #46 "The Girl of Our Dreams"

Page 1
Panel 1: Ethan Crane is in the Omegapolis public library.

Panel 2: While flying through space, Supreme sees strange images as he approaches the speed of light.

A Moiré grid is a shimmering wave-like pattern seen when two sets of parallel lines are superimposed at an acute angle; the wavy distortions occasionally visible in computer monitors is a Moiré effect, a side effect of the physical configuration of the monitor's picture tube.

The point-of-view perspective here is very similar to that of scenes in *Miracleman* #8 (also written by Moore) in which Miracleman crashes through Emil Gargunza's laboratory.

Panel 3: Ethan looks up an old newspaper article about his own departure from Earth in the late sixties.

The name of the newspaper, the *Daily Globe,* is reminiscent of that great metropolitan newspaper, the *Daily Planet*.

The date of the article is May 1969.

The main article says that Supreme left the Earth in Suprema's care; sidebars indicate that the President affirming his confidence in Suprema, but a poll shows ordinary citizens concerned. The President is presumably Lyndon Johnson, who in our world was President from November 1963 to January 1969.

The article notes that Suprema was "chirpy and confident." As we will see in the next two issues, Suprema is *always* chirpy and confident; in *Youngblood* (third series) #1, Twilight describes her as being "like God's pushy big sister."

There is also a note that Suprema "modeled a new claret cape for the occasion." Supergirl's costume changed frequently during the sixties and seventies, and readers often submitted their own costume designs, which Supergirl would occasionally model in subsequent issues.

Page 2
Panel 1: Supreme refers to the increase in mass an object experiences as it approaches the speed of light. The peculiar fact, established as a corollary of Einstein's theory of general relativity in the

early part of this century, has been demonstrated experimentally using particle accelerators, and is the reason why it apparently is impossible to travel faster than light. The closer to light speed an object comes, the more its mass increases and thus more force is required to accelerate it: to accelerate to the speed of light would require an infinite amount of energy, because the object would have infinite mass. Only photons, which have no mass, travel at the speed of light. Luckily, Supreme, being a superhero, is exempt from such minutiae.

Panel 2: Another newspaper article, this one dated October 1969, reports the Earth being threatened by Gorrl the Living Galaxy. Based on his appearance in this issue, Gorrl seems to be inspired by Ego the Living Planet, an enormous Marvel comics character who first appeared in *The Mighty Thor* #132. Ego was a sentient planet, a fraction of the size of Earth, who was fitted with a "sidereal propulsion unit" that allowed him to travel through space. He occasionally menaced the populations of inhabited worlds and was thwarted on several occasions by Thor and the Fantastic Four.

Panel 3: Supreme exceeds the speed of light. Before his 1986 revision, Superman could fly at many times the speed of light (he first flew faster than light as early as 1945, in *Superman* #35) allowing him to travel interstellar distances C or even, as mentioned in the notes for issue #42, through time C under his own power. In the current continuity, Superman is fast enough to reach escape velocity, but not fast enough to travel interstellar distances unaided.

Panel 4: A third newspaper article reports Suprema's decision to become Gorrl's companion in exchange for his sparing the Earth.

Panel 5: As Supreme flies through space, he sees three shapes pass him traveling in the opposite direction, a phenomenon which is explained later in this issue.

Page 3
Rick Veitch's art style in this flashback story, "The Hussy from Heck," is modeled on that of artist Jim Mooney, who was the primary artist of Supergirl's strip in *Action Comics* during the fifties and sixties. Aiding the resemblance is Mooney himself, who inked Veitch's pencils in this sequence.

Panel 2: Sally Crane is shown living in Glenvale. Supergirl, in her secret identity of Linda Danvers, lived in the small town of Midville.

Page 5
Panel 1: This story is somewhat reminiscent of a 1972 Supergirl story entitled "Demon Spawn," in which the villainess Nightflame, an evil version of Supergirl, imprisoned the Girl of Steel within a "microcosmos" in Supergirl's own mind and then took Supergirl's place (*Adventure Comics* #421). In 1963 there also was a villainess called Satan Girl who fought Supergirl and the Legion of

Superheroes. Satan Girl was a duplicate of Supergirl created by exposure to red Kryptonite in 1963; she attempted to drain the red Kryptonite radiation from her body so that she would not disappear once the red-K's effects wore off. She was exposed to green Kryptonite and perished before she was able to carry out her plan. (*Adventure Comics* #313).
There also is a Marvel Comics character called Satana, the daughter of the Devil and the sister of Damien Hellstrom, the unlikely superhero Son of Satan.

Panel 6: Here we see Sally Crane's girlhood sweetheart, Troy Taylor. Supergirl had a boyfriend named Dick Wilson (changed to Dick Malverne after he was adopted), another resident of the Midville Orphanage.

Page 6
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is reminiscent of the Marvel Comics character Captain Marvel (Mar-Vell), who gained "cosmic awareness" in the mid-seventies (*Captain Marvel* #33-#34). It also addresses the fact that Superman's sensory powers defied the laws of physics just as much as his flight. He could hear events taking place thousands of miles away, faster than the sound (which travels at about 750 miles per hour at sea level) could possibly reach his ears, and could see instantaneously across interstellar distances that it would take light decades to cross. In fact, in some stories, Superman was able to witness (and even photograph) past events by overtaking light rays, a trick he first performed in 1947 (*Action Comics* #111).

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Panel 1: Supreme discovers Radar, the Hound Supreme, frozen in a block of ice.

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Panels 3 and 6: A black hole is a bizarre stellar phenomenon caused by the death of a star many times larger than the sun. The mass at the star's interior becomes so dense that it collapses to form a singularity, an object with incredible mass but no height, length, or width. The singularity's gravity is so enormous that it draws surrounding matter towards it in the manner of a whirlpool. The name "black hole" comes from the fact that the area of space nearest the singularity would appear pure

black; its gravity would be so strong that the velocity necessary to escape its pull would exceed the speed of light. The edge of this lightless area, from which nothing can escape, is called the event horizon.

The presence of the black hole within Gorrl's confines has a basis in current astronomy; it is believed that there are massive black holes at the centers of galaxies.
wonders about the fate of Jack O'Lantern. According to issue #49, Jack O'Lantern disappeared after the Allied Supermen of America disbanded in 1950; Supreme's last encounter with him took place in 1971. The Spectre, on whom Jack O'Lantern is based, vanished in 1945 shortly after the cancellation of his strip in *More Fun Comics*; the grimness of the character, combined with his near-omnipotence and the vague nature of his powers, limited his popularity. He did not reappear until 1966, when he was revived in *Showcase Comics* #60. Unlike his Golden Age peers, he never rejoined the Justice Society of America, and he eventually became a remote and inhuman cosmic entity.

Page 23
Panel 2: Glory notes that the Alley Cat looks good for a woman of her age. The longevity of DC's Golden Age heroes became something of a headache in the seventies and eighties. For many years, the contemporary heroes have been on a "floating" timeline which says that the characters' early adventures took place roughly ten years ago, whatever the current year may be. However, because of the JSA's ties to World War Two, the JSA members and their contemporaries are more "fixed" in time than the modern heroes. When the Justice Society first met the Justice League in 1963 (*Justice League of America* #21-#22), this was not a problem: the JSA members were in their early forties and still active and athletic. However, by 1980 the youngest of the original group was pushing 60; in 1984 it was established that many of the JSAers were exposed to a burst of "temporal energy" that allowed them to remain vigorous at an advanced age (*All Star Squadron* Annual #3). In recent years, the surviving JSA members have been aged and "de-aged" several times. Three of their members, the Flash (Jay Garrick), Wildcat (Ted Grant), and Green Lantern (Alan Scott) still are active, despite the fact that both are nearly 80 years old.

Supreme asks if he can borrow some of the ASA's trophies, including the Future-O-Scope and Magno, to display in the Citadel Supreme.

Panel 3: Glory kisses Supreme goodbye. In the DC universe, there has been an occasional flirtation between Superman and Wonder Woman C they parted with a kiss at the end of Superman Annual #11 (1984) and shared another kiss in *Action Comics* #600 (1988) C but it has never developed into anything more serious, and Superman's recent marriage to Lois Lane appears to have shelved the issue. The possibility of a romance between Supreme and Glory is explored in issue #50.

Page 24

Panel 1: Supreme has apparently repaired Suprematon S-1 since last issue.

Because S-1 says he will have to instruct them, Suprematons S-2 and S-3 presumably aren't capable of independent thought.

Panel 2: Supreme dons his anti-Supremium suit, which was first seen in the Souvenir Gallery Supreme last issue.

Note in the background that Hilda's drawing of Supreme is still taped to the wall. To the right are the Future-O-Scope and the inert body of Magno, which Supreme removed from the trophy room in the Allies' headquarters.

Panels 3-4: Supreme prepares to investigate the mysteries of Supremium.

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Issue #45 "Featuring Supreme's Pal Billy Friday"

Page 1
Panel 1: As in the previous issue, we begin with a parallel narration, as Diana Dane enlists Ethan Crane to ask a favor of Supreme.

Panel 2: We learn that Billy Friday, who was taken off of *Omniman* last issue, is now planning a new autobiographical comic series.

Supreme is flying towards the Citadel Supreme carrying a figure wrapped in his cape. When Superman flew visitors to the Fortress of Solitude, he would frequently wrap them in his indestructible cape to protect them from the friction of his flight and to keep them warm in the frigid Arctic climate where the Fortress was located, as first shown in *Action Comics* #253 (1959).

Panel 3: Ethan expresses his annoyance at saddling Supreme with the arrogant, obnoxious Billy Friday. Despite this issue's title, Billy is clearly *not* Supreme's pal.

Panel 4: Setting down the figure in the cape, Supreme generates the artificial lightning bolt to open the Citadel's doors, as we first saw him do in issue #43.

Page 2
As Supreme enters the Citadel, we see a massive sword embedded in a block at the right edge of the panel. The sword is not identified, but may be intended to be Excalibur, the legendary sword of King Arthur.

Page 3
Panel 1: Billy expresses skepticism about the stuffed body of Stupendo, the Simian Supreme, citing the Square-Cubed Law as proof that Stupendo could not exist. The Square-Cubed Law is a principle of biology that states that so long as a bipedal creature's proportions remain the same, its mass will increase at a faster rate than its height (i.e., if height is squared mass will be cubed). This suggests that beyond a certain height, a human-shaped creature's bones and muscles will no longer be capable of supporting its own mass.

Panel 2: Supreme reminds Billy that Stupendo was transformed by Supremium, which Supreme describes as a "meta-element" that distorts physical laws in its vicinity. Since Supreme also acquired his powers through exposure to Supremium, this may explain how he is able to exercise his powers in ways that obviously defy the laws of physics.

The Suprematons inform Supreme that his Supremium sample is still in its "white stage." Unlike Kryptonite, which existed in several varieties with different colors and effects, the color and effects of Supremium are apparently based on the energy state of the individual sample.
Panel 3: Supreme expects that the Supremium sample will shortly enter its "violet stage," just as did the violet Supremium which caused bizarre transformations in Supreme and Suprema in years past. As an experiment, Supreme is attempting to accelerate the changes in the Supremium through "particle bombardment" of the sample.

Panel 4: The Suprematons describe the birth of a new creature in the Imaginary Menagerie: an eight-legged chimera with hooves and glossy mane like a horse. It is the offspring of two creatures from Greek myth: a centaur (a creature with the torso of a man and the body of a horse) and a lamia (a vampiric demon, generally depicted as a snake with the head and torso of a woman).

Page 4
Panel 1: One of the Suprematons notes that the villains imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors refuse to approach the glass to make themselves visible. Superman possessed a device called the Zone-O-Phone, which allowed him to see into the Phantom Zone to communicate with its inmates; if an inmate was not willing to speak to him, the inmate could simply move away from the window created by the Zone-O-Phone and retreat to elsewhere in the Zone.

Panel 2: The Suprematons note that it is the beginning of the new year for the inhabitants of Amalynth.

Panel 3: The body of Magno the Super Humanoid, which Supreme retrieved from the Allies' headquarters last issue, has now been moved into the Allies Memorial Chamber in the Citadel Supreme.

Panel 4: We see that Billy has definitely touched the Supremium reaction chamber, which will shortly prove to be a very serious problem.

Page 5
Panel 3: Billy asks Supreme if his experiments are ">black' research for the nuclear conspiracy." Billy's paranoia and intellectual elitism are reminiscent of Alan Moore's colleague Grant Morrison, the writer of the ultra-paranoid conspiracy adventure series *The Invisibles* for DC's Vertigo imprint.

Page 6
Panel 1: The "splash page" for this flashback story, "The Secret of the Supremium Man," shows Supreme transformed into "modern art Supreme" bearing some resemblance to cubism. Cubism, an artistic style founded by painter Pablo Picasso circa 1911, presented fragmented objects, often

constructed from abstract geometric shapes, in such a way that multiple aspects of the three-dimensional object are visible simultaneously.

Like Master Meteor (mentioned in issue #42), the Supremium Man may be partly inspired by the Kryptonite Kid, an alien villain who radiated green Kryptonite and who had the power to turn objects into Kryptonite who fought and nearly killed Superboy and Krypto in *Superboy* #83 and #99 (1960 and 1962), and who later became the Kryptonite Man.

Panel 2: Sally Crane, Ethan's adoptive sister, mentions that Ethan now works in Omega City. As described in issue #41, Original Supreme, the first incarnation of Supreme, made his home in Omega City. Supreme currently lives in Omegapolis; it is not clear whether the city changed its name or whether Omega City and Omegapolis are intended to be two different cities.

Panel 3: Supreme gives Sally Crane a robotic duplicate of Radar, the Hound Supreme. Note that "Radar II" has spots; similarly, Krypto the Superdog used a washable wood stain to make himself spotted in order to preserve his and Superboy's secret identities.

Page 7
Panel 4: Sally sees "ghost people" looking down from the sky. The identities of these "ghosts" will be revealed in issue #52B.

Panel 5: Supreme exclaims "Great Luminous Nebulae!" Superman's favorite epithets were references to his home planet Krypton, including "Great Krypton" and "Great Rao" (a reference to the supreme being in Kryptonian belief); Supreme seems to favor exclamations referring to stellar phenomena.

Page 8
Panel 1: Sally feels dizzy from exposure to the Supremium Man's radiation. This is the Supremium exposure that presumably is responsible for her gaining powers like her brother's.

Panel 4: The reason for Supremium Man's hostility towards Supreme, who apparently has never seen him before, will be made clear in issue #52B.

Panel 5: The Supremium Man's radiations become violet-tinged, causing Supreme to feel strange. This presumably is Supreme's first encounter with violet Supremium.

Page 9

Panel 1: Supreme's first violet Supremium transformation turns him into a Ventriloquist's Dummy Supreme. This is reminiscent of a transformation experienced by the Flash in *The Flash* #133 (1964), in which the villain Abra Kadabra turned him into a wooden marionette.

Panel 3: Note that Sally's hair has turned white just as Ethan's did after he was exposed to Supremium as a boy.

Panel 6: The Supremium Man's taunt ("you don't realize you're no match for me in any decade!") is a hint of his true origins.

Page 11

Panels 1-2: Doc Wells is referred to here as "Doc Erwin." It is not clear if Wells' first name is intended to be Erwin, or whether this is an error that was not corrected prior to publication.

Panel 5: Supreme is transformed into a Picasso-like rendering of himself as seen in the splash page on page 6.

Page 12

Panel 1: ???

Panel 2: ???

[Author's note: I'm certain that both of these images are references to famous paintings; a special prize to anyone who can tell me what they are.]

Panel 5: The Supremium Man says he "fell here from a terrible war in the heavens." Again, all will be explained in issue #52B.

Panel 6: The Supremium Man suggests that there really is only one Supremium isotope spread throughout several points in time, a fact that Supreme will use in the next issue to help him locate Radar and Suprema.

Page 13

Panel 2: The Supremium Man begins to shrink...

Panel 3: ...and becomes a singularity, dropping out of space and time. The graphic used to represent the singularity is reminiscent of the collage effect used by artist Jack Kirby to depict the Negative Zone, a weird antimatter dimension parallel to our own that was first seen in Marvel's *Fantastic Four* #51 (1966).

Panel 5: Sally's hair remains white, but she has not yet manifested any super-powers.

Page 14
Panel 1: Supreme notes that all of his subsequent encounters with Supremium, including the sample used in this issue's experiment, were with an artificial isotope he himself created in the mid-sixties. Similarly, Lex Luthor managed on several occasions to create synthetic Kryptonite to use on Superman when the genuine article was not available; he produced the first such sample in 1950 (*Action Comics* #141).

Panels 1-2: Billy Friday scoffs at the concept of Supreme's secret identity, insisting that "your friends would recognize you, unless they were stupid." Supreme, no doubt savoring the irony, replies, "one would assume so." While Superman's friends and coworkers often noted a resemblance between Superman and Clark Kent, only a few C primarily Lois Lane and Lana Lang C were ever openly suspicious that they were the same man; on many occasions, they uncovered evidence of that fact, only to have Clark convince them (often on the flimsiest pretenses imaginable) that they were mistaken.

Note that the crayon drawing of Supreme made by Hilda (in issue #42) is still hanging on the wall.

Page 15
Panel 1: This is our first glimpse of Supreme's Stadium Supreme, an amphitheater that later will be used to hold the trial of Knightsabre, a member of Youngblood charged with the murder of his teammate Riptide (in the *Judgment Day* mini-series).

Panels 1 and 2: Billy is beginning to undergo a transformation triggered by the violet Supremium.

Billy's transformation in this issue is reminiscent of the many such changes Jimmy Olsen underwent both in the Superman strip and in his own series *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen.* Over the years, Jimmy was transformed into a giant, a devil, an enormous turtle, and many other forms. None of his changes, however, were caused by red Kryptonite, which had no effect on non-Kryptonians.

Page 16
Panel 1: Billy's uncontrollable growth is reminiscent of the gruesome changes undergone by the psychic Tetsuo Shima in Katsuhiro Otomo's manga series *Akira* and its animated film adaptation.

Panel 2: Billy suggests a name for himself: Billy Friday, Elaborate Lad. Jimmy Olsen's most frequent transformation was Elastic Lad; by drinking a vial of a special serum he could temporarily gain the power to stretch himself (like Plastic Man or the Marvel hero Mr. Fantastic). Jimmy first became Elastic Lad in *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #31 (1962).

Page 19

Panels 1-2: As Billy Friday's expansion threatens to crack open the Hell of Mirrors, Korgo the Space Tyrant and Shadow Supreme rant at their captor:

Korgo: "The day is coming, Supreme!"
Shadow Supreme: "Accursed one! Our revenge shall consume you!"
Korgo: "Strike hard, dark one! Soon we shall be free!"

Panel 2: Supreme recalls with horror that the End (whose Armageddon Gauntlet is on display in the Citadel, as seen in issue #43) is imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors, and that he had threatened to destroy the Earth if he ever escaped. We do not see the End in this issue, but we will get a brief glimpse of him in issue #52B.

Page 20
Panels 2-3: The destructive force of Billy's expansion, which smashes several Suprematons, is once again reminiscent of *Akira*, where several unfortunate bystanders including Tetsuo's own girlfriend were crushed to death within his rapidly expanding bulk.

Page 21
Panels 2-3: Supreme heads for the Hall of Armaments in search of Optilux's Photoplasmic Converter (seen earlier in this issue).

Page 22
Panel 3: Supreme uses the Photoplasmic Converter to transform Billy into sentient light, trapping him in the Prism World of Amalynth. This solution is reminiscent of a story in *Superboy* #89 (June 1961) in which Superboy first met Mon-El, a space explorer from the planet Daxam with powers almost identical to Superman's. Mon-El was poisoned by lead, which affects Daxamites the same way Kryptonite affects Kryptonian survivors. With no way to reverse the lead's toxic effects on Mon-El's body, Superboy was forced to send Mon-El to the Phantom Zone; Mon-El survived there for a thousand years as a bodiless phantom before he was freed by the Legion of Superheroes.

Panel 4: Supreme enlists S-1's help in explaining Billy's fate to his coworkers.

Page 23
Panel 1: S-1 poses as Supreme to allow Supreme and Ethan Crane to appear in the same place at the same time as he did in the flashback story in issue #43.

Panel 5: Jonas Tate, enthusiastic about the idea of Billy writing autobiographical comics about his experiences in the Prism World, exclaims, "even Shooter never thought of this!" Jim Shooter is a comic writer who became the regular writer of the Legion of Superheroes strip in *Adventure Comics*

in the late sixties while only 14 years old. He later became editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics from 1978 to 1987, and he was responsible for inaugurating an era of sales-boosting gimmicks including the first major company-wide crossover, 1984's *Marvel Superheroes Secret Wars*.

Page 24
Panel 1: We have another bit of dramatic irony as Diana Dane calls Supreme (as impersonated by S-1) "a bit cold and mechanical." For the first time she notes Supreme's resemblance to Ethan...

Panel 2: ...but notes that Supreme is "obviously a lot taller." Superman, who is listed in DC's *Who's Who* series as being 6'3" tall, often deliberately slouched as Clark Kent to disguise his true height. Since the Supremantons are supposed to be exact duplicates, either Ethan Crane does the same thing or his height and impressive physique are less noticeable in street clothes.

Panels 3-4: Diana asks Ethan if Supreme ever had a female counterpart, and he says her name was Suprema. This is the first reference to Suprema in the current continuity, although we saw alternate versions of her in the Supremacy and have already seen her alter ego Sally Crane.

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Issue #46 "The Girl of Our Dreams"

Page 1
Panel 1: Ethan Crane is in the Omegapolis public library.

Panel 2: While flying through space, Supreme sees strange images as he approaches the speed of light.

A Moiré grid is a shimmering wave-like pattern seen when two sets of parallel lines are superimposed at an acute angle; the wavy distortions occasionally visible in computer monitors is a Moiré effect, a side effect of the physical configuration of the monitor's picture tube.

The point-of-view perspective here is very similar to that of scenes in *Miracleman* #8 (also written by Moore) in which Miracleman crashes through Emil Gargunza's laboratory.

Panel 3: Ethan looks up an old newspaper article about his own departure from Earth in the late sixties.

The name of the newspaper, the *Daily Globe,* is reminiscent of that great metropolitan newspaper, the *Daily Planet*.

The date of the article is May 1969.

The main article says that Supreme left the Earth in Suprema's care; sidebars indicate that the President affirming his confidence in Suprema, but a poll shows ordinary citizens concerned. The President is presumably Lyndon Johnson, who in our world was President from November 1963 to January 1969.

The article notes that Suprema was "chirpy and confident." As we will see in the next two issues, Suprema is *always* chirpy and confident; in *Youngblood* (third series) #1, Twilight describes her as being "like God's pushy big sister."

There is also a note that Suprema "modeled a new claret cape for the occasion." Supergirl's costume changed frequently during the sixties and seventies, and readers often submitted their own costume designs, which Supergirl would occasionally model in subsequent issues.

Page 2
Panel 1: Supreme refers to the increase in mass an object experiences as it approaches the speed of light. The peculiar fact, established as a corollary of Einstein's theory of general relativity in the

early part of this century, has been demonstrated experimentally using particle accelerators, and is the reason why it apparently is impossible to travel faster than light. The closer to light speed an object comes, the more its mass increases and thus more force is required to accelerate it: to accelerate to the speed of light would require an infinite amount of energy, because the object would have infinite mass. Only photons, which have no mass, travel at the speed of light. Luckily, Supreme, being a superhero, is exempt from such minutiae.

Panel 2: Another newspaper article, this one dated October 1969, reports the Earth being threatened by Gorrl the Living Galaxy. Based on his appearance in this issue, Gorrl seems to be inspired by Ego the Living Planet, an enormous Marvel comics character who first appeared in *The Mighty Thor* #132. Ego was a sentient planet, a fraction of the size of Earth, who was fitted with a "sidereal propulsion unit" that allowed him to travel through space. He occasionally menaced the populations of inhabited worlds and was thwarted on several occasions by Thor and the Fantastic Four.

Panel 3: Supreme exceeds the speed of light. Before his 1986 revision, Superman could fly at many times the speed of light (he first flew faster than light as early as 1945, in *Superman* #35) allowing him to travel interstellar distances C or even, as mentioned in the notes for issue #42, through time C under his own power. In the current continuity, Superman is fast enough to reach escape velocity, but not fast enough to travel interstellar distances unaided.

Panel 4: A third newspaper article reports Suprema's decision to become Gorrl's companion in exchange for his sparing the Earth.

Panel 5: As Supreme flies through space, he sees three shapes pass him traveling in the opposite direction, a phenomenon which is explained later in this issue.

Page 3
Rick Veitch's art style in this flashback story, "The Hussy from Heck," is modeled on that of artist Jim Mooney, who was the primary artist of Supergirl's strip in *Action Comics* during the fifties and sixties. Aiding the resemblance is Mooney himself, who inked Veitch's pencils in this sequence.

Panel 2: Sally Crane is shown living in Glenvale. Supergirl, in her secret identity of Linda Danvers, lived in the small town of Midville.

Page 5
Panel 1: This story is somewhat reminiscent of a 1972 Supergirl story entitled "Demon Spawn," in which the villainess Nightflame, an evil version of Supergirl, imprisoned the Girl of Steel within a "microcosmos" in Supergirl's own mind and then took Supergirl's place (*Adventure Comics* #421). In 1963 there also was a villainess called Satan Girl who fought Supergirl and the Legion of

Superheroes. Satan Girl was a duplicate of Supergirl created by exposure to red Kryptonite in 1963; she attempted to drain the red Kryptonite radiation from her body so that she would not disappear once the red-K's effects wore off. She was exposed to green Kryptonite and perished before she was able to carry out her plan. (*Adventure Comics* #313).
There also is a Marvel Comics character called Satana, the daughter of the Devil and the sister of Damien Hellstrom, the unlikely superhero Son of Satan.

Panel 6: Here we see Sally Crane's girlhood sweetheart, Troy Taylor. Supergirl had a boyfriend named Dick Wilson (changed to Dick Malverne after he was adopted), another resident of the Midville Orphanage.

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Panel 3: The art here is scientifically inaccurate: the drops of liquid water from the melting ice should be spherical. In zero-gee, liquid forms itself into perfect spheres.

Panel 4: Radar's metabolism has slowed to a crawl to increase his chances of survival. This has precedent in the Superman mythos: following his apparent death at the hands of Doomsday in 1993 (*Superman* (2nd series) #75), Superman was still been alive for hours or perhaps days, despite the inability of paramedics to detect any life signs. Similarly, after Legion of Superheroes member Mon-El, whose powers are nearly identical to Superman, apparently died of internal injuries (*Legion of Superheroes*(3rd series) #62), he was actually alive (albeit in an exceptionally deep coma) even though his vital signs had flatlined (*Legion of Superheroes* (4th series) #3 and #4).

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Panels 3 and 6: A black hole is a bizarre stellar phenomenon caused by the death of a star many times larger than the sun. The mass at the star's interior becomes so dense that it collapses to form a singularity, an object with incredible mass but no height, length, or width. The singularity's gravity is so enormous that it draws surrounding matter towards it in the manner of a whirlpool. The name "black hole" comes from the fact that the area of space nearest the singularity would appear pure

black; its gravity would be so strong that the velocity necessary to escape its pull would exceed the speed of light. The edge of this lightless area, from which nothing can escape, is called the event horizon.

The presence of the black hole within Gorrl's confines has a basis in current astronomy; it is believed that there are massive black holes at the centers of galaxies.

Page 16: As Supreme and Radar approach the event horizon, they find themselves stretched and distorted because the gravitational pull is greater on the parts of their bodies nearest the black hole than on their extremities.

Page 17
Panel 2: Radar says that the strange landscape he and Supreme find themselves in smells "like the moon shining in water." Your guess is as good as mine when it comes to the precise meaning of Radar's bizarre metaphor, but what's important is that here, as at several key points in the series, Radar is less susceptible to disguises and illusions than humans, even his super-powered master.

Panel 3: The enormous objects filling this space represent the stereotypical concerns of a teenage girl of the sixties: a telephone, a hairbrush, and a perfume atomizer.

Panel 4: The strange space also contains "human icons from the nineteen sixties" including images of John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Also note the giant stuffed rabbit, perhaps one of Suprema's childhood toys.

Page 19
Panel 2: Supreme discovers that Suprema has been affected by time dilation. By falling into a black hole, an object is accelerated rapidly, approaching the speed of light as it approaches the center. As established by general relativity, time passes more slowly for objects traveling at high speeds than it does for a stationary observer. Thus, while almost thirty years have elapsed on Earth, in Suprema's frame of reference it has only been a short time, perhaps a few hours.

Panel 6: When told of Gorrl's infatuation with her Suprema says, "I didn't realize he thought we were dating." Given the headlines we saw on page 2 describing her "wedding" to Gorrl (which she presumably would have seen before her departure), this remark seems rather disingenuous.

Page 20
Inset panel 2: Supreme offers a bit of pseudo science, saying that if "something called gravity radiation" can escape from a black hole, so can they. At one time, physicists theorized the existence of gravitons, subatomic rays or particles which carry gravitational force the same way electrons carry

electrical force. However, more recent theories suggest instead that the reason objects are drawn towards larger objects is that they are following the "curve" created in space by the larger object's mass. An analogy would be to drop a bowling ball onto the middle of a cushion: if a marble is then dropped on the curtain it will roll down into the depression created by the bowling ball. If this theory is correct, there is no reason to believe that gravitational force requires a carrier.

To complete their escape Supreme urges his companions to accelerate to "lightspeed plus." If the laws of physics applied to Supreme, this wouldn't help, because the closer to light speed he accelerated, the greater his mass would become and the more strongly he would be drawn towards the singularity. Luckily, Supremium radiation apparently defies physical law.

Page 21
Panel 2: Here Gorrl's face particularly resembles that of Ego the Living Planet.

Quasars are objects that resemble stars but appear to be much further away than any of the stars in our own or neighboring galaxies. They emit tremendous radiation, mostly as ultraviolet light and radio waves. Their origins and true nature remain a mystery to modern astronomers. The name "quasar," first coined in 1964, was derived from the term "quasi-stellar."

Page 22
Panel 4: Suprema's farewell to Gorrl reveals a truly romantic heart: "goodbye, my starry darling."

Page 23
Panel 1: Supreme notes that the stars that comprise Gorrl are red-shifting. Red- and blue-shifts are a result of the Doppler effect: light waves emanating from a moving object will appear to be a higher or lower frequency (and thus a different color) just as sounds from a moving object will sound higher or lower pitched to a stationary observer. If an object is moving towards the observer, the waves will arrive closer together (at higher frequency) and be shifted towards the blue (or violet) end of the spectrum; if an object is moving away, the waves will take longer to arrive (a lower frequency) and will appear shifted towards the red end of the spectrum.

Page 24
Panel 1: The three heroes see Supreme traveling in the opposite direction, revealing that Supreme, Suprema, and Radar are the three shapes Supreme saw on page 2.

Radar's collar, which contains the speakers which allow him to talk, apparently also contains a radio.

Panel 2: We hear two of the nicknames given to Suprema: the Maid of Might, and the Lass of Laurels. Supergirl was also referred to as "the Maid of Might;" "Lass of Laurels" is analogous to "Girl of Steel," the most common nickname for Supergirl.

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Issue #47 "The Finest of All Possible Worlds"

Page 1: Here we see Radar the Hound Supreme back in action after thirty years.

Page 2: Suprema and Radar, perhaps hoping to make up for lost time, are on a one-woman, one-dog crusade to clean up Omegapolis.

Note Suprema's disapproval of swearing: while Supergirl had a certain reputation as a goodie-two-shoes, Suprema is quite a prig.

Page 3: Suprema employs her Shout Supreme. Superman (and Supergirl) had a similarly powerful voice; in one 1942 story he shouted so loud that his voice could be heard for miles (*Superman* #18), and in the November-December 1947 issue of *Superman* (*Superman* #49) he shattered a thousand-ton block of ice with a single high-pitched note.

Radar has a doghouse in the Citadel Supreme. Krypto, who spent much of his time in deep space after Superman moved to Metropolis, did not generally live in the Fortress of Solitude, but he had his own Doghouse of Solitude located on a distant asteroid.

Suprema notes that Supreme has gone to Star City. Star City is the home of Professor Night and thus analogous to Gotham City, home of Batman. There is also a Star City in the DC universe that was once the home of Green Arrow; it was originally depicted as being in the Midwest, on Lake Michigan, but in recent years it has been established as being located on the northern coast of California.

Gotham City is modeled on the city of New York, and Batman's early adventures were described as taking place in New York city. It was later established as a separate locale with a distinct history and geography, although DC remains reluctant to confirm its exact location.

Page 4:
The title of this issue is a play on "World's Finest," a term applied to the team of Superman and Batman. In the comics Superman and Batman first teamed up in 1952 in "The Mightiest Team in the World" (*Superman* #76), although they often shared adventures on the *Adventures of Superman* radio series beginning in 1945. From 1955 to 1986, they appeared together in nearly every issue of *World's Finest Comics* (#71-#325). The *World's Finest* title has also been applied to several subsequent mini-series, and to a three-part animated mini-series produced by Warner Brothers in 1997.

Kendal Manor, home of Taylor Kendal (Professor Night's alter ego) is equivalent to Wayne Manor, the home of Batman's alter ego Bruce Wayne.

Taylor's last name is spelled inconsistently in the series: here it is spelled "Kendal," but in issue #52B it is spelled "Kendall." It is not clear which spelling is intended to be correct.

Page 5

Panel 1: Taylor Kendal has a butler, Pratap, whose role is equivalent to that of Alfred Pennyworth, the English butler who acts as Batman's housekeeper, cook, chauffeur, valet, and confidant.

Panel 2: Ethan remarks that Pratap first came to work for Taylor in the fifties. Alfred debuted in 1943 (*Batman* #16), and except for a brief period from 1964 to 1966 (where he was presumed dead), has been an integral part of the Batman series ever since.

Note the owl motif inside Kendal Manor: instead of a bat, Taylor Kendal seems to have been inspired by a different nocturnal winged creature. It should be noted that Doctor Mid-Nite, a Golden Age hero on whom Professor Night is partially based, had a pet owl named Hooty, who sometimes shared his adventures.

Pratap refers to "Master Taylor and Mistress Linda." Linda Kendal is Taylor's niece and secretly his crime fighting partner Twilight, the Girl Wonder. Twilight is an analog of Robin; she may be inspired by Carrie Kelly, the female Robin in *The Dark Knight Returns*.

Panel 4: Professor Night and Twilight are referred to as the "Darktown Duo" just as Batman and Robin are often called the "Dynamic Duo."

Pratap and Ethan prepare to descend into the Halls of Night, Professor Night's equivalent of the Batcave, Batman's headquarters and laboratory, which is located in a cavern beneath Wayne Manor. Batman's underground sanctuary evolved gradually during the forties; a subterranean laboratory with hangers for the batmobile and batplane was first depicted in August 1942 (*Batman* #12) but the term "Batcave" was not introduced until January 1944 (*Detective Comics* #83) and it was not depicted as a natural cave (as opposed to a man-made basement) until August 1948 (*Batman* #48).

Taylor Kendal's Sinking Salon is an ingenious entrance to his secret headquarters: the entire room drops into the floor and is replaced by an exact duplicate. Batman's entrance to the Batcave is not nearly so elaborate: the primary entrance is a winding staircase behind the grandfather clock in Bruce Wayne's study, and there also is a secret elevator.

Page 6

Panel 1: The Halls of Night repeat the owl motif seen in Kendal Manor and add a moon motif. The crescent moon symbols are reminiscent of the Marvel Comics hero Moon Knight, whose costume and equipment had a similar theme.

At the left there is a statue of a woman with a bow, presumably the goddess Artemis. Artemis, the twin sister of Apollo, was associated with the moon and was depicted as a huntress, making her an appropriate patron for Professor Night.

Professor Night and Twilight are lying immobile on stone pillars in the middle of the room.

Panel 2: Pratap describes their condition: not alive (with no heartbeat or breathing) but apparently not dead, either, with their limbs still supple and no signs of decay or even rigor mortis.

Page 7
Panel 1: Pratap notes that the night before they were stricken, Taylor and Linda had been visiting Brice Bristow and Toby King, the alter egos of the Fisherman and Skipper. Brice and Toby are counterparts of Oliver Queen and Roy Harper, also known as Green Arrow and Speedy. Oddly, although Batman and Green Arrow were both members of the Justice League and their sidekicks were both members of the Teen Titans, the four never teamed up. The fate of the Fisherman and Skipper is revealed in issue #49.

Taylor and Linda are said to have disappeared in 1970. In the DC universe, Batman and Robin underwent significant changes in 1969-1970. In 1969 Dick Grayson graduated from high school and left Gotham for Hudson University, prompting Bruce Wayne to move from Wayne Manor to a penthouse apartment in downtown Gotham, leaving much of his paraphernalia behind (*Batman* #217). During this period, writer Denny O'Neil attempted to confront Batman with topical issues like racism and industrial pollution, though not quite to the extent of his more famous stories in *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* (#72-#86) around the same time. By having Professor Night vanish in 1970, Moore neatly sidesteps Batman's period of "relevancy."

Panel 2: The Night Files are Professor Night's equivalent of the Batcomputer, the sophisticated computer database system that maintains Batman's exhaustive files on everything from criminal profiles to Gotham City soil types.

Panel 4: Pratap mentions three of Professor Night's enemies:

The Jack-a-Dandy: Professor Night's arch-enemy, who we will see in the flashback story later in this issue. Jack's role is equivalent to that of the Joker, the macabre clown who has been Batman's most persistent foe since his debut in 1940 (*Batman* #1).

Fakeface: a criminal who can apparently reshape his face to impersonate others.
Evening Primrose: another of Professor Night's enemies from the fifties. An evening primrose is an herb (*Oenothera biennis*) with yellow flowers that open in the evening; the villain may be analogous to Batman's opponent Poison Ivy.

In the background, several of Professor Night's trophies are visible. Like Superman's Fortress of Solitude, Batman's headquarters contained a trophy room, first shown in 1942 (*Batman* #12). The two trophies visible here are:

A giant high-heeled shoe
A cane in a glass case with a sign indicating it was confiscated from the Jack-a-Dandy; this may be Jack's cane cannon, which is shown in action (in flashback) on page 14.

Pratap says that the Jack-a-Dandy would have sent absinthe and lilies. Absinthe is a very potent green liqueur of almost 80% alcohol and traditionally flavored with wormwood. Absinthe was popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially among writers and artists. Lilies are white flowers of the family *Liliaceae*; symbolically, they denote purity. Lilies are often used in funeral arrangements.

Panel 5: Pratap tells Ethan that Taylor had very few friends or enemies in his civilian identity. Similarly, Bruce Wayne often plays the part of the bored, shallow playboy Costensibly to keep anyone from suspecting that he is secretly Batman C which prevents him from developing any meaningful friendships. In the forties, he was engaged twice, first to Julie Madison and later to Linda Page, but he allowed both to fall apart after his fiancées became frustrated with his apathetic pose. Bruce's only real friends were Dick Grayson, Alfred, and Superman.

Pratap observes that Taylor greatly valued his friendship with Ethan. From the fifties through the mid-eighties, Batman and Superman were best friends, frequently sharing adventures and helping each other in times of trouble. However, after the climactic battle between a future Batman and Superman in *The Dark Knight Returns* in 1986, the two old friends were recast as uneasy allies. In John Byrne's revision of Superman in *Man of Steel,* he presented a new version of Superman and Batman's first meeting that showed them as having an antagonistic, distrustful attitude towards each other from the beginning (*Man of Steel* #3). This remains the pattern for their relationship in the current continuity.

Page 8
Panel 1: For this flashback story, "The Turnabout Trap of the Terrible Two," artist Rick Veitch consciously imitated the style of artist Dick Sprang, a regular artist on *Batman*, *Detective Comics*, and *World's Finest Comics* from the mid-forties through the early sixties. Sprang illustrated many

of the team-ups between Batman and Superman that appeared in *World's Finest Comics* between 1955 and 1961.

This story depicts a team-up between Professor Night and Supreme's greatest foes, the Jack-a-Dandy and Darius Dax. The Joker and Lex Luthor teamed up twice to battle Batman and Superman in the fifties and sixties, first in May 1957 (*World's Finest Comics* #88) and again in November 1962 (*World's Finest Comics* #129).

Note the license plate on the villains' truck: "RORN1." For a pair of ruthless criminal masterminds, Jack and Dax apparently have quite a sense of humor.

Panel 2: The Jack-a-Dandy is reading Virgil's *Aeneid*; he presumably considers a thorough knowledge of the classics a requirement of his role as a Victorian dandy.

Panel 3: Darius Dax is described as "the Einstein of Evil." Dax's counterpart Lex Luthor would have considered this sobriquet quite an honor; writer Elliot S! Maggin established in his 1978 prose novel *Superman: The Last Son of Krypton* that Luthor idolized Albert Einstein.

Page 9
Note the ornate Victorian decor of Dandy's den, which is in keeping with the Jack-a-Dandy's persona; similarly, the Joker's hideouts often had a clown motif.

Panel 3: Behind Jack-a-Dandy is a giant replica of his monocle. This may be the same monocle which was seen in the Citadel Supreme in issue #43.

Page 10
Panel 1: This is the Night-Wagon, Professor Night's equivalent of the Batmobile, Batman's distinctive automobile. Batman's car was first called the Batmobile in February 1941 (*Detective Comics* #48); it has gone through many variations of styling and equipment over the years.

Page 11
Panel 5: Professor Night is referred to as the "Afterdark Avenger." Batman has been referred to by a variety of nicknames, many of them similarly alliterative, e.g., "Caped Crusader," "Darknight Detective," and "Dark Knight."

Professor Night's acquisition of uncontrollable super-powers is very similar to the story "The Super Bat-Man" from *World's Finest Comics* #77 (July 1955). In that story, Batman was accidentally exposed to a ray created by the evil scientist Professor Pender which temporarily gave him super-powers identical to Superman's. At the same time, Superman was struck by a different ray which

stripped him of his powers. Superman eventually realized that the "ray" was actually a spray of Kryptonite dust, and regained his powers by changing into an uncontaminated costume. Together he and the Batman captured Professor Pender; shortly afterwards, Batman's powers faded.

Page 12
Panel 3: Mulled sack is a type of spiced white wine imported to England from the Canary Islands and Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Twilight prepares to throw her "lunarang" at the fleeing villains. This crescent-shaped weapon is similar to Batman's batarang.

Panels 4 and 6: Professor Night's inability to control his powers are again very similar to the problems faced by Batman in the aforementioned story in *World's Finest Comics* #77.

At the right we see a trophy identified as "Killer Oysters used by the Walrus and the Carpenter, 1958." The Walrus and the Carpenter, two enemies of Professor Night, are characters from a poem by Lewis Carroll. Their "Killer Oysters" may be inspired by the giant "animal-machines" used by a trio of fifties Batman villains, the Fox, the Shark, and the Vulture, also known as the Terrible Trio. The Terrible Trio were criminal inventors clad in business suits with animal head masks who used vehicles based on living creatures to carry out a series of spectacular robberies. They first appeared in 1958 (*Detective Comics* #253). A more contemporary version of the Terrible Trio recently was introduced in the *Doctor Mid-Nite* mini-series (1999).

Page 13
Panel 1: Note that the Night Files computer is operated much like an old-fashioned telephone switchboard.

Panel 3: Two more trophies are visible here:

A "hypnotic music box" used by the villain Evening Primrose in 1955
False countenances sloughed off by Fakeface.

Panel 6: Note the lasciviously winking figure on the Knave & Toff billboard. "Gentlemen's magazine publishing," indeed!

Page 14
Panel 2: Even at the height of the fifties giant-prop fascination, it's unlikely that we would have seen a giant bottle of Jim Beam in a Code-approved DC comic book.

Panel 3: Jack-a-Dandy's Cane Cannon is reminiscent of the gimmicked umbrellas used by Batman's enemy the Penguin. The Penguin's umbrellas incorporated a variety of weapons including guns, flamethrowers, and poison gas sprayers.

Panel 5: Professor Night and Supreme take each other's places. Superman and Batman often pretended to be each other; the first such masquerade took place in 1952 (*Superman* #76).

Page 16
Panel 3: S-1 is repairing one of the Suprematons damaged by Billy Friday in issue #45.

S-1 says that Billy Friday, last seen trapped in the Prism World of Amalynth, had a disagreement with Szazs, the Sprite Supreme, and is now in the 19th Dimension. Szazs, who we will see in issue #53, is the counterpart of Mister Mxyzptlk, the magical imp from the Fifth Dimension who has pestered Superman since the mid-forties. Mxyzptlk (originally spelled "Mxyztplk") first appeared in the Superman newspaper comic strip in February 1944 and made his comic book debut shortly thereafter in *Superman* #30.

Page 17
Panel 1: More of the imaginary creatures in Supreme's Mythopoeic Zoo are visible here:

A unicorn
A dragon.

Page 18
Panel 1: The icons of Supreme's mind are:

Hilda's drawing (from issue #42)
Judy Jordan
Radar dragging young Ethan away from the Supremium meteor (as shown in flashback in issue #42)
The intersecting Earths Supreme saw when he returned to Earth (in issue #41)
Darius Dax's Tremendoid (seen in issue #43)
Diana Dane
Squeak the Supremouse.

Panel 2: The "archetypal images and cultural symbols" shown here are:

A banner with the Star of David (probably intended to be the flag of Israel)

Marilyn Monroe with her skirt blowing up, a famous image from the 1955 film *The Seven-Year Itch*
The mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion
A tapestry with Chinese characters
An ornate crucifix
A Coca-Cola bottle
A baseball
Adolf Hitler with his arm raised in the Nazi salute
The planet Earth
A row of tanks.

Panel 3: Supreme sees the representation of "the Janus-like dual mind" of Professor Night. This suggests that Professor Night may have something of a split personality, which is reminiscent of Marvel's Moon Knight. Moon Knight, who at one time had *four* separate identities, suffered psychological problems from the strain of maintaining his various personas.

Page 19
Panel 1: Giant props like the ones shown here were a trademark of the Batman strip in the forties and fifties, generally attributed to artist Dick Sprang. Giant versions of objects ranging from coffee cups to revolvers were a common sight in Gotham City, usually explained as being advertising or display pieces. The most interesting aspect of the giant props was that they were always fully functional: if you could find an appropriately sized bullet to load into the giant revolver, it would actually fire. The objects shown here are:

A stethoscope. Supreme wonders if this is symbolic of the doctors who diagnosed Taylor Kendal's case of Porphyria's Complaint. Porphyria is a liver disease that prevents the blood from manufacturing heme, the iron-containing component of hemoglobin. The disease causes extreme sensitivity to sunlight; other symptoms include pallid skin, excessive hair growth, allergic reactions to certain chemicals (including those in garlic), and receding gums, which makes the teeth appear elongated. Some historians now suspect that the symptoms of porphyria may have given rise to European lore surrounding vampires and werewolves.
A giant typewriter. For some reason, the typewriter has become the archetypical giant prop, and whenever modern artists include enormous props as a nostalgic gesture (e.g., the origin of the Riddler as presented by Neil Gaiman and Matt Wagner in 1989's *Secret Origins Special* #1) they always use a giant typewriter.

Panel 2: Chief O'Brien is presumably the counterpart of Commissioner Gordon, Batman's long-time ally and liaison to the police department, who debuted in Batman's very first adventure in May 1939 (*Detective Comics* #27).

Panel 4: Here we see several of Professor Night's enemies. From left to right:

A figure with tusks, whose tufts of beard give him a certain resemblance to Batman's nemesis Ra's al Ghul.
A figure armed with a scythe dressed as the Grim Reaper; this may be intended to represent several different Batman enemies who adopted similar guises, including the unnamed costumed villain of *Batman* #237 and the Reaper, a bloodthirsty scythe-wielding vigilante who Batman fought in the early part of his career (as shown in the "Batman: Year Two" storyline that appeared in *Detective Comics* #575-#578).
The Lounge Lizard, possibly based on Batman's reptilian-skinned foe Killer Croc; Lounge Lizard next appears in *Youngblood* #2.
An unnamed figure dressed as a butcher and holding a vicious-looking knife.
A faceless figure who is presumably the villain Fakeface. Based on the available evidence, Fakeface's ability is to disguise himself as others, later sloughing off faces he no longer needs; his image here and his brief cameo in *Youngblood* #2 suggest that he has no real face. Fakeface resembles Steve Ditko's faceless hero the Question (although the Question's peculiar featureless face was a mask), while his costume is reminiscent of the question mark-covered suit worn by Batman's enemy the Riddler. Other characters with similar powers include Richard Benson, the pulp hero known as the Avenger, who could reshape his features to impersonate others, and Batman's shape-shifting enemy Clayface.

Page 20
Panel 1: The glyph of Hulver Ramik appears in place of Taylor Kendal's soul: a metaphysical graffito left by the being who stole it.

Page 21
Panel 4: Hulver Ramik, the Slaver of Souls, is described as a resident of the "Dimension of the Dead." He is an enemy of the Allies, who, according to the Night Files was first encountered in a case called "The Puzzle of the Paralyzed Planet" in September 1964.

Janet Planet, who we will see in issue #49, was an adventurer who occasionally worked with the Allies.

Page 22
Panel 2: Supreme refers to Ramik having been swallowed by a creature called the Scarlet Sphere. This incident is mentioned again in issue #48, although it is not explained in any detail.

Page 24: Several of the former members of the Allies have gathered in response to Ethan's summons. Present here are the following heroes:

Glory
The Patriot (formerly known as the Super-Patriot)
Mer-Master
Diehard
Mighty Man.

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Issue #48 "Just Imagine"

Page 1: Glory arrives at the Citadel Supreme

Page 2: The Allies are reunited for the first time since the early seventies.

Note that Mer-Master greatly resembles the current version of Aquaman in his costume, hair, and beard. In his previous appearances in flashback C with shorter, darker hair emphasizing his pointed ears C he more strongly resembled Marvel's Prince Namor, the Submariner.

Page 3
Panel 1: Glory explains that she was late because she was waiting for an updraft. Glory, like the Silver Age Wonder Woman, can glide on air currents, but cannot actually fly. Since her revision by artist George Perez in 1987, Wonder Woman has been able to fly under her own power, a gift from the Greek gods.

Note that Mer-Master, like Aquaman in his recent appearances, is quite testy. Over the years, Aquaman has become increasingly short-tempered with air-breathers for their pollution of the seas; not coincidentally, this characterization has also made him more like Marvel's Prince Namor (of whom Aquaman originally was an imitation). Namor, who debuted in *Marvel Comics* #1 (1939), was comics' original anti-hero, and consequently a more interesting character than his pallid DC imitation.

Panel 2: Mer-Master laments his former headquarters, the underwater Mer-Cave, and its seashell throne. DC's Aquaman once had a similar headquarters; like Marvel's Submariner, Aquaman is royalty and at several points has served as the ruler of the undersea kingdom of Atlantis.

Panel 3: Diehard remarks that he feels "a simulation of enthusiasm." As shown in the *Judgment Day* mini-series, Diehard is a cyborg who retains little semblance of his original humanity.

Panel 4: The Allies were formed in 1960. The Justice League of America, the Silver Age super-team on which the Allies are based, first met in the March 1959 issue of *Brave and the Bold* (#28).

Page 4: The Allies' first foe was Florax the Dominator, an intelligent orchid from interstellar space who could enslave humans with her scent. Florax is reminiscent of Starro the Conqueror, a giant, intelligent starfish, who was the first enemy faced by the JLA. Starro could produce miniature versions of himself that allowed Starro to control a victim's mind when the starfish was attached to their face.

This "cover illustration" is closely modeled on the cover of *Brave and the Bold* #28 (the first appearance of the JLA and of Starro) by Mike Sekowsky and Murphy Anderson, down to the lettering style and the Allies logo, which is highly reminiscent of the original Justice League of America logo.

The "Funny Book Federation Decal of Decency" is based on the "Approved by the Comics Code Authority" seal carried by most mainstream comics from 1954 to the late eighties.

Glory recalls that Florax was defeated with a high-tech herbicide. Similarly, Starro was vanquished after the JLA's mascot, Snapper Carr, discovered the Starfish Conqueror was vulnerable to common garden lime.

Page 5
Panel 2: Supreme is informed that Billy Friday, who we learned last issue had been banished to the 19th Dimension by Szazs, the Sprite Supreme, was rescued by Emerpus, the Reverse Supreme. Emerpus (which is "Supreme" spelled backwards) is the counterpart of Bizarro, a weird, imperfect duplicate of Superman who followed a strange code of backwards logic. Bizarro was created by Lex Luthor in *Action Comics* #254 (July 1959). (Earlier versions of the character appeared more-or-less simultaneously in *Superboy* #68 and the Superman newspaper comic strip in 1958, although neither was created by Luthor and both were destroyed at the end of their respective stories).

Emerpus has taken Billy to his home in the Backwards Zone, which is analogous to Htrae, the Bizarro World. Htrae was a distant planet colonized by Bizarro #1 and his mate, Bizarro-Lois, in April 1960 (*Action Comics* #263). Bizarro reshaped the world into a cube and populated it with duplicates of himself and Bizarro-Lois. The civilization that developed on Htrae was a bizarre mirror image of life on Earth; its central philosophy, as Bizarro #1 once remarked, held that "Is big crime to make anything perfect on Bizarro World!"

Panel 5: Glory exclaims "Merciful Demeter!" Demeter, a goddess associated with the Earth and with agriculture, is Glory's mother. Similarly, Wonder Woman often exclaimed, "Great Hera!"

The symbols visible here include:

The logo of the cable music channel MTV (shown reversed)
The stylized H logo of the Honda Motor Corporation
The McDonald's logo
The distinctive camel silhouette of Camel brand cigarettes.

Page 6

Panel 1: More iconic symbols are visible here:

The Warner Brothers corporate logo (note that DC Comics, publisher of Superman, is a part of the Time-Warner corporation)
James Dean, an American film actor of the mid-fifties
The Coca-Cola logo
Gene Simmons, the lead singer of the band KISS, in his full stage makeup
A Muppet, one of the puppet characters created by the late Jim Henson.

Panel 2: More symbols:

The Pepsi-Cola logo
The Michelin Tire Man
A slogan in the Japanese *katakana* alphabet: VBQW (pronounced "yoshimura").

Page 7
Panel 4: Glory recalls that she took the minutes at Allies meetings. When Wonder Woman joined the Justice Society in 1943 (in *All-Star Comics* #11), she became their secretary, taking minutes and maintaining case files.

Page 8
The "cover illustration" of *Allies* #16, "Servants of the Soul-Slaver," is reminiscent of the cover of *Justice League of America* #3. That cover, drawn by Murphy Anderson, showed the JLA as unwilling oarsmen of a boat commanded by the issue's villain, the alien tyrant Kanjar Ro of the planet Dhor.

Hulver Ramik the Slaver of Souls, bears some resemblance to the Justice League of America villain Despero, a red-skinned, three-eyed mutant from the world of Kalanor who first appeared in *Justice League of America* #1 (October-November 1960).

Glory expresses her irritation at "the slavery thing," remarking that "it seemed like...I was getting tied up every other month!" While heroines in bondage is a cliche dating back to the pulps, bondage and slavery were major themes in the forties Wonder Woman strip. Wonder Woman and her fellow Amazons were compelled to wear iron bracelets as a reminder of their past subjugation by men; if Wonder Woman's wrists were bound by a man, she lost her strength and was unable to free herself. Many of Wonder Woman's enemies practiced slavery, but bondage was only shown as evil if practice by cruel or evil masters. Indeed, submitting to "loving bondage" on Paradise Island resulted in the reform and redemption of Wonder Woman's forties arch-nemesis, the Nazi spy Paula Von

Gunther. After the death in 1947 of William Marston Moulton, Wonder Woman's creator and writer, the bondage themes were downplayed.

Page 9
Panel 2: The "archetypes and symbols" shown include:

The ankh, an Egyptian symbol of life
A Latin cross
The Star of David
A Celtic cross.

Panel 3: Supreme remarks that this realm of ideas was the birthplace of "every angel, demon, god, or monster mankind ever dreamed of." The concept of a unified idea-space shared by all intelligent creatures is very similar to Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series for DC, in which the title character rules over the Dreaming, an amorphous realm made of and encompassing the dreams of all sentient life. The Dreaming was apparently the source for human nightmares and a home for many deities and mythological characters.

Panel 4: Glory exclaims, "Great Athena." Athena is the Greek goddess of wisdom; a tendency to invoke the names of goddess is another trait Glory shares with Wonder Woman, although Wonder Woman was partial to Hera (wife of Zeus and mother of the gods) and Aphrodite (goddess of love and the patron of the Amazons of Paradise Island).

Page 10
Panel 1: Mer-Master refers to the monsters as "Squids from the Id." This phrase is a play on "creatures from the id," the monsters in the fifties science fiction film *Forbidden Planet*, which was loosely based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Panel 2: Glory comments on the degree to which the Super-Patriot, originally a human hero analogous to Captain America, has given up his humanity as more and more of him has been replaced with cybernetic parts.

Page 11
Panel 2: Here Supreme's eye-beams (his Stare Supreme) are described as "plasma beams." Plasma is a collection of charged particles that possesses some of the qualities of a gas but is a good conductor of electricity; plasma forms the outer layers of a star's atmosphere. As previously noted, Superman's heat vision originally was described as a side-effect of his x-ray vision; in current continuity, his eye beams are essentially lasers operating in the infrared frequencies.

Panel 3: Supreme refers to the "time door" which opened between the forties and sixties allowing the Allies to meet themselves as the Allied Supermen of America. Similarly, starting in the early sixties, the Justice League of America frequently met their counterparts in the Justice Society of America, although their meetings were accomplished by traveling to an alternate dimension, not through time.

In 1961, in *The Flash* #123, it was established that the heroes of the forties, including the original Flash (Jay Garrick), lived on a parallel world called Earth-Two, while the modern heroes, including Barry Allen, the Silver Age Flash, lived on Earth-One. The two worlds occupied the same space but vibrated at different frequencies so that they never intersected. Barry Allen, who could control his own internal vibrations, discovered that he could travel to Earth-Two by tuning in its particular vibrational frequency. There, he met his forties counterpart, who in Barry's world had only existed as a comic book character (it was further suggested that writer Gardner Fox, who had penned most of the Flash's Golden Age adventures, wrote the stories based on psychic impressions that he received from Earth-Two in his dreams). Later, in *The Flash* #137, Barry met Jay Garrick's comrades of the Justice Society of America, who came out of retirement to help the two Flashes defeat the villain Vandal Savage.

Not long afterward, the Justice Society arranged its first meeting with Earth-One's Justice League of America (in *JLA* #21-#22), teaming up to fight a group of super-villains from both worlds. This afforded the modern heroes the opportunity to meet their Golden Age counterparts; for instance, the original Hawkman (Carter Hall, the reincarnation of an Egyptian prince) met the modern Hawkman (Katar Hol, a policeman from the planet Thanagar). The JLA and JSA heroes were separate individuals and not different temporal versions of each other; however, several of the JLA members, whose adventures had been published continuously from the forties through the sixties, had counterparts on both Earths. Therefore, there were older and younger versions of Wonder Woman, Robin (whose Earth-Two counterpart was now an adult), Superman, Green Arrow, and Batman.

Page 12
The "cover" of *Allies* #21 ("The Cross-Time Catastrophe") is modeled closely on the cover of *Justice League of America* #21, which was drawn by Mike Sekowsky and Murphy Anderson. That issue showed the first teaming of the Justice League with Earth-Two's Justice Society of America, in a story called "Crisis on Earth-One!" Its cover featured a banner proclaiming, "Back After 12 Years! The Legendary Super-Stars of the Justice Society of America!"

The Allies' first meeting with their forties selves is said to have been brought about by the forties villain Doctor Clock and Glory's sixties enemy the Time Tinker. In the forties, the Justice Society of America had a time-traveling foe named Per Degaton, first encountered in 1947 (*All-Star Comics* #35), who made four attempts to conquer the world by altering the past. In the most convoluted of those efforts, he time-traveled from 1947 to the parallel world of Earth-Prime in 1963, and then to

Earth-2 in 1942, where he attempted to conquer the world with nuclear weapons stolen from Earth-Prime. Degaton ultimately was thwarted by the combined efforts of the Justice League, the modern Justice Society, and the wartime All-Star Squadron, which included younger versions of some of the Justice Society members (*Justice League of America* #207-#209 and *All-Star Squadron* #14-#15). Wonder Woman, of whom Glory is a counterpart, had a time-traveling enemy called the Time Master, who first appeared in *Wonder Woman* #101 (1958).

The JLA had several time-traveling enemies, most notably the Lord of Time, who first appeared in *Justice League of America* #10 (1962).

The members of the Allied Supermen shown on the cover are, from left to right:

Black Hand
Jack O'Lantern
Alley Cat
Waxman
Doc Rocket
Storybook Smith.

Supreme remarks that "we met ourselves every year." Similarly, the meetings between the JLA and JSA became an annual event for more than two decades.

Supreme mentions that the Allies and the Allied Supermen fought "evil duplicate parallel world Allies." In their second team-up in *Justice League of America* #29-#30 (1964), the JLA and the JSA visited Earth-Three, where all the counterparts of the Justice League were supervillains, banded together as the Crime Syndicate of America. In Supreme's universe, a similar parallel world, called Contra-Earth, is mentioned in issue #52B.

Page 13
Panel 1: Glory says that the Allies broke up in the early seventies following the departure of Supreme and the disappearance of Professor Night, and had no more team-ups with their forties selves. In the DC universe, the JLA/JSA team-ups continued through the eighties, with their final meeting taking place during the Crisis on Infinite Earths in 1985 (*Justice League of America* #244 and *Infinity, Inc.* #19).

(It should be noted that as a result of the Crisis, the various alternate Earths were combined into a single unified world. In the post-Crisis universe, the Justice Society and Justice League exist on the same world; they still teamed up, but they did not leave their own dimension.)

The original Justice League of America was disbanded in *Justice League of America* #258-#261 (1987) following the deaths of several of its members; by then, most of the original team had already departed. The League was reorganized as the Justice League International a few months later; it was recently reformed a third time, reuniting most of the original members.

Panel 2: Mer-Master refers to his "sonar senses." Originally, Mer-Master's DC counterpart Aquaman had no special sensory powers other than being able to communicate with sea life; in recent years, however, he has developed formidable telepathic and extrasensory abilities.

Page 14: This is Hulver Ramik's Alcatraz of the Soul, the otherworldly prison in which he keeps the stolen souls of his victims prior to resale.

Glory exclaims "by the sweet elixir of the underworld!" She may be referring to the Waters of Oblivion, which ran in the river Lethe in the underworld of Greek myth and which caused the dead to forget their former lives. The second story in issue #52B describes an encounter Kid Supreme and Taylor Kendall (who later became Professor Knight) and the legendary river, which ran beneath the caverns Taylor later used to house his headquarters, the Halls of Night.

Page 15
Panel 1: Note that the dialogue of the cyborg Patriot is very similar to the clipped speech patterns of Rorschach, one of the characters in Moore's *Watchmen*, and to the Surgeon General, the bizarre cyborg villain of Frank Miller's *Give Me Liberty*.

Panel 2: Visible here are the imprisoned souls of a number of other sixties heroes. From left to right:

Spacehunter: an extraterrestrial lawman who is strongly reminiscent of J'Onn J'Onzz, the Martian Manhunter, a green-skinned hero from the planet Mars. J'Onn first appeared in *Detective Comics* #225 (1955) and later became a stalwart member of the Justice League in most of its incarnations.
Professor Night. Note that this is Professor Night's soul, not his body, which, as seen last issue, still rests in the Halls of Night beneath Kendall Manor.
Twilight. As with her mentor Professor Night, her body is still in the Halls of Night.
Polyman: a hero with the ability to stretch himself. The first and most famous stretchable hero is Plastic Man, the creation of the great Jack Cole, who first appeared in Quality Comics' *Police Comics* #1 (1940). Plastic Man later became a part of the DC stable, and currently is a member of the Justice League. Other heroes with similar powers include DC's Ralph Dibny, the Elongated Man, and Marvel's Mister Fantastic (Reed Richards), the leader of the Fantastic Four.
The Fisherman: as previously mentioned, a counterpart of Green Arrow who uses a fishing pole rather than a bow as a weapon.

Panel 3: Supreme says that every vanished sixties hero appears to be imprisoned in Ramik's domain. As we will see in the next issue, Alan Moore used this device to introduce many new heroes, most of them based on DC characters, who did not have previously established counterparts in the Maximum Press/Awesome universe.

Page 16

The former Allies recall the Fisherman: a playboy and "angling champion" who became a crime fighter along with his partner Skipper. His real name was Bryce Bristow. The Fisherman is analogous to Green Arrow, a crime-fighting archer who debuted in *More Fun Comics* #73 in 1942. Green Arrow was playboy Oliver Queen, who became an expert archer after being stranded on a remote island where he built a bow for hunting. Green Arrow's sidekick was Speedy, secretly Queen's ward Roy Harper. It should also be noted that DC has a villain called the Fisherman, who also used a fishing pole as a weapon; he first appeared in *Aquaman* #21 (1965).

The Fisherman joined the Allies after helping them to defeat the Moth-Empress, a "dominatrix" from another world who made the Allies her mind-slaves. Green Arrow joined the Justice League of America in *Justice League of America* #4 (1961); the cover for *Allies* #28 ("Minions of the Moth-Empress) is loosely based on the cover of that issue. The Moth-Empress is based on the JLA villain Zazzala, the Queen Bee, an alien monarch from the planet Qorll who could control the minds of others with her "radiation rod." She first encountered the JLA in *Justice League of America* (1963).

Page 17

Panel 1: Other vanished heroes mentioned as being imprisoned by Ramik include:

The Stormbirds: a group modeled on the Blackhawks, a squadron of heroic aviators who first appeared in Quality Comics' *Military Comics* series in the forties. Their series was the longest-running of the many aviator strips of the war years, surviving until 1969. They have been revived several times since then, and are now part of the DC universe. The Stormbirds' leader is Jim Stormbird, a counterpart of Blackhawk himself.
The Conquerors of the Uncanny: a team of explorers and heroes modeled on the Challengers of the Unknown, a band of adventurers created for DC by Jack Kirby in 1958. The Conquerors and their leader, Dr. Daniel "Blacky" Conqueror, play a minor role in the *Judgment Day* mini-series.
Jungle Jack Flynn: a jungle adventure hero based on DC's Congo Bill, who had a long-running feature in the forties and fifties beginning in *More Fun Comics* #56 (1940).

Panel 2: The Allies split into small groups, "like old times." As previously noted, most JSA and JLA adventures split the group into smaller teams.

Page 18
The cover of *Allies* #24 is based loosely on that of *Justice League of America* #9 (1962), "The Origin of the Justice League," which showed the JLA transformed into trees by an alien meteorite.

The villains the Patriot mentions C the Basilisk, Ecto-Man, and the Wizard of Blizzard C each of whom caused bizarre transformations of the JLA, are reminiscent of the villains of *JLA* #9, aliens from the planet Appellax. The Appellaxians, who took the form of creatures of stone, glass, mercury, gold, fire, wood, and crystal, attempted to turn humans into stone, glass, etc., before they were defeated by the heroes, who decided to join together as the Justice League.

The Patriot remarks that Mighty Man has a separate human identity. This is another similarity between Mighty Man and the original Captain Marvel; Marvel's alter ego was a young boy named Billy Batson, who possessed no special powers other than the ability to become Captain Marvel.

Page 20
Panel 1: Here we see more imprisoned heroes:

Blake Baron, the Occult Agent. As we will learn in *Judgment Day,* Blake Baron was a Marine Corps sergeant during World War Two, the leader of a unit called the "Roaring Roughnecks;" after the war he was promoted to the rank of Major and attached to a secret government agency called the Veil, investigating supernatural phenomena. Blake Baron is modeled on Marvel's Nick Fury, a World War Two veteran (the leader of the "Howling Commandos") who later became the Director of an international espionage organization called S.H.I.E.L.D.
Janet Planet, a female adventurer whose costume is strongly reminiscent of DC's sixties science fiction hero Adam Strange. Strange, who appeared in *Mystery in Space* beginning in 1959, was an Earthman who was transported across interstellar space to become the champion of the planet Rann; he was a frequent ally of the Justice League of America. Interestingly, a female version of Adam Strange, the hero's daughter Aleaa, appeared in DC's *Kingdom Come* (1996), set in the future of the DC universe; except for the colors of their costumes, she and Janet Planet have a very similar appearance.
A man dressed in 18th century garb, not identified.

Page 22
The cover of *Allies* #37, "The Deadly Daubs of Prismalo the Painter," is loosely based on that of *Justice League of America* #1 (1960), which shows the villain Despero playing chess with the Flash. The villain snickers, "I've got this game rigged so that every time the Flash makes a move, a member of the Justice League disappears from the face of the Earth!"

Page 23

Panel 2: As Supreme mentioned in the last issue, Hulver Ramik was absorbed by a being called the Crimson Sphere in 1966.

Panel 4: Glory exclaims “Sweet Selene.” Selene is the Greek goddess of the moon.

Page 24
Supreme’s enemy Optilux returns.

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Issue #49 "There is a Light That Never Goes Out"

The title of this issue is borrowed from a 1986 song of the same name, performed by the Smiths (81986 Morrissey/Marr Songs Ltd.).

Page 1
Panel 1: Optilux refers to his apparent suicide in 1969, when he transformed himself into a "higher form of radiance."

Panel 6: Optilux has "imagineered" a device called the Rapture Engine, intended to convert the entire universe into coherent light. "Rapture" originally meant the transportation of a soul to heaven, which, at least in Optilux's view, is what the device is intended to do. "Imagineering" is a term for the creation of objects through pure thought; the term was defined in the framing sequence to *Judgment Day: Aftermath,* a gushing tribute to artist Gil Kane.

Page 3
Panel 2: Mighty Man prepares to try an "energy flash" from his wrist-bands, which are very similar to those of Marvel's extraterrestrial Captain Marvel (Mar-Vell).

Pages 4-5
The eerie hotel room Supreme and Glory find themselves in here is strongly reminiscent of the finale of Stanley Kubrick's 1968 science fiction film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in which astronaut David Bowman finds himself in a similar (and equally artificial) hotel.

Page 6
Panel 2: Glory remarks that she is the daughter of a goddess; as previously mentioned, she is the daughter of the Earth goddess Demeter.

Page 7
Panel 3: Supreme refers to his departure from Earth in 1969.

Page 8
This flashback story, "How Low Burns the Lantern," is modeled on the work of writer/artist Jim Starlin in the mid-seventies. It is particularly reminiscent of a 1975 story in *Warlock* #10-#11, in which Adam Warlock's evil future self, the Magus, forced him to confront a bizarre being called the In-Betweener, who was destined to drive Warlock mad. During the late seventies, Starlin brought psychedelic art techniques and cryptic pseudo-mysticism to the Marvel universe cosmology created by Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko in the sixties. His "cosmic" stories marked a new effort to appeal

to older, college-educated readers rather than the children and adolescents who made up comics' traditional market.

Page 9
Panel 1: Supreme recalls his departure from Earth in 1969 in a brief flashback to events alluded to in issue #46.

Panel 2: By this time, Ethan Crane's parents are dead. As previously noted, Superboy's adoptive parents Jonathan and Martha Kent passed away shortly before Superboy left Smallville to attend college. Supreme's parents apparently survived until Supreme was an adult.

The references to Judy Jordan learning kung fu and becoming involved with women's rights refer to efforts to introduce current social issues to Lois Lane's comic book series (*Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*) during the early seventies. The most infamous example of this period was the story "I am Curious (Black)" in *Lois Lane* #106, in which Lois subjected herself to a ray that temporarily altered her skin color so that she could spend a day as a black woman.

This period also marked the return of Lois's independence and self-reliance: while she had been a bold, courageous, and headstrong career woman in the thirties and forties, by the mid-fifties her primary concern was persuading Superman to marry her, and she had become almost as mild-mannered and neurotic as Clark Kent. The seventies saw Lois abandon her dreams of marriage and take charge of her own life. She did in fact learn a martial art, the Kryptonian style called Kuklor, taught to her in the Bottle City of Kandor.

Supreme also notes that Dax and Optilux are dead. As revealed in issue #42, Dax was stricken with cancer as a result of his exposure to Supremium, and died in 1968. Optilux converted himself to pure energy in 1969.

Panel 3: Supreme wanders the "Mausoleum World" of Amalynth, the barren surface of the world transformed into coherent light by Optilux (and which is now contained in a prism which Supreme guards in his Citadel Supreme). The empty landscape is reminiscent of the crater on the planet Krypton where the city of Kandor stood before being stolen by the villain Brainiac, as originally shown in *Action Comics* #242. (It is worth noting that in current Superman continuity, Kandor was not stolen by Brainiac; it was destroyed thousands of years ago, during the last days of Krypton's great wars, by an atomic blast detonated by the terrorist group Black Zero (as seen in 1987 in *World of Krypton* (2nd series) #3).)

Page 10

Panel 2 - inset: Supreme says that Jack O'Lantern has been missing in action since 1950. The Spectre's strip in *More Fun Comics* ended in 1945 when it was displaced by, ironically enough, the new *Superboy* feature (*More Fun Comics* #101). The Spectre's last Golden Age appearance was with the Justice Society in *All-Star Comics* #23, later that year; the character did not appear again until 1966 (*Showcase* #60).

Supreme refers to Jack O'Lantern as a "murdered news hound;" Jack O'Lantern was once a human reporter named Jack Bradley. The Spectre was originally a police detective named Jim Corrigan, slain by gangsters in 1940 only to be resurrected by a higher power as an avenger of evil (*More Fun Comics* #52).

Panel 3: Jack O'Lantern explained that Jack Bradley was inhabited by "the power of the living lantern" which hangs "above the gateway of reality." Similarly, later Spectre stories revealed that the Spectre, although tied to the spirit of a mortal man, was an inhuman spirit of vengeance and instrument of God's wrath. In the early eighties, Alan Moore established that the Spectre, now nearly omnipotent, had withdrawn from Earth to stand guard over Heaven and Hell. In 1984 the Swamp Thing, traveling to the afterworlds in search of the soul of his friend Abigail Holland, was forced to seek the Spectre's permission to enter Hell (*Saga of the Swamp Thing* Annual #2), and two years later, the Spectre confronted the dreadful Shadow Creature that menaced Heaven itself (*Swamp Thing* #50). Following his failure in that mission, he was sent to once more walk the Earth (*Spectre* (3rd series) #1).

Page 12
Panels 1-3: To battle Supreme, Jack O'Lantern disperses his ectoplasm into several duplicates of himself, a feat Supreme describes as "polylocation." There are several superheroes who can create duplicates of themselves, including Triplicate Girl (later known as Duo Damsel) of the Legion of Superheroes and Jamie Maddox, X-Factor's Multiple Man. During Alan Moore's run on his series, the Swamp Thing also developed this power, learning how to grow duplicates of himself from the surrounding flora.

Page 15
Panel 2: Jack O'Lantern muses sadly that Supreme learned of the "terrible abyss of existence" before he was ready. For all its cosmic grandeur, Jim Starlin's comics milieu was an essentially pessimistic one: as previously mentioned, his hero Adam Warlock was forced to destroy his own soul to save the universe, while the cosmic awareness of Captain Marvel ultimately served only to allow him to accept his own death from cancer in 1982 (in *The Death of Captain Marvel* graphic novel).

Page 17

Panels 3-4: Supreme uses his Shout Supreme, just as Suprema did in subduing the muggers in the beginning of issue #47.

Page 18
Panel 1: More heroes:

Mark Tyme, Dimensioneer: a counterpart of Rip Hunter, Time Master, a time-traveling hero who starred in 29 issues of his own series in the early sixties. He has appeared sporadically in other DC titles since then; he recently became one of the Linear Men, a self-appointed task force dedicated to preventing interference with the course of history (*Superman* (2nd series) #61).
Jim Stormbird: as previously noted, a counterpart of Blackhawk, the leader of the Blackhawks. Before the eighties, Blackhawk's real name was never revealed; the 1987 Howard Chaykin series *Blackhawk: Blood and Iron*, and the short-lived monthly series that followed it, gave his real name as Janos Prohaska, a Polish national. More recent stories have treated that series as apocryphal (e.g., the Blackhawks' appearance in the mini-series *JLA Year One*), once again leaving Blackhawk's real name a question.
Blake Baron
Professor Night
Twilight
Polyman
Spacehunter
Janet Planet.

Page 19
Panel 1: Dr. Daniel "Blacky" Conqueror is the leader of the Conquerors of the Uncanny. We will see more of him, and learn something of his background, in *Judgment Day* #2.

Panel 3: Professor Night throws a black-out bomb. Professor Night and Twilight's weapons are very similar to the black-out bombs used by the Golden Age hero Doctor Mid-Nite. Doctor Mid-Nite, who could see in the dark but was blind in daylight, used the bombs to plunge his opponents into darkness, where he could dispatch them at his leisure; a new Doctor Mid-Nite, with similar powers and weapons, was recently introduced in the *Doctor Mid-Nite* mini-series (February 1999).

Spacehunter projects destructive eye blasts. Spacehunter's DC counterpart the Martian Manhunter has inconsistently been shown to possess "Martian vision" similar to Superman's heat vision.

Page 20
Panel 1: Janet Planet uses her "gamma gun." Janet's DC counterpart Adam Strange, who had no super-powers, was armed with a similar ray gun.

Page 21
Panel 1: As previously mentioned, the Golden Age heroes Doc Rocket and the Alley Cat, two former members of the Allied Supermen of America, were married in the Citadel Supreme in 1953, an event attended by most of the active superheroes of that time.

Panel 2: Supreme infuriates Optilux by telling him that he has reversed the Photoplasmic Converter and restored the Prism World of Amalynth to its original state. As we saw in issues #43 and #45, this is a bluff: the Prism World remains in Supreme's Souvenir Gallery Supreme, and he has not yet discovered a way to restore it to normal.
Page 22
Panel 1: Supreme captures Optilux by imprisoning him in a prism, just as Optilux trapped the worlds he once transformed into coherent light.

Panel 3: Conqueror Island is the base of operations for the Conquerors of the Uncanny. As revealed in *Judgment Day* #2, a strange fluke of evolution allows dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures to survive on Conqueror Island, which was discovered in the early part of the 20th century by Professor Conqueror, grandfather of Conqueror leader Daniel "Blacky" Conqueror. It is reminiscent of Monster Island, a similar locale in the DC universe which first appeared in *Star Spangled War Stories* #90 (1960).

Stormbird Mountain is the home base of the Stormbirds. The Blackhawks, the Quality/DC characters on whom the Stormbirds are based, made their headquarters on a remote atoll called Blackhawk Island.

Page 23 "Everyone's home safely." As we will see next issue, and in the *Judgment Day* crossover, the vanished heroes of the sixties will shortly be making a comeback.

Page 24
Panel 2: Suprema makes a crack about Glory's age. As shown in *Judgment Day* #2, Glory is a demigod whose birth preceded the existence of the Earth, making her approximately four billion years old.

Note that Supreme refers to Ethan Crane in the third person. Superman occasionally referred to Clark Kent in the third person, an interesting commentary on his relationship to his alternate identity.

Panel 4: Radar clearly does *not* approve of Supreme's romance with Diana Dane. The consequences of Radar's disapproval will be shown in issue #60, presuming that story eventually sees print.

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Issue #50 "A Love Supreme"

Page 1
Panel 1: The newscaster announces that Professor Night and Twilight are back on the streets. The Professor and his young assistant apparently have chosen to resume their crime-fighting careers after being rescued from the realm of Hulver Ramik (as seen last issue).

Panel 2: The Fisherman and Skipper also have returned to action in Coast City. The Fisherman and Skipper's DC counterparts, Green Arrow and Speedy, made their home in Star City; there also was a Coast City in the DC Universe which was once home to Hal Jordan, the Silver Age Green Lantern. Coast City was originally intended to represent Los Angeles, but was later established as a separate entity located along the California coast north of Santa Barbara. Coast City and its seven million inhabitants were destroyed by alien attackers in 1993 (*Superman* # 80).

Panel 3: The news also reports that Jim Stormbird have reported for duty at the United Nations. As seen last issue Jim Stormbird is the leader of the Stormbirds, a squadron of heroic aviators of the World War Two era. The Blackhawks, however, were generally been an independent organization not attached to the United Nations, although in the eighties *Blackhawk* series they worked as CIA operatives after the end of the war.

Diana's earrings are figures of Krazy Kat and Ignatz the mouse, the main characters of George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*, a classic newspaper comic strip that first appeared in 1916.

Page 2: The title of this issue, "A Love Supreme," is both a pun on the name of our hero and a reference to a famous 1965 album by jazz saxophonist John Coltrane.

Page 3
Panel 1: On the wall is an illustration from the comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* by Windsor McKay. *Little Nemo* was one of the earliest color newspaper strips, first published in 1905.

Ethan refers to the Allies' meeting as a "class reunion," an interesting euphemism for the cosmic battle of last issue.

The book on Diana's coffee table appears to be the 1987 novel *Mama* by author Toni Morrison.

Panel 3: Note that there is a figurine of Krazy Kat on the shelf next to Diana's stereo.

Panel 4: Ethan and Diana discuss the status of Billy Friday, who was rescued from the Nineteenth Dimension by Emerpus, the Reverse Supreme and who is now in the 25th century staying with

Zayla Zarn. Similarly, Jimmy Olsen made several visits to the 30th century to visit Superman's comrades in the Legion of Superheroes and eventually became an honorary member in his Elastic Lad guise.

Page 4

Panel 1: Linda Lake is the love interest of Omniman, the main character of the comic book Diana and Ethan work on. Linda is Omniman's version of Lois Lane, just as Diana is Supreme's.

Page 5

Panel 1: "The Many Loves of Supreme"

"The Suburbanite Supreme"

Panel 2: The "Possibilitron" is reminiscent of a story in *Superman* #132 (1959), in which Batman, Robin, and Superman used Superman's "Super Univac" computer to see images of how Kal-El's life might have unfolded had he grown up on Krypton rather than on Earth.

Note that while Judy Jordan is most closely analogous to Lana Lang, in this and other flashback stories she also fills the role played by Lois Lane in the Superman mythos. While Superman's relationship with Lana was very similar to his relationship with Lois, his involvement with Lana as an adult was limited, and Lana did not play nearly as important a role in the Superman strip as Lois did (nor did she ever have a strip devoted to her adventures).

Page 6

Panel 3: Some of the Allies are present at the wedding:

Glory
The Fisherman
Skipper
Spacehunter
Die Hard
Mighty Man
Twilight
Mer-Master
Professor Night
Super-Patriot.

Suprema and Radar also are in attendance.

Page 7

Panel 3: The Clarks ask Supreme to crush a lump of coal into a diamond. Superman first performed this feat of super-strength in *Action Comics* #115 (1947).

Page 9
Panel 1: Diana's statement about heroes' girlfriends wanting to trap and emasculate their boyfriends is an accurate interpretation of the relationship between Superman and Lois Lane up till the early seventies. Lois constantly tried to persuade (and sometimes trick) Superman into marrying her, but it was suggested time and again that she would betray his secret identity or otherwise compromise his crime-fighting career.

Panel 2: Spencer Samson is the civilian alter ego of Omniman, and another counterpart of Clark Kent.

Page 10
Panel 3: Lyra Lemuria, the mermaid from Poseidonis, is Omniman's equivalent of Lori Lemaris, the mermaid who was Superman's college sweetheart. Lori Lemaris, as noted earlier, was from the Atlantean kingdom of Tritonis. "Lemuria" is the name of another mythical lost civilization, similar to Atlantis.

Page 11
Panel 1: "A Marriage Made in Heaven"

In this chapter of the story, Supreme marries Luriel, the angel glimpsed in his Imaginary Menagerie in issue #43.

Page 12
Panel 1: In addition to Luriel, we see several more creatures in the Mythopoeic Zoo:

A unicorn
A figure with a winged helmet who may be the Greek god Hermes (or his Roman equivalent, Mercury)
The Cyclops, a creature fought by the hero Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Panel 3: In another of the bubbles in the background, we see the Roman god Atlas carrying the Earth on his back.

Panel 6: Present at the wedding are several other gods:

Officiating the ceremony is the jackal-headed Annubis, an Egyptian deity who oversaw the judgment of dead souls.

Bacchus (known to the Greeks as Dionysus), the Roman god of wine and revelry. He is depicted here as he appears in the comic book series *Bacchus,* written and drawn by Moore's friend Eddie Campbell, which chronicles the elderly god's adventures in the modern world.
A centaur, a creature with the lower body of a horse and the torso of a man.
The god Pan, with a human torso and the lower body of a goat, holding his trademark flute.

Page 14
Panel 5: The sad fate of Luriel is reminiscent of a 1964 Imaginary Story (*Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane* #51) in which Superman married Lori Lemaris, only to see her perish under tragic circumstances soon afterward.

Page 15
Panel 3: The arguments made by Supreme as to why Omniman would never have a real relationship with Linda Lake are the same as those Superman made throughout the fifties and sixties for not marrying Lois Lane.

Panel 5: The Solar Sanctum is Omniman's equivalent of Superman's Fortress of Solitude. Interestingly, in DC Comics' recent *1,000,000* series, Superman is shown to have survived until the 853rd century, where he resides in a colossal fortress inside the sun.

Page 16
Panel 3: As noted in issue #43, Warrior Woman apparently is Dazzle Comics's equivalent of Wonder Woman.

Page 17
Panel 2: Surprisingly, the idea of a marriage between Superman and Wonder Woman has rarely been broached in the Superman mythos. In a Wonder Woman story in 1983, Wonder Woman has a dream in which she marries Superman only to find that their responsibilities drive them apart (*Wonder Woman* #300). Hyperion and Power Princess, counterparts of Superman and Wonder Woman in Marvel's Squadron Supreme, eventually fell in love and married, and more recently, the coda of DC's 1996 Elseworlds series *Kingdom Come*, set years in the future, shows Superman and Wonder Woman having a child together.

Panel 3: Glory suggests that the wedding be held in the Temple of Stars on her Interdimensional Island. The Interdimensional Island is equivalent to Paradise Island (also known as Themysciria), home of Wonder Woman, while the Temple of Stars is similar to the Temple of Aphrodite, where the Amazons of Paradise Island worship their patron goddess.

Page 18

Panel 1: The wedding of Supreme and Glory is attended both by the Allies and a number of gods of various pantheons. The deities represented here are, from left to right:

Zeus (or Jupiter), the king of the gods and the father of many gods and demigods, is shown officiating the ceremony.
Cupid, the cherubic Roman god of love and the son of the goddess Venus.
Loki, the trickster god of Norse mythology.
Heracles (or Hercules), a demigod who is the son of Zeus and a mortal woman. Hercules has had several comic book incarnations at both Marvel and DC Comics.
Hermes (or Mercury), the messenger of the gods and the god of merchants, thieves, and athletics. Hermes plays an important role in the *Judgment Day* crossover storyline (see *Judgment Day* #2).
Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and warfare born from the brow of Zeus, with her owl perched on her shoulder.
Aphrodite (or Venus), the Greek (or Roman) goddess of love.

Page 19

Panel 2: Supreme protests that he was busy fighting the Sun-Eater near Andromeda. Andromeda is a northern constellation between Perseus and Pegasus that contains one of the nearest neighboring galaxies to our own, some two million light-years from Earth. The Sun-Eater presumably is similar to the monsters of the same name that have occasionally menaced the DC universe. The Sun-Eater first appeared in *Adventure Comics* #305 (1962) in the 30th century. In 1996, the sun was engulfed by a 20th century Sun-Eater, but the monster was neutralized before it could consume the sun's mass and energy (in the *Final Night* mini-series).

Panel 3: The Moth Empress was a villain who fought the Allies, as mentioned in issue #48. As noted there she could mentally enslave others.

Supreme makes a caustic remark about Glory running home to her mother goddess. As previously mentioned Glory is the daughter of the goddess Demeter.

Panel 4: The Light and Void Cafe? [*Author's note: I'm sure this is a literary reference; however, it's lost on me. If anyone can enlighten me, I'd appreciate it.*]

Panels 4 and 5: The apocalyptic battle between Glory and Supreme, in which Glory throws a city bus at her estranged husband, is very reminiscent of the battle between Superman and three Kryptonian villains Zod, Nom, and Ursa in the feature film *Superman 2* (1980).

Page 20

Panel 1: Supreme refers to an incident in which he was made to propose to Gunzella the Gnome Queen as part of a prank by Szazs the Sprite Supreme. This is somewhat reminiscent of a 1962 Supergirl story in which Supergirl was compelled to marry Mr. Mxyzptlk (*Action Comics* #291).

Page 21
Panel 3: Diana Dane refers to a famous scene in *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* #2 (July 1968), in which artist Jim Steranko made clever use of page design and symbolism to suggest a sex scene between Nick Fury and his lover, despite the Comics Code's prohibition on sexual situations.

Page 23
Panel 1: Judy Jordan's granddaughter Hilda remarks that she can't stop thinking about Supreme's "big house up in the sky." This of course is the Citadel Supreme, where Supreme hung Hilda's drawing in issue #44.

Panel 2: Note that Judy Jordan is once again reading the "religious book," *Life After Death,* that was sent to her by Darius Dax.

Page 24
Panel 1: Hilda has certainly produced an exceptionally complex schematic for a young girl drawing with crayons. A map of the Citadel Supreme, very similar to this diagram, appears in issue #52A.

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Issue #51 "A Roster of Rogues"

Page 1: Jonas Tate's exclamation: "Great Kirby's Cigar!" Similarly, Tate's counterpart in the Superman mythos, Perry White, often exclaimed, "Great Caesar's Ghost," or, in the ABC television series *Lois and Clark*, "Great Shades of Elvis!" Jack Kirby, of course, was one of the premiere artists of American comics, the creator of Captain America, the Fantastic Four, the Incredible Hulk, the X-Men, and many other institutions. Kirby was fond of cigars, and was often seen with a stogie in his mouth.

Page 2
Panel 1: Despite his other psychological flaws, Cyberzerk's statement that Diana Dane must be "the new love interest" is surprisingly astute.

Page 3
Panel 4: Cyberzerk mistakes Supreme's Stare Supreme for Omniman's "Omni Vision," a power Omniman apparently no longer possesses.

Page 4
Panel 1: Supreme's last jibe, "here's your No-Prize," is a reference to a Marvel Comics custom dating back to the late sixties. The No-Prize was originally a reward sent to readers who wrote in to point out errors. Later the standards were tightened: readers had to not only find an error but provide a semi-plausible explanation for why the error wasn't *really* an error. Winners got their No-Prize C an empty envelope C by mail.

Page 5
Panel 1: Supreme refers to two of his enemies: Dr. Nocturne, who we have not yet seen, and the Shadow Supreme, who was last seen imprisoned in the Hell of Mirrors in issue #45.

Panel 4: Supreme and Judy visit the Supremeworld Exhibition. There have been several Superman stories showing Superman amusement parks, the first of which appeared in *Action Comics* #210 (1955). In the early seventies, DC had tentative plans for starting a real "Supermanland" amusement park, to be based in the town of Metropolis, Illinois, but for various reasons the plan never passed the conceptual stages.

Page 6
Panel 1: "The Remarkable Ruse of the Rogue's Roster"

Panel 2: Note the Radar ride, which bears some resemblance to Disneyland's Dumbo ride.

Page 7
Panel 3: This is our first glimpse of Stupendo the Simian Supreme while he was still alive; as seen in issue #43, he later died of Supremium poisoning and was stuffed and mounted in the Citadel Supreme.

Supreme remarks that he found a home for Stupendo on Conqueror Island. As noted in issue #49 and in *Judgment Day* #2, Conqueror Island is the headquarters of the Conquerors of the Uncanny; it is inhabited by dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures. Similarly, in *Superman* #138 (1960), Superman found a home for Titano the Super-Ape in the prehistoric past.

Page 8
Panel 3: This is our first glimpse of Emerpus, the Reverse Supreme, who was mentioned in several earlier issues. Like Bizarro, he is an imperfect version of Supreme with unnatural, purplish skin (Bizarro's was chalky white). Unlike Bizarro, who wore a costume like Superman's, the colors of Emerpus's costume are different: it's orange with a green cape.

Panels 4-5: The description of Backwards Zone is reminiscent of the story "The Reversible Man," written by Alan Moore with art by Mike White, which appeared in the strip "Tharg's Time Twisters" in the British series *2000 A.D.* The story narrates the life of an ordinary man in reverse, starting with the protagonist as an old man dying of a heart attack and ending with his birth.

Page 9
Panel 1: This is our first glimpse of Szazs, the Sprite Supreme. Szazs appears in issue #53.

Panel 3: Supreme remarks that Szazs can only exist in prime-numbered dimensions: the first, second, third, fifth, seventh, eleventh, thirteenth, seventeenth, nineteenth, and so on. As previously mentioned, Superman's perpetual headache Mister Mxyzptlk hailed from the Fifth Dimension.

Panel 5: Supreme admonishes Judy: "Nonsense! It's just your female imagination!" Superman often displayed a similarly sexist and contemptuous attitude towards both of his erstwhile love interests, Lana Lang and Lois Lane, belittling their intelligence and sometimes subjecting them to humiliating pranks intended to teach them a lesson.

Page 10
Panel 2: "Looking-Glass Leavenworth" is another term for Supreme's Mirror-Prison. As we learn in issue #56, which describes Supreme's creation of the Mirror-Prison, it's a more accurate description than "Hell of Mirrors." Leavenworth is the name of a famous high security federal penitentiary located in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Panel 3: This is our first glimpse of what Optilux looked like before his transformation in 1969. Note the floating mirrors around him giving him a humanoid shape; at this point in his career, Optilux had already converted himself to coherent light.
Panels 3-4: This is another of Supreme's enemies, the Televillain, first glimpsed in issue #43. His real name is Reuben Tube, a criminal who built a "static suit" that enabled him to enter television programs.

Page 11
Panels 1 and 2: These are the two Supremium Men. The first, the purple figure at the left, was seen in issue #45; his true origins will be revealed in issue #52B. The second, originally known as Master Meteor, was previously mentioned but has not yet been seen. According to Alan Moore's notes, the Supremium Man is scheduled to appear in issue #61, if that story ever sees print.

Page 12
Panel 4: Supreme reveals that the villains are just Suprematons helping him play a prank on Judy. Superman commonly played pranks like this one, and some considerably crueler, on Lois Lane and his other friends, including Jimmy Olsen and Batman.

Page 13
Panel 1: Judy's transformations:

Giant Turtle Judy, reminiscent of Jimmy Olsen's transformation in *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #51 (1961).
Devil Judy
Fat Judy, similar to a transformation Lois underwent in *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane* #1 (1958)
Elastic Judy, similar to a transformation Lois underwent in *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane* #23 (1961)
Witch Judy, similar to a transformation Lois underwent in *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane* #1 (1958)
Snowman Judy
Snake Judy
Jungle Judy
Vampire Judy (note the stake through her chest)
Cyclops Judy
Cowgirl Judy.

Panel 2: In the left background, we see another of Judy's transformations, apparently an ape-Judy.

Panel 3: Here's two more Judy transformations:

A hunchbacked Judy ringing a bell, reminiscent of the character Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*
Pirate Judy, with an eye patch and a parrot.

Page 15
Panel 1: Here we again see the older Judy Jordan and her granddaughter Hilda.

Panels 4 and 5: Hilda is definitely *not* a normal little girl.

Page 16
Panels 2-3: Like Supreme's Suprematons Hilda can generate the artificial lightning bolts necessary to open the doors to the Citadel Supreme. Hilda's true nature will be revealed next issue.

Page 18: Ouch.

Page 20
Panel 3: Supreme exclaims, "By the Great Magellanic Cloud!" The Magellanic Cloud is one of the two galaxies nearest our own, orbiting the Milky Way at a distance of about 160,000 light years from Earth. It was named for Ferdinand Magellan, the famed Portuguese navigator of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Page 21
Panel 2: Here we see the means by which prisoners are sent to the Mirror-Prison.

Page 22
Panel 1: Supreme's reversed dialogue reads "...doing."

Panel 2: Judy's reversed dialogue reads: "Poor Supreme. It's always the same when you get to our age..." Note that, despite Supreme's apparent youth, Supreme and Judy are roughly the same age.

Panel 3: Judy's reversed dialogue reads: "...Mirrors can be so unkind."

This is our first glimpse inside the Hell of Mirrors. We will learn more about this dimension and its origins in issue #56.

Page 23
Panel 1: Supreme's reversed dialogue reads: "I don't understand why you're doing this..."

Panel 2: Hilda's reversed dialogue reads: "Gran'ma says everything's working out fine. She says not to worry."

Supreme's reply reads: "Huh? How can I understand what you're saying? How did you get here?"

Panel 3: Judy's reversed dialogue reads: "Tell him he's got a welcoming committee."

Page 24: Enter the Televillain and the Shadow Supreme.

The Televillain remarks that he "prayed to the dark gods for this moment." The Televillain was apparently an ordinary man before creating his static suit; it's not clear which dark gods those might be. However, this line is reminiscent of the 1988 horror film *Shocker*, in which a condemned murderer prays to his television for salvation from the electric chair.

Supreme has no powers in the Mirror-Prison. It is not clearly explained why; perhaps the (presumably) magical nature of the mirror dimension strips him of his powers just as Satana's sorcery nullified Suprema's powers in the flashback story in issue #46. That would also explain why the Shadow Supreme, who appears to be as powerful as Supreme, has never been able to break through the mirror and escape.

Page 24
Panels 2-3: Judy replies, ominously, "Judy's not who he's talking to." The meaning of this statement, and the mystery of Hilda, will be explained next issue.

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Issue #52A

Issues 52A and 52B were originally intended to run as a single oversized comic book like those DC released beginning in the early sixties. 80-Page Giants featured reprints of older stories and occasional special features like diagrams of the Batcave (*Batman* #203, 1968). Apparently, the printing formats used by Awesome Entertainment precluded the creation of a single issue that size C hence the split into two issues with the unusual numbering.

"The Return of Darius Dax!"

Page 1-2: Judy Jordan quotes the rest of the stanza from Shelly's "Adonais" from which the epitaph on Darius Dax's tombstone was taken (as seen in issue #42).

Page 2: It is unclear if the Shadow Supreme possesses all his powers in the Mirror-Prison, since, as noted last issue, Supreme does not; he may just be willing to beat Supreme to death with his normal strength.

Page 3
Panel 2: The Shadow Supreme's dialogue reads: "Who are you, women? Why have you given the hated one to us?"

Panel 3: Hilda's dialogue reads "Okay, Gran'ma. I'll tell him."

The Shadow Supreme was created by Darius Dax; similarly, both Bizarro and the Negative Superman, the Shadow Supreme's antecedents in the Superman mythos, were created by Lex Luthor.

Page 5: The truth about Judy Jordan is revealed.

Panel 4: This flashback sequence shows Dax stealing the Supremium meteor from Professor Wells immediately prior to the clash with Kid Supreme shown in issue #42.

Page 6
Panel 1: Dax's plan to kill Kid Supreme with the Supremium failed owing to the intervention of the League of Infinity; Dax apparently never realized they were involved.

Panel 2: In 1967 Darius Dax learned he had contracted cancer from his exposure to Supremium. Similarly, in current Superman continuity, Lex Luthor suffered radiation poisoning from a Kryptonite ring he wore to keep Superman at bay. The hand on which he had worn the ring was amputated and replaced with a cybernetic prosthetic (*Action Comics* #600), but Luthor later learned

that the poisoning had spread and that he had less than a year to live. Luthor faked his own death and had his brain transplanted into a specially-created clone of himself as he'd appeared as a young man; he later returned to Metropolis (in *Action Comics* #670), claiming to be his own illegitimate son so as to lull his enemies into complacency.

Panel 4: The meaning of the book *Life After Death* and its cryptic dedication is made clear.

Page 7
Panel 1: Dax notes that Judy was in Littlehaven "waiting for Supreme to return from space." Issue #54 establishes that Judy received Dax's book in "early 1969."

Panels 2-3: The awful fate of Judy Jordan: her body now houses the intellect of Darius Dax.

Dax claims that the mind-overwriting process would only take instants today.

Panel 5: The secret of Hilda is revealed: she's really a "High Impact Lethal Defense Automaton."

Panel 6: Judy/Dax's reversed dialogue reads: "Anyway, enough about me. You boys have fun with Supreme, now. Me and Hilda have things to do."

Page 8
Panel 1: The End still is imprisoned elsewhere in the Hell of Mirrors, although he's not seen here.

Panel 6: The bazooka-like weapon is Korgo's Planet Smasher, mentioned but not seen in issue #43.

Page 9
Panel 3: This is the first time we've seen Suprema in her civilian identity of Sally Crane since her return to Earth. Note that like Supergirl's alter ego, Linda Lee Danvers, Sally wears a wig with pigtails. However, Sally's wig is blond; Supergirl was a natural blond and wore a brown wig as Linda.

Panel 4: Sally can't resist a dig at Diana Dane: unlike Supergirl, who was genuinely sweet, Suprema's squeaky-clean act apparently covers a real nasty streak.

Panel 5: Sally mentions that she is looking for an apartment with her dog, who we know is actually Radar the Hound Supreme.

Panel 6: One of the other patrons refers to Sally as "Gidget," perhaps due to her overbearing personality. Gidget was the title character of a 1959 film based on a novel by Frederick Kohner,

about a teenaged girl (played by Sandra Dee) who discovers the joys of surfing. The insufferably cheerful and wholesome Gidget (a nickname given her by her surfing buddies) went on to appear in several film sequels, as well as two sixties television series starring Sally Fields.

Page 10
The Citadel Supreme's presence is revealed to the world.

Page 11
Panel 4: Sally prepares to switch to her identity as Suprema. Note that she has already discarded her blond wig.

Page 12
Panels 2-6: The figure on the table is the inert body of Magno, the Super Humanoid, who Supreme retrieved from the former headquarters of the Allies in issue #44.

Panel 6: If Magno's open eyes indicate that Dax's personality had taken residence, then Dax's claim that the mind transfer would taken only seconds with modern technology was no idle boast.

Page 13
Panel 2: Radar, like all good fictional dogs, is not easily fooled by illusions and disguises.

Page 14
Inset panel: Hilda refers to "that black shouty man" in the Hell of Mirrors, no doubt referring to the Shadow Supreme.

Page 15
Panel 2: Hilda attacks Radar with the same artificial lightning generator she used to open the doors to the Citadel Supreme.

Page 16
Panel 1: Diehard and Glory arrive.

Diehard, an android, can sense that Hilda is also an android.

Glory calls Hilda a "Cabbage Patch Kid." Cabbage Patch Kids are a line of cherubic dolls created by toymaker Xavier Roberts, first sold in 1978. During the eighties, the toy license was acquired by Coleco (later owned by Hasbro and more recently by Mattel), and for a time became the hottest toy on the American market: more than 50 million had been sold by 1987.

Panel 2: Hilda again employs her lightning generator.

Page 17
Panel 1: Dax reappears, now occupying the body of Magno.

"The Artist Formerly Known as Magno" is a reference to the American rock star Prince, who in the early nineties changed his name to a symbol. Since his new "name" was unpronounceable, he has since been referred to as "the artist formerly known as Prince."

Dax notes that Magno absorbed the powers of the Allied Supermen of America. Amazo, the android on whom Magno is based, absorbed the powers of the JLA; he never fought the Justice Society.

Panel 2: Magno uses his version of Supreme's Stare Supreme. Note that the beams are green; when we've seen Supreme use this power, his "plasma beams" have been red.

Page 18
Panel 2: The End is the figure in the chair, who we do not see clearly. Korgo calls him "Terminal One." It is not clear who or what the End actually is, although he must be quite formidable, given the other villains' deference towards him.

Page 19
Panel 2: The End issues a cryptic proclamation: "The End? This. Is. Not. It. I. Am. It. Go. Away!" This may imply that the End is an incarnation of entropy, perhaps similar to the Legion of Superheroes villain the Time Trapper, who operated from a citadel at the end of time.

"Tales of the Supremacy Starring Squeak the Suprememouse in >What a Friend We Have in Cheeses'"

Page 20
[*Note: the author, still paralyzed by the appalling pun in the title of this story, offers no comment on the contents of panel 4 except to note that Supremouse, like Mickey Mouse, has only three fingers.*]

Page 21
Panel 1: Supremouse derives his powers from radioactive "Supremium Stilton." Super-Mouse, the cartoon predecessor of Mighty Mouse on whom Supremouse is based, got his powers by eating super cheese.

Panel 2: Micro-Supreme, apparently a microscopic version of Supreme, complements Macro-Supreme, the gigantic alternate Supreme who appeared in issue #41.

Panel 3: Supremouse visits the Summit Supreme, the "distinctive mountaintop hideout" of Fifties Supreme. As previously mentioned, from 1942 through 1956, Superman had a similar mountain retreat, the predecessor of his later Fortress of Solitude. The mountain retreat first appeared in *Superman* #17 (July 1942), and was later attributed to the Earth-Two Superman.

Also seen here are some more Supreme counterparts:

Snake Supreme
Bulldog Supreme
Cat Supreme
Two-dimensional Supreme
Shark Supreme
Roller-skating Supreme
Chicken Supreme

Panel 4: Note that Supremouse enters through a giant key-hole. Superman's Fortress of Solitude was opened using a gigantic golden key that only Superman was strong enough to lift; the key was inserted into an equally massive keyhole. The key was first seen in *Action Comics* #241 (1958).

Note the galaxy in the corked-bottle behind Fifties Supreme. This may be another homage to the Bottle City of Kandor: Superman had a city in a bottle, the modern Supreme has an entire world in a prism (the Prism World of Amalynth, first seen in issue #43), and Fifties Supreme has an entire galaxy.

Fifties Supreme is bench pressing a steam-roller with his "Supreme-Breath." By the fifties, even Superman's super-breath had become tremendously powerful; in *Superman* #91 (1954), for example, Superman actually blows out a star with his super-breath.

Panel 5: "The White Death" is a nickname for Supremium; the radiation of normal white Supremium is harmful to many of Supreme's incarnations.

Page 22
Panel 1: Note the trophies visible in the background:

A domed city labeled "Atlantis II"
The liner HMS *Titanic* with a sign reading "Time Travel Rescue: 1951-1912," implying that the ship was rescued from sinking by a time-traveling Supreme
A statue of Abraham Lincoln.

These trophies are reminiscent of a 1961 story entitled "Superman's Greatest Feats" (*Superman* #146), in which Superman travels back in time to undo several historical disasters, including the sinking of Atlantis and the assassination of Lincoln in 1865. (At the end of the story, Superman discovers that he has not affected his own history but rather that of a parallel universe; although time travel was commonplace in the sixties, a truism of the DC universe held that history could not be changed.) Superman did not rescue the *Titanic* in that story, although a large, damaged ocean liner often appeared in his trophy room; to the best of the author's knowledge, the ship's origins were never explained.

Supremouse warns Fifties Supreme that Grim Eighties Supreme may demand urine samples to prove that he is no longer abusing violet Supremium; as we see later in this story, Grim Eighties Supreme is suspicious of Fifties Supreme, who he says is "weak" and "deserves punishment" (page 27). In the eighties, the effort to crack down on the use of illegal drugs in the U.S. led to the imposition of mandatory urine analysis for people in certain professions; discovery of evidence of narcotics use was usually grounds for dismissal.

Panel 3: The reference to gaining the head of an ant under the influence of violet Supremium is probably a reference to a story in *Action Comics* #296 (January 1963), "The Invasion of the Super-Ants!" in which Superman was partially transformed into a giant ant. The transformation proved fortuitous, however, because it enabled Superman to communicate with an invading swarm of giant, intelligent ants and to persuade them to not turn Metropolis into their new home.

The Giant Turtle Supreme resembles Superturtle, a turtle version of Superman clad in a red cape with a red and yellow T-insignia who appeared in a series of gag strips in DC comics of the sixties.

Note "due for demolition" sign on the collapsed building, similar to the one on the building Professor Night accidentally smashed in the flashback story in issue #47. In the fifties and sixties, DC's heroes were firmly Establishment figures who would never wantonly destroy public property, even by accident.

Panel 4: An addicts is sometimes referred to colloquially as having a monkey on his backs; thus, Fifties Supreme's Supremium addiction constitutes a figurative "Simian Supreme" on his back.

Some more Supremes are displayed here:

Zebra Supreme
Old Supreme
Dr. Jekyll Supreme

Panel 5: And even more:

Caveman Supreme
Horse Supreme
Fly-Supreme

Panel 6: This is one of the most bizarre alternate Supremes, apparently a Whale Supreme.

Page 23
Panel 1: Supremouse and Fifties Supreme visit the Creche Supreme, home of Supremite; as mentioned in the notes for issue #42, Supreme's heroic career began shortly after he was exposed to the Supremium meteor, reminiscent of Superman's early adventures as Superbaby.

Panel 2: These are Specky, Scrappy, and Shorty, the Sergeants Supreme, first glimpsed in issue #41. As previously mentioned, they are analogous to Tall Billy, Fat Billy, and Hill Billy, the Lieutenant Marvels from the Fawcett Comics *Marvel Family* series of the forties.

Panel 3: The unfortunate cetacean in Fat Supreme's sandwich is a bizarre topical reference. In the late eighties, animal rights groups became concerned that dolphins were being caught and dying in the nets used to catch tuna; many leading tuna companies were pressured into changing their fishing techniques to avoid snaring dolphins, and subsequently began advertising their tuna as "dolphin safe." The tuna in Fat Supreme's sandwich, obviously, is not dolphin safe.

Fat Supreme apparently also takes the expression "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse" quite literally.

Note that the table is about to collapse under the weight of Fat Supreme's belly.

Panels 4-5: This is Supreme-of-the-Future, first seen in issue #41. Note that he is depicted here as having green skin; in his first appearance, he had normal skin tones.

We see several more Supremes:

A naked baby Supreme
Liquid Supreme
Cubist Supreme

Both of the latter two Supremes are reminiscent of the white Supremium transformations that Supreme underwent in the flashback story in issue #45.

Page 24
Panels 1-6: Grim Eighties Supreme, with his pessimistic brooding and clipped dialogue, is a parody of the "grim and gritty" heroes of the eighties, particularly Batman in 1986's *The Dark Knight Returns*, which was written and drawn by Moore's friend Frank Miller. Note that, like most of the characters in Miller's *Sin City* stories, Grim Eighties Supreme smokes cigarettes. Kools are a real cigarette brand manufactured by the British-American Tobacco Co. Ltd., which also produces Lucky Strikes; menthols are cigarettes whose tobacco is treated with a crystalline alcohol that produces a mint-like taste and smell.

Also note that Grim Eighties Supreme's gauntlets have bullets C despite the fact that he does not even have a gun C reflecting the eighties and nineties fascination with gun-toting heroes like Marvel's Punisher.

Page 25
Panel 1: A veritable convention of Supremes:

Aztec Supreme
Whale Supreme (probably the same as seen on page 22, panel 6)
A Supreme who bears a marked resemblance to Bizarro holding a sign reading, "Am Me Supreme?"
A Supreme modeled after *MAD* Magazine's trademark character Alfred E. Neuman, who first appeared in *MAD* #24.
A Supreme whose head pops open
Elastic Supreme
Suprema, seen here selling Wieners Supreme; this is reminiscent of a Superman Sunday newspaper strip published on Sept. 28, 1947, in which Superman carries out a stunt to publicize "Teenie Weenies" brand hot dogs.

Panel 2: Sixties Supreme (who, according to issue #41, is also known as Supreme the Fifth) is at bat.

Page 26
Panel 1: The pitcher is Mr. Hyde Supreme, presumably the counterpart of the Dr. Jekyll Supreme seen on page 22.

Panel 6: Note the mushroom cloud rising from bat. Sixties Supreme, like Superman of the same era, was described as having godlike powers; since Superman was at that time capable of destroying the Earth singlehandedly, it's no surprise that Sixties Supreme can swing a bat hard enough to cause nuclear fission in the ball.

Page 27
Panel 1: The poster contains another wretched pun: "The Green, Green Cheese of Home"

Panel 3: Here, Grim Eighties Supreme's even-more clipped dialogue parodies Alan Moore's own grim vigilante character Rorschach, from the 1987 series *Watchmen*, who had similar views ("Drug user. Weakling. Deserves Punishment.") and a distinct aversion to pronouns.

Panel 5: Supremouse refers to the "Rich Roquefort of Reality" Roquefort is a pungent French blue cheese made from sheep's milk; if reality is like a Roquefort, that implies that it may be unpleasant, but it's certainly not dull or bland.

Pages 28-29: **Map of Citadel Supreme**
Note that this cutaway diagram of the Citadel is essentially similar to that drawn by Hilda in issue #50.

The depiction of the Roof Gardens is reminiscent of the garden atop Olympus, the sprawling, pyramid-shaped headquarters/temple of Marvelman (Miracleman in the U.S.) at the conclusion of Alan Moore's radical revisionist version of that character in *Warrior* magazine in the mid-eighties. While Superman's Fortress of Solitude had a variety of plant specimens, Superman was evidently not much for horticulture, and did not maintain any type of full-fledged garden.

Note that both Supreme and Suprema have quarters in the Citadel. Similarly, in the seventies Supergirl constructed her own annex of Superman's Fortress of Solitude. Oddly, the living quarters of Superman and Supergirl were never included in the published diagrams of the Fortress.

Page 30: **"Suprema -- The Has-Been Supreme!"**

Panel 1: Note the "Space Roebuck" catalog: this is based on the mail-order catalog (first published in 1894) of Sears Roebuck & Co., the first truly mass-market mail-order concern. The Sears Roebuck catalog, along with the King James edition of the Bible, was a fixture of Americana found in a huge percentage of American homes in the early part of the 20th century.

Page 31
Panel 3: Note the "outer space heater," a throwaway joke of the sort popular in Harvey Kurtzman and Wally Wood's work on MAD magazine.

Page 36
Panels 3-4: Suprema's tormentors are revealed as the League of Infinity. Shown here are:

Future Girl
Witch Wench
Kid Supreme
Kid Aladdin.

While this story is not based on any specific Legion story, it is characteristic of the practical jokes the Legionnaires often played on Superboy and Supergirl. Despite the Legionnaires' repeated assertions that the Boy and Girl of Steel were history's greatest heroes, they tried to keep the two heroes humble by subjecting them to a series of pranks, some of them rather cruel. Given the literally world-shattering level of their Kryptonian powers the Legionnaires were fortunate that Superboy and Supergirl were good sports.

Page 37
Panels 3-5: Suprema joins the League of Infinity. Supergirl first attempted to join the Legion of Superheroes in 1960 (*Action Comics* #267) but was rejected on a technicality (she was temporarily transformed into an adult by exposure to Red Kryptonite, making her too old to be eligible for Legion membership). She applied again a year later and was accepted for membership in *Action Comics* #276 (May 1961), although her involvement with the Legion always was somewhat sporadic.

Page 38: **Gallery of Villains**

Darius Dax: Dax's full name is given here as Darius Christian Dax; he is depicted with the Tremendoid he used in the flashback story in issue #43. Dax's first appearance is given as *Supreme* #10, published in 1940. Lex Luthor's first appearance was in *Action Comics* #23; however, *Superman* #10 was the first time he was depicted as bald (as previously mentioned he had red hair in the earliest stories), which he would remain in all subsequent appearances.

Optilux: His real name is given as Voran Glynn of the planet Sarto; he is shown converting Amalynth. As previously mentioned Optilux is based on the Superman villain Brainiac, whose real name was Vril Dox of the planet Colu. Optilux's first appearance is given as *Actual Comics* #242 (1958); Brainiac debuted in *Action Comics* #242 in the same year.

Page 39
Shadow Supreme: The Shadow Supreme is said to have been created by Darius Dax's Negatizer. As previously mentioned, the Shadow Supreme's origin is reminiscent of that of Bizarro, who was created by Lex Luthor's flawed "duplicator ray" in 1959 (*Action Comics* #254). The Shadow Supreme's first appearance is given as *Kid Supreme* #68 (1958). An early version of Bizarro, based on the teenaged Superboy, debuted in 1958 in *Superboy* #68. Unlike the later Bizarro, he was not

created by Lex Luthor, although the story which introduced the "adult" Bizarro a year later stated that Luthor's duplicator ray, which created Bizarro, was based on the design of the device that created the original Bizarro-Superboy.

Korgo the Space Tyrant: As mentioned in issue #42, Korgo originally was called Korgo the Space Bully. His first appearance is given as *Advantage Comics* #283 (1961). In this illustration, Korgo's servants bear a striking resemblance to the Hunger Dogs, the "lowlies" of the planet Apokolips in Jack Kirby's *New Gods* series.

Page 40
Satana and Lord Sin: The arch-enemies of Suprema, seen in flashback in issue #46. Satana appears next in *Youngblood* #2. The two villains' first appearance is given as *Actual Comics* #255 (1959).

The Televillain: The Televillain's real name is given as Reuben Tube. He is shown in the Mayberry Sheriff's Department threatening Barney Fife, the bumbling sheriff's deputy played by Don Knots in the long-running situation comedy *The Andy Griffith Show*, which ran from 1960 to 1968. Since his debut (given as *Supreme* #104) was in 1956, the scene depicted presumably is not from his first appearance.

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Issue #52B

"The Return of Darius Dax" continued

Page 1
Panel 3: Radar can't talk without his thought speakers, which were destroyed by Hilda last issue.

Panel 4: "Zayla" is Zayla Zarn, Future Girl, a member of the League of Infinity in the 25th century, as seen in issue #42.

Page 2
Panel 1: Professor Night and Twilight arrive on the scene.

Panel 2: Professor Night's aircraft is called the Night Flyer. Although we don't see it very clearly here, it presumably is analogous to Batman's Batplane. Note that it generates artificial clouds of darkness to cloak itself, much like Professor Night's blackout bombs. Similarly, the Owlship piloted by Nite Owl in Moore's *Watchmen* could generate artificial clouds as airborne camouflage.

Panel 3: Professor Night sets the Night Flyer in a holding pattern. The Batplane (somewhat improbably) could be left to fly unattended, allowing Batman and Robin to rappel to the ground.

Page 3
Panel 1: Professor Night and Twilight active their "night-sight." Unlike Doctor Mid-Nite, the Golden Age hero on whom he is partially based, Professor Night cannot see in the dark and, like Batman, must rely on night vision equipment.

Panel 2: Both Professor Night and Twilight use black-out bombs, as first seen in issue #49.

Page 5
Panel 1: Enter the League of Infinity: Aladdin, Kid Achilles, Bill Hickok, Future Woman, Giganthro, and Witch Woman. Note their ages: this is presumably the "Adult League" first mentioned in the flashback story in issue #43, the equivalent of the various adult incarnations of the Legion of Superheroes.

Panel 3: Dax/Magno once again employs Supreme's Stare Supreme.

Page 6
Panel 1: Witch Woman's real name is apparently Vivienne.

Hickok remarks that Magno has "Hoodoo power" stolen from Jack O'Lantern. As seen in previous issues, Jack O'Lantern was a member of the Allied Supermen of America; Magno possesses his powers as well as those of the other ASA members. Since Supreme and Suprema's powers do not protect them from magic, this makes Magno a very dangerous opponent.

Panel 2: Aladdin must summon his genie to help him. Similarly, JSA member Johnny Thunder had no powers of his own and called on his magic Thunderbolt (by saying the magic word "Cei-U") for assistance.

Panel 3: Zayla employs her ability to temporarily stop time, as we saw her do in the flashback story in issue #42.

Page 7
Panel 4: Supreme remarks that "this showdown has been coming for sixty years." According to issue #42, Supreme's first encounter with Dax was in 1933; the two have been fighting for 64 years.

Page 8
Panel 3: Darius Dax laments his past: "suffering indignity in Littlehaven, always being second best, despite my genius, to some dumb hick who'd stumbled over a meteorite." Dax's bitter recollections of his early days are reminiscent of the characterization of Lex Luthor in the stories of Elliot S. Maggin in the seventies, including his prose novels *Superman: Last Son of Krypton* (1978) and *Miracle Monday* (1980), which present Luthor as a tragic genius whose criminal nature is a product of his colossal intellect. In Maggin's conception, Luthor suffered from having no one who understood him C let alone qualified as a peer C except for Superman, who frustrated Luthor by throwing his lot in with the mediocre common people Luthor disdained.

Note Supreme's vulnerability to magic. Just as Suprema was vulnerable to the sorcery of Satana in issue #46, Supreme's powers don't protect him from the magical power of Jack O'Lantern. Similarly, as previously mentioned, Superman has no special protection from magic: he is just as vulnerable to spells, supernatural creatures, and enchanted weapons as any other mortal. In the seventies, the "World of Krypton" strip explained this vulnerability as a result of the rarity of sorcery and magic use on Krypton: because it was so rare, Kryptonians possess far less genetic predisposition towards magic than do humans, leaving them ill-equipped to deal with its effects.

Page 10
Panel 1: This presumably is the same Supremium isotope seen in issue #45.

Panel 2: The Supremium is still in the early stages of its violet phase. Apparently, even when accelerated for experimental purposes (as we saw Supreme doing in issue #45), Supremium passes

through its various stages fairly slowly, because it has not completed the change in the time that has elapsed since issue #45.

Panel 4: Here we see Billy Friday, finally back to normal and back in the real world. He apparently is making arrangements to attend a comic book convention. "Fancy-dress" is the British term for a an event in which the participants wear costumes.

Page 11
Panel 1: Upon being exposed to the Supremium a second time, Billy's "Elaborate Lad" transformation begins almost immediately.

Panel 2: Kid Aladdin refers to Billy as a "carrot-haired buffoon," apparently having gotten a poor impression of him during Billy's time with the League in the 25th century. Jimmy Olsen was a good friend of the Legion of Superheroes, but the obnoxious Billy Friday is considerably less genial.

Page 13
Panel 3: Here, we see the beginning of events that took place in Littlehaven in 1958, as shown in flashback in issue #46.

Panel 4: The secret of the Supremium Man from issue #46 is revealed: he's Darius Dax in the body of Magno, merged with the 1990's sample of Supremium.

Page 15
Panel 1: The assembled heroes witness Supreme's origin, which originally was shown in flashback in issue #42.

Panel 2: The young boy and the dog are, of course, Ethan Crane and Radar.

Page 16
Panels 2-3: Supreme retrieves Judy's body. Because Dax's mind-transference was accomplished by dismantling her personality, Judy now is essentially mindless.

Panel 4: Zayla hints to Supreme that "maybe you'll think of something to help her." Being from the future, Zayla presumably already knows Judy's fate. In the Superman mythos, various characters from future eras often dropped vague but leading clues to future events. In Alan Moore's "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" for instance, the Legion's farewell to Superman gives Superman the clue to his ultimate victory, even though the Legion steadfastly refuses to tell him outright what's going to happen (*Superman* #423). Similarly, in his many adventures with the

Legion in the 30th century, Superboy was given a post-hypnotic suggestion that made him forget any details he learned about his own future as soon as he returned to his native time.

Page 17
Panel 1: Zayla refers to the Youngblood murder trial, which will be the subject of the *Judgment Day* mini-series.
Panels 3-4: This is the same scene that we saw in the second flashback story in issue #42, seen from the older Supreme's perspective.

Page 20: **National Flashlight Battery Inspection Day**
This is a spoof of the one-page public service ads that ran in DC comics from 1949 through the late seventies. The ads, which were the brainchild of editor Jack Schiff, used DC characters to pass along socially positive messages encouraging cultural tolerance and other virtues.

Page 21: **"The Secret Origin of the Professor Night/Supreme Team!"**

This flashback story is highly reminiscent of a story published in *Adventure Comics* #275(1960), which chronicled a meeting between Superboy and Bruce Wayne (the man who is secretly Batman) while both were still teenagers. In that story, Superboy learned that he would one day meet Batman after looking into the future with his "time telescope." He subsequently encountered young Bruce Wayne, whose parents had temporarily moved to Superboy's home town of Smallville and enrolled Bruce in Smallville High School.

(It should be noted that the *Adventure* story was not in keeping with most accounts of Batman's origin, in which Bruce Wayne's parents were murdered when he still a young boy. In *World's Finest Comics* #271 (September 1981), Roy Thomas and Len Wein attempted to reconcile this contradiction by stating that Bruce moved to Smallville with his *guardians* rather than his parents, who were already dead, although that account is at odds with a story in *Superboy* #182 (1972), explicitly a sequel to the *Adventure* story, which states that Bruce Wayne's parents died after his earlier encounter with Superboy in Smallville.)

Panel 1: "Littlehaven Legend" and "Dean of Darkness" are two of the many nicknames for Supreme and Professor Night.

Panel 2: As mentioned in issue #47, the Walrus and Carpenter, who are named for two characters from a Lewis Carroll poem, are enemies of Professor Night.

Page 22

Panel 1: The photo shows Kid Supreme and Taylor Kendall together at age of thirteen, the approximate age of both Superboy and Bruce Wayne in the aforementioned story in *Adventure Comics* #275.

Panel 2-4: According to Twilight, Supreme and Professor Night met on an airline flight that was hijacked by terrorists. They discovered each others' secret identities when they both feigned airsickness as an excuse to slip away and change into costume. This is reminiscent of the meeting of Batman and Superman in *Superman* #76 (1952); Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent were traveling together on an ocean liner and accidentally discovered each others' identities when a searchlight outside their cabin window revealed them surreptitiously changing into costume. During the voyage, Clark Kent claimed to suffer from persistent sea sickness so that his absence would not be questioned while he was acting as Superman.

Page 23
Panel 1: This is Taylor Kendall, who will later become Professor Night, as a young man. The reason he can't stand the light, as explained in the notes for issue #47, is that he suffers from Porphyria, a disease that causes hypersensitivity to sunlight.

Note that Taylor is reading an adventure of the Phantom Aviator printed in the pulp magazine *Masked Detective Mysteries*. As seen in the *Judgment Day* mini-series, the Phantom Aviator was an actual World War One hero in the Maximum Press/Awesome universe who was killed in action in 1943. The Phantom Aviator is based on G-8 and other aviator heroes of the pulp era, and on the similar Fawcett Comics character Spy Smasher, who first appeared in *Whiz Comics* #2 (1940).

Panel 6: Taylor Kendall has adopted the guise of the Midnight Mask. In *Adventure Comics* #275, Bruce Wayne adopted a similar identity, the Flying Fox.

Page 25
Panel 2: Kid Supreme and Taylor Kendall discover each others' respective secrets. In the *Adventure Comics* story, Superboy knew from the outset that Bruce was the Flying Fox and that he would one day become Batman. Bruce managed to discover Superboy's secret identity, but Superboy hypnotized him into forgetting that information, along with the fact that they would meet again as adults.

(According to *World's Finest Comics* #84 (September-October 1956), Bruce Wayne had earlier visited Smallville in hopes of discovering Superboy's identity as a test of his detective skills. *World's Finest Comics* #271 explained that Bruce did know Clark was Superboy and only wanted to find definitive proof in order to impress Lana Lang. In any case, Superboy's hypnosis stripped Bruce Wayne of all knowledge of his true identity until the two met again as adults years later.)

Panel 4: Kendall says he gets "extra strong and smart" at night. The Marvel Comics hero Moon Knight, another character similar to Batman (and one of the models for Professor Night), became stronger during the waxing of the moon; during a full moon, he could lift almost two tons.

Page 26
Panel 3: The two heroes conclude that they've found the entrance to the legendary underworld depicted in Greek and Roman mythology. This area, also known as Hades (after its ruler, the Greek god of death), was the land of the dead, which, under some circumstances, mortals could visit while still alive.

Panel 5: The villain's exclamation, "Curses! You meddlesome kids saw everything," is reminiscent of the lament of every villain on *Scooby-Doo* after having their plans unraveled.

Page 27
Panel 1: The river Lethe was one of the rivers running through the Underworld in Greek mythology. Its waters, the Waters of Oblivion, caused the dead to forget their former lives.

Panel 2-3: The fate of Hunkel, slipping into water and drowning, is reminiscent of the fate that befell the first criminal to find his way into the Batcave, Wolf Brando, who drowned in an underground stream in 1948 (*Batman* #48).

Panel 5: The water saps Kid Supreme's strength because it's magical; Supreme's powers, as previously mentioned, are of little use against magic or sorcery.

Page 28
Panel 2: The tunnels found by Kid Supreme and Taylor Kendall were later converted into Halls of Night, which, as discussed in the notes for issue #47, is Professor Night's equivalent of Batman's Batcave. The Batcave had a similarly illustrious history before becoming Batman's headquarters; according to *Detective Comics* #205 (1954), it was the base of operations for a 19th century American army scout named Jeremy Coe, and according to *Batman Secret Files and Origins* (1997), at one time it was used as a hiding place for the Underground Railroad, smuggling escaped slaves to safety in the North.

Panel 3: As mentioned above, in *Adventure Comics* #275 Superboy hypnotized Bruce so that he would forget both Superboy's identity and his own future career as Batman. He made no effort to remove his own knowledge of the future in that story or in its sequel in *Superboy* #182, although according to *World's Finest Comics* #271, he later hypnotized himself to forget as well. His self-hypnosis occurred at some point prior to his third meeting with the teenaged Bruce Wayne, as

shown in *Superboy Spectacular* (1980). In that adventure, neither he nor Bruce remembered having met before.

Page 29
Cover Gallery

Supreme #155 (1962): "The Death of Supreme"
According to the text, this issue contains an "Impossible" story in which Darius Dax pretends to reform only to kill Supreme with Supremium. Dax is then tracked down by Professor Night, who becomes the new Supreme after taking an experimental serum to give him super-powers. This story, and the cover illustration, are closely modeled on *Superman* #149 (1961), an Imaginary Story in which Lex Luthor created a cure for cancer in order to secure his release from prison, and then pretended to befriend Superman in order to lead him into a deadly Kryptonite trap. After Superman's death, Supergirl apprehended Luthor and took him to stand trial in the Bottle City of Kandor, where he was sentenced to spend eternity in the Phantom Zone. Supergirl then took Superman's place in Metropolis.

The fictional comic book *Supreme* is equivalent to *Superman*, Superman's own title, which was first published in 1939. In 1987 its title was changed to *Adventures of Superman*, and it continues today. It passed its 500th issue in 1993.

Supreme's Girlfriend Judy Jordan #21: "Super-Judy, the Sweetheart Supreme!"
According to the text, in this story Judy Jordan gained super-powers and adopted the alternate identity of "Super Judy." This story may be modeled on a story entitled "Lana Lang, Superwoman" that appeared in *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane* #17 (1960). The costume Judy wears, which is seen again in issue #54, is a dead ringer for the costume Supergirl wore while disguised as "Mighty Maid" in *Action Comics* #260 (1960).

The fictional comic series itself is based on *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*, a title solely devoted to the adventures of Superman's long-time love interest. *Lois Lane* ran from 1958 to 1974 with a total of 137 issues.

Page 30
Kid Supreme #68 (November 1958): "The Shadow Kid Supreme"
According to the text, this story recounted the creation of the first version of the Shadow Supreme, an evil counterpart of Supreme created by Darius Dax. At the end of the story, the Shadow Supreme was destroyed by a good, negative version of Dax himself. The story is somewhat similar to the first appearance of Bizarro in *Superboy* #68 (also cover-dated November 1958), although the Bizarro

Superboy in that story was destroyed at the story's end, and is not the same as the later adult Bizarro. However, the Bizarro Superboy was not created by Lex Luthor.

The adventures of Superman when he was a boy first appeared in *More Fun Comics* #101 in 1945 and later in *Adventure Comics*. In 1949, Superboy gained his own title; it lasted until 1973, at which time it became *Superboy and the Legion of Superheroes* with issue #197. The series was retitled *Legion of Superheroes* with issue #259 as Superboy moved into a new title of his own, and ultimately survived (under the title *Tales of the Legion of Superheroes*) until 1987, with a total of 350 issues.

Advantage Comics #103
According to the text, this issue contained the debuts of Kid Supreme (with Radar) as well as those of the Fisherman and Skipper and Roy Roman, the Mer-Master. This cover is reminiscent of that of *Adventure Comics* #103, published in 1946, which began the runs of Superboy, Green Arrow, and Aquaman in that series; all three strips previously appeared in the discontinued *More Fun Comics*. The text also notes that Kid Supreme displaced Jack O'Lantern's strip; similarly, Superboy's original strip in *More Fun Comics* replaced the more macabre adventures of the Spectre. *Adventure Comics* was one of the oldest books in the DC stable. Originally entitled *New Comics*, it was first published in 1935; the title became *New Adventure Comics* with issue #12 and *Adventure Comics* with issue #32 (1938). It lasted until 1981, when it became a digest-sized reprint series. It ended for good in 1983 with issue #503.

Page 31
America's Greatest Comics
The cover shows a beleaguered Twilight in the Halls of Night trying to care for Professor Night and Supreme, who have both been transformed into infants. Being transformed into babies were just a few of the weird transformations Superman and Batman suffered in the fifties and sixties. Batman was transformed into an infant (albeit with his normal intelligence) in *Batman* #147 (May 1962); Superman was similarly transformed in *Superman* #66 (1950). Mort Weisinger, the editor of the Superman titles, was unaccountably fond of this gimmick and revisited it several times; for example, Superboy, along with his comrades in the Legion of Superheroes, reverted to infancy in *Adventure Comics* #356 (May 1967).

The series *America's Greatest Comics* is modeled on *World's Finest Comics*, which debuted in 1941 (the first issue was entitled *World's Best Comics*; the title changed with #2). It was originally an oversized 100-page anthology book with a variety of features including Superman and Batman (in separate strips). Starting in 1954, it featured the adventures of the Superman-Batman team, which remained the staple of the series (except for a brief period in 1970-1971) until its cancellation in 1986 with issue #323.

Actual Comics #240 "Battle of the Biblical Behemoths"
The cover shows Supreme battling the biblical characters Samson and Goliath. Superboy met Samson in *Adventure Comics* #257 (1959), and met the biblical hero again in an Imaginary Story in *Action Comics* #279 (1961).

Page 32
Advantage Comics #284 "The Evil-Doers from Beyond Eternity!"
This cover, showing Kid Supreme bound with Supremium chains before a jury of villains presided over by Darius Dax, is highly reminiscent of the cover of *Action Comics* #286 (March 1962), in which Superman was put on trial by Lex Luthor and the Legion of Super-Villains.

The text notes that the League of Infinity debuted in *Advantage Comics* #247, April 1958. DC's Legion of Superheroes, on which the League is based, debuted in the same month and year in *Adventure Comics* #247. The text also says that the League took over as the main feature of *Advantage Comics* in issue #300; the Legion took over *Adventure* in #300, also in September 1962.

Actual Comics #294: "Super-Dax vs. The Crook of Chrome!"
The text states that in this issue Supreme visited Contra Earth, a world where Professor Night and Supreme were evil, Judy was a "vicious gun moll," and the counterparts of Darius Dax and Jack-a-Dandy were heroes. This story may be inspired by an Imaginary Story entitled "Killer Kent vs. Super-Luthor" which appeared in *Superman* #230 (October 1970), in which Lex Luthor was a superhero and Clark Kent a murderous gangster. Contra Earth also is similar to the parallel world of Earth-Three, first encountered by the Justice League of America in *JLA* #29-#30 (1964), where the counterparts of the Justice League C including Superman and Batman C were all villains. In 1982, Earth-Three's counterpart of Lex Luthor was introduced as that world's only hero (*DC Comics Presents* Annual #1); he later married Earth-Three's Lois Lane.

The text indicates that Contra Earth, unlike Earth-Three, was not in a parallel dimension, but shared the same orbit as Earth on the opposite side of the sun. This is similar to Marvel's Counter-Earth, a duplicate of the Earth created in the seventies by the High Evolutionary, which was briefly the home of hero Adam Warlock.

Page 33: **Newspaper Strip**

The fictional Supreme newspaper strip is modeled on the Superman daily newspaper comic strip, distributed by the McClure Syndicate starting in January 1939. Before selling Superman to DC, Siegel and Shuster tried unsuccessfully to sell the character to the syndicates as a newspaper strip; in the late thirties, newspaper comics had much greater prestige than comic books. However, it was

only after the character was on his way to comic book success that the major newspaper syndicates showed any interest. The original strip ran until 1966 and was revived several times in the seventies and eighties. The newspaper strip, which in its heyday ran in more than 230 newspapers with a total circulation of almost 25 million, arguably was the largest single factor in making Superman a household name.

This "newspaper" story, "Supreme and the Funnybook Felonies!" is based on a story which ran in *Superman* #19 (November-December 1942), entitled "The Case of the Funny Paper Crimes."

Strip 2, panel 2: "Upsy-Dazy" is a thinly-veiled version of Alley Oop, a time-traveling caveman created by Vince Hamlin who made his newspaper debut in 1934.

Page 34
Strip 2: Poopdeck the Sailor is based on Popeye, a character created by cartoonist Elzie Segar, who was introduced in the comic strip *Thimble Theatre* in 1929. Popeye, who had tremendous strength and was nearly indestructible, is considered a forerunner of Superman, although his adventures were played primarily for comedy. It should be noted that Popeye's father was named Poopdeck Pappy.

Page 35
Strip 1, panel 2: Poopdeck downs a can of broccoli to increase his strength. Popeye boosted his muscle power with canned spinach.
Strip 2, panel 3: Note that the beachgoer is reading *The Naked and the Dead*, a 1948 novel by Norman Mailer about World War Two.

Page 36
Strip 1, panel 2: Prince Features Syndicate is a none-too-subtle reference to King Features, one of the leading syndicates of newspaper comic strips.

Panel 3: One of the Prince Features editors asks Supreme nervously if he's "coming to take one of our characters to court, like you did Major Marvelous?" This is a reference to National's aforementioned lawsuit against Fawcett Comics, alleging that Captain Marvel was an imitation of Superman, which was settled out of court in late 1953.

Strip 2, panel 2: "R. F. Overcoat" is a reference to R. F. Outcault, the creator of *Hogan's Alley* and *The Yellow Kid*, the first American newspaper comic strips, which debuted in 1895. Good Oldberg is a stand-in for Rube Goldberg, a cartoonist and satirist best known for his cartoons depicting the convoluted contraptions of Professor Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts, mechanisms now known as "Rube Goldberg machines." The cartoons first appeared in 1914 and appeared periodically through the mid-sixties.

Panel 3: Lil' Abnorm is another thinly-veiled version of a well-known comic strip character, Al Capp's noble country bumpkin Lil' Abner, who debuted in 1934.

Page 37
Strip 1, panel 2: "Harold Beige" is a reference to Harold Gray, the creator of *Little Orphan Annie*, who made her debut in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1924.

Page 38:
Strip 1: The cartoon characters are revealed as "Syndicatrons" created by Rube Oldberg, bitter at having been put out to pasture by Supreme and his superhero ilk. Indeed, the advent of comic books began the decline of adventure strips in the newspapers, which today are all but extinct. Similarly, the crimes in *Superman* #19 were masterminded by an unnamed, disgruntled cartoonist who disguised himself as a villain called Funnyface.

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Issue #53 "19th Dimensional Nervous Breakdown"

The title of this issue is a play on "19th Nervous Breakdown," a song written by Keith Richards and Mick Jagger and performed by the Rolling Stones (81966 BMI Music, Inc.).

Page 1
Panel 4: The Suprematons are fixing Radar's speaker collar, which was destroyed by Hilda in issue #52A.

Page 2
Panel 2: Korgo's dialogue reads: "Supreme, we beg you! Take this prattling fool from our midst!"

The villains' concerns about their Constitutional rights seems misplaced given that, by all appearances, they've been imprisoned without trial.

Page 3
Panel 1: Ethan remarks that Billy lost his laptop communicator after he was again transformed into "Elaborate Lad" (as shown last issue). This will prove to be very significant later.

Panel 3: The Miskatonic Mental Institution for the Homicidally Depressed is analogous to DC's Arkham Asylum for the Criminally Insane. Arkham Asylum, which first appeared in *Batman* #258 (1974), was inspired by the works of seminal horror/fantasy author H.P. Lovecraft. In Lovecraft's stories, Miskatonic University was a fictional college located in the fictional city of Arkham, Massachusetts; it specialized in the study of arcane texts. We get a glimpse inside the Miskatonic Mental Institution in *Youngblood* #2.

Panel 4: Diana recalls that Miskatonic houses "old, mad Professor Night villains like Jack-a-Dandy and the Lounge Lizard." As shown in issue #47, the Jack-a-Dandy and the Lounge Lizard are two of Professor Night's greatest enemies, who at the time of this story are still imprisoned. Both villains are seen next in *Youngblood* #2. Arkham Asylum, Miskatonic's equivalent in the DC universe, is the home of such notable lunatics as the Joker, Two-Face, Poison Ivy, and the Riddler.

The name of the coffee shop is "Apollo's." Apollo was the Greek god of music and poetry; he was also associated with prophecy, which may be intended as a subtle clue to the plot of this issue.

Page 4
Panel 1: The murder at Youngblood headquarters and the subsequent trial in Supreme's Stadium Supreme is the subject of the *Judgment Day* mini-series.

Panel 2: Ethan is holding a copy of this issue of *Supreme*, which is complete with logos and ads.

Panel 3: The comic book page Ethan is looking at shows him looking at a smaller version of the same page. This visual technique has often been used for comic book covers since the early forties; such illustrations are referred to as "infinity covers."

Ethan's concern that the mysterious comic book will give away his secret identity parallels Superman's concerns in a tongue-in-cheek story entitled "Superman, Matinee Idol" that appeared in *Superman* #19 (November-December1942). In that story, Clark Kent took Lois Lane to a theater to see one of the Superman animated shorts produced during that period by Max Fleischer Studios. During the film, he was forced to repeatedly distract Lois's attention away from the screen because the cartoon showed him changing into Superman (although he seemed unconcerned about the rest of the audience).

There were seventeen of the Fleischer cartoons from 1941 to 1943; lavishly produced for the big screen, these cartoons are still considered classics in the field of animation.

Page 6
This is our first glimpse of Omniman. With his blonde hair, he bears some resemblance to Mighty Man, Supreme's colleague and a member of the Allied Supermen of America and the Allies, who was last seen in issue #49.

Page 9
Panel 3: Diana warns Supreme of Omniman's powers, which include "Omni-ventriloquism." This power is presumably the same as "super-ventriloquism," one of Superman's lesser known powers. It allowed him to literally throw his voice, almost like a radio broadcast: for example, he could use his super-ventriloquism to carry on a normal conversation while he was busy miles away. Superman first employed this power in *Superman* #62 (1950).

Page 10
Panel 1: Omni-exhalation is analogous to Superman's super-breath. Despite Supreme's confusion, this power is essentially the same as his "Shout Supreme," albeit using an exhalation of breath rather than a shout.

Panel 2: "Some Mylar mausoleum." Mylar is a clear, rigid plastic; because it does not promote acid decay, it is commonly used for archival storage of paper, including comic books. The "mausoleum" comment is a derisive remark about the tendency of comic book collectors to carefully seal away their books (to preserve their future value as collectibles) rather than read them.

Page 11
Panel 2: Supreme pits his Stare Supreme against Omniman's Omni-vision. Note that, despite what the Cyberzerk insisted in issue #51, Omniman obviously has *not* lost this power.

Panel 3: Lucas Tate wonders about the consequences of the fight, "with the industry in the state it's in." Sales for all comic books have dropped precipitously over the past ten years, with even the most popular comics selling barely a third as many copies as the industry leaders of the previous decade. Many professionals have wondered if the shrinking market is a death knell for comics as an industry; some point to the profusion of gimmicks and "stunt" storylines of the late eighties and early nineties as contributing to the decline.

Page 12
Panel 2: This is the first appearance of Carl Chambers, a new assistant editor at Dazzle Comics. His presence here is intended mainly as a setup for the story in issue #55, in which he plays a minor but significant role.

Page 14
Panel 1: This is Szazs, the Sprite Supreme, in the flesh. With his huge eyes and plastic hair, Szazs bears some resemblance to Astro Boy, a seminal Japanese manga and anime character who first appeared in *Shonen* magazine in 1951.

The "Impolympics" competition to which Szazs refers is reminiscent of the "Brxll Award," a prize issued by the Fifth Dimension's Academy of Practical Joking for which Mr. Mxyzptlk competed in *Superman* #154 (1962).

Page 15
Panel 2: Note the other sprite counterparts: Nite Mite, Qyrk the Sea-Sprite, and sprites of Fisherman, Janet Planet, Glory, Spacehunter, and Mighty Man. NiteMite is a counterpart of Bat-Mite, a magical imp who pestered Batman and Robin between 1959 and 1965. Unlike Mr. Mxyzptlk, Bat-Mite did not intend Batman any harm, but used his magical powers to try to spur the Dynamic Duo to more spectacular feats of heroism. Bat-Mite first appeared in *Detective Comics* #267 (1959); after 1965, he made only a handful of appearances, generally as a joke (e.g., "Bat-Mite's New York Adventure" in *Detective Comics* #482 or the hallucinatory Bat-Mite in *Legends of the Dark Knight* #38). *Ambush Bug* #3 (1985) showed Bat-Mite retired and married to Star-Mite, the sprite version of buxom heroine Starfire of the New Teen Titans. In the fifties and sixties many other DC characters also were saddled with cute alien or other comic relief sidekicks: Green Lantern had an alien starfish called Itty, Space Ranger (one of DC's futuristic outer space heroes) a pink, trumpet-nosed creature called Cryll, and Aquaman a "water-sprite" called Quisp.

Page 17
Panel 1: Diana Dane asks, "can't you try getting him to speak his name in reverse or something?" This was the traditional method for getting rid of Mr. Mxyzptlk; speaking or writing his name backwards would cause him to vanish back into his home dimension for at least 90 days. In his more recent appearances, Mxzyptlk has set other conditions for returning to the Fifth Dimension.

Panel 4: "Great Ganymede..." Ganymede is a satellite of the planet Jupiter with an icy surface that may conceal an ocean of liquid water. In Greek mythology, Ganymede was a mortal youth taken to Olympus to become the cup-bearer of the gods.

Page 20
Panels 1-3: Diana Dane and Supreme realize that the ending of the *Supreme* issue in their hands has the key to solving their dilemma. Since the eighties, there have been a number of comic series in which the characters are aware they are in a comic book, including Keith Giffen's *Ambush Bug* for DC and John Byrne's *She-Hulk* for Marvel, as well as the storyline in Grant Morrison's *Animal Man* #17-#26, in which Animal Man confronts his author.

Page 22
Panel 1: Supreme disproves Szazs's existence with a "Syllogism Supreme!" A syllogism is a logical but specious deductive argument, e.g., God lives on high, Denver is high, therefore God lives in Denver. Popular fiction's most famous syllogist is *Star Trek*'s Captain Kirk, who was an expert in driving intelligent computers to self-destruction through the use of spurious logic.

Page 23
Panel 2: Supreme's former Allies teammate Diehard is here to make arrangements to hold a murder trial in the Stadium Supreme. As revealed in *Judgment Day* #1, Youngblood member Riptide was recently murdered, apparently by one of her own teammates.

Panel 3: Knightsabre, another member of Youngblood, was charged with Riptide's murder.

Toby King is the secret identity of Skipper, the sidekick of the Fisherman. As shown in issues #49-#50, the Fisherman and Skipper were imprisoned in Hulver Ramik's Alcatraz of the Soul and were only recently freed by their old comrades of the Allies.

Panel 4: Toby King is now a lawyer, which seems unusual given that he only recently returned to Earth after an absence of nearly 30 years. Toby's DC counterpart, Roy Harper, Green Arrow's longtime sidekick Speedy, became a narcotics agent after a bout with heroin addiction (as revealed in the classic *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* #85); he now uses the name Arsenal and has a young daughter named Lian.

Toby tells Supreme that Professor Night's "old flame" Shona Shane will defend Knightsabre. As revealed in *Judgment Day*, Shona had a brief career as the costumed adventurer Lady Day. Shona may be based on DC's Batwoman, a crimefighting partner and sometimes love interest of Batman during the late fifties and early sixties. Batwoman was secretly Kathy Kane, a former motorcycle stunt rider who became wealthy after inheriting the estate of her late uncle. Her niece, Betty Kane, occasionally worked with her as Bat-Girl. Batwoman made her debut in *Detective Comics* #233 (1956) and appeared regularly in the Batman strip until 1964, after which she vanished completely for almost 15 years. She reappeared briefly in the late seventies and was murdered in 1979 by agents of the League of Assassins (*Detective Comics* #485). "Lady Day," incidentally, was a nickname for legendary blues singer Billie Holiday.

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Issue #54 "The Ballad of Judy Jordan"

The title of this issue may be inspired by a song by Shel Silverstein entitled "The Ballad of Lucy Jordan" (8 1979 Island Records, Inc.).

Page 1
Panel 1: Judy was born in Littlehaven in 1920; technically, she is the same age as Ethan Crane, although Ethan apparently stopped aging upon reaching adulthood.

Panel 2: This is a flashback to Kid Supreme's rescue of Judy from Darius Dax, as first seen in issue #43. "Space-Bullies" refers to Korgo the Space Tyrant, who was known as the Space Bully in his youth. "Evil doubles" presumably refers to the Shadow Supreme.

Panel 3: Jungle Judy is one of the many identities adopted by Judy Jordan, as seen in issue #51.

Page 2
Panel 1: Judy is said to have been 48 when Supreme left for space; her birthday is presumably late in the year, because Supreme left in 1969.

Trix is a breakfast cereal, made by General Mills, which first went on sale in 1954. It was one of the first pre-sweetened cereals.

Panel 2: This panel recaps events first described in issue #52A.

Page 4:
This page is highly reminiscent of the lurid covers of the science fiction pulps of the thirties, which frequently featured scantily-clad women trapped in the laboratories of mad scientists or in the clutches of BEMs (bug-eyed monsters).

Page 5
Panel 1: We learn that Judy has been revived not by Supreme but by Suprematon S-1.

Page 6
Panel 1: Judy's original body is now 77 years old.

Panels 3-5: Radar explains that Judy's personality was rebuilt out of echoes remaining in her brain and placed into a Suprematon body. This concept is very similar to Alan Moore's *Miracleman* #16 (1990), in which the alien Mors discovered that "people recently deceased leave faint vibrations, echoes of their personality which could be captured and embodied in an android." Miracleman and

Mors consigned the resurrected androids to an artificial "underworld" located beneath Miracleman's London citadel.

Page 7

Panel 1: Two notable new trophies are visible here:

The costume Judy wore as Supreme Woman in 1959, as shown in the cover gallery in issue #52A
The copy of *Supreme* #53, Supreme's souvenir of Szazs the Sprite Supreme's latest exploit, as seen in *Supreme* #53.

Page 8

Panel 3: Judy is now wearing the Supreme Woman costume seen on the previous page.

Page 13

Panel 2: Suprema recalls fighting Clare DeLune on the moon in 1965. "Clare Lune" was the alter ego of the Fiction House heroine Moon Girl, who appeared in her own series in 1947 and 1948. Moon Girl, created by prolific comics writer Gardner Fox (who wrote most of the adventures of the Justice Society of America in *All-Star Comics*), was closely based on Wonder Woman.

Page 15

Panels 3-4: Suprema sympathizes with Judy's broken heart, "even if it is only made of silicone!" Presumably she means "silicon," in reference to Judy's electronic nature; silicone is an inorganic polymer commonly used for waterproofing, electrical insulation, and breast implants.

Page 20

Panel 1: The creatures visible in the Imaginary Menagerie include:

A unicorn
The Medusa, a snake-haired monster from Greek mythology with the power to turn men to stone
A bat-like creature with a snake's tail
The angel Luriel.

Page 21

Panels 1-2: S-1 recaps the events of issue #43 and his "marriage" to a Suprematon duplicate of Judy.

Page 22

Panel 3: S-1's new name is Talos, after a metal man from Greek legend. In Greek myth, Talos was a man made of bronze, given as a gift to Europa by Zeus. He was the guardian of Crete.

With its headband and chest insignia, S-1's new costume is nearly identical to the Kryptonian outfit worn by Superman's father Jor-El before Superman's 1986 revision.

Diehard, Supreme's former comrade from the Allies, is present at the wedding. Because Diehard is also largely cybernetic, he may be attending as a show of moral support.
Page 23
Panel 2: The Supremobile is analogous to the Supermobile, a spacecraft Superman used in situations in which he was unable to fly. It may be the same craft seen in the citadel Supreme in issue #43.

S-1/Talos and Judy settle on a planet in the Rigel system. Rigel is a massive B-type star, a blue giant about 65 times the size of the sun and 50,000 times brighter. It is part of a trinary star system located about 810 light-years from Earth. Rigel forms the foot of the constellation Orion; the name is derived from *rijl*, the Arabic word for foot.

Page 24
Panel 3: Seen on the balcony of their new home, Talos and Judy are dead-ringers for Superman's parents, Jor-El and Lara, as they were depicted before Superman's 1986 revision.

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Issue #55 "Silence at Gettysburg"

Gettysburg is a small town in Pennsylvania that was the site of a famous battle in the American Civil War from July 1 to July 3, 1863. The defeat suffered there by the Confederate Army is generally seen as the turning point of the war, but Gettysburg is best known for the speech given by President Abraham Lincoln upon the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery on November 19, 1863, an address which is one of the most famous of all American speeches and which is considered one of the finest-ever examples of political oratory.

The alterations to history that take place in this story occurred on June 1, 1863, and resulted in the immediate and

[editor's note: An unfortunate file problem ate the end of the original file, so most of #55 and all of #56 have been lost]