"SO, MISTER RAMSAY...

...WHY DO YOU HATE SUPERMAN?"

NOTE: THIS STORY TAKES PLACE AFTER THE EVENTS OF ACTION COMICS #6.
I HAVE MY REASONS.

I'M SURE YOU DO.
BUT IF YOU WANT TO BE PART OF THIS PROJECT YOU'LL HAVE TO SHARE THEM.

YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE ALL THAT INFO IN THAT FILE ALREADY, DOCTOR ABERNATHY.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE ANYWAY SOME KIND OF GOVERNMENT THING?

IT'S BETTER NOT TO ASK THOSE SORTS OF QUESTIONS AND I'D RATHER HEAR YOUR REASONS FROM YOU.
SUPERMAN TOOK EVERYTHING FROM ME! MY HOME! MY WIFE! HE PUT ME IN THE HOSPITAL!

WHERE'S MY HOME? WHERE'S MY WIFE? EVER SINCE THEN, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET EVEN BUT THE COPS IGNORED ME EVEN THE SLEAZIEST LAWYERS IN METROPOLIS WON'T TAKE THE CASE.

EVERYBODY HAD PLENTY OF EXCUSES BUT I KNOW THE REAL REASON.

-NONE OF 'EM HAD THE GUTS TO STAND UP TO SUPERMAN!

SHEESH! YOU WANT REASONS?

SO NOW I NEED TO FIND SOMEWAY TO STAND UP TO SUPERMAN!

P-Perhaps.

PROJECT K-MAN NEEDS A TEST SUBJECT AS WE ATTEMPT TO CREATE A DEFENSE AGAINST SUPERMAN IF THE PROCESS IS SUCCESSFUL IT COULD GIVE YOU EVEN GREATER POWER THAN SUPERMAN'S...

BUT I SHOULD WARN YOU, THE PROCESS IS UNTESTED. IT'S FAR MORE LIKELY THE PROCEDURE WILL KILL YOU.
POCTOR IRONS?

ACROSS A TABLE, SO SWEET, SO DILD, AND SO...

DOCTOR IRONS?

WAH...? SUPERMAN!
HOW DID YOU...?

HOLD ON! YOU CAN'T BE IN HERE!
THE SUIT'S POWER CORE--IT'S RADIOACTIVE!

Yeah, I know.

OH... RIGHT.
SO UM, YOU THOUGHT YOU'D JUST STOP BY MY LEAD-LINED RADIATION LAB?

NOT EXACTLY, I WAS THINKING... REMEMBERING HOW YOU HELPED ME IN THE FIGHT AGAINST METAL-ZERO.

OH, WELL, YOU REALLY DIDN'T HAVE TO COME THANK M--

BUT THEN I ALSO REMEMBERED THAT YOU WERE THE ONE WHO BUILT METAL-ZERO--

---AND THAT YOU WERE THERE WHEN LUTHOR AND THE ARMY CONDUCTED THEIR LITTLE TORTURE SESSION.

---YOU MEAN... YOU WANT TO KNOW IF YOU SUPERMAN... HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT FROM ME, JOHN HENRY IRONS?

AT FIRST, MAYBE. BUT THAT WASN'T WHAT I SIGNED UP FOR. SO I QUIT AND--

WAIT...
HA HA HA HA HA HA!

COME ON... I'LL BUY YOU A COFFEE.

AFTER WE'RE DECONTAMINATED, OF COURSE.
ARE YOU DEAF, LUTHOR, OR JUST NOT LISTENING? YOU'RE DONE.

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, SAM.

THAT'S "GENERAL LANE."

I'M CANCELED!

MY CONSULTING CONTRACT WITH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

COMMANDING OFFICER

OH, PLEASE.

I DELIVERED THE "SUPERMAN" CREATURE TO YOU AS PROMISED. IF YOUR PEOPLE WERE TOO INCOMPETENT TO HOLD HIM, THAT'S HARDLY MY RESPONSIBILITY.

WHO'S TALKING ABOUT SUPERMAN?

YOU SOLD OUT THE WHOLE PLANET!

IF I HAD ANY HARD EVIDENCE OF YOUR DEAL WITH THE COLLECTOR OF WORLDS, I'D HAVE YOU SHOT FOR TREASON!

WHAT A PITY, THEN, THAT YOU DON'T.

I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO ARREST YOU, BUT I'M SURE AS HELL NOT GOING TO TRUST YOU WITH ACCESS TO A CLASSIFIED INSTALLATION!

SEND THOSE M.P.S IN HERE!
THAT'S HIGHLY DOUBTFUL.
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY HANDLE EXTRANORMAL THREATS LIKE "SUPERMAN" WITHOUT MY HELP.

DON'T BE SO SURE. I ALREADY HAVE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS UNDER WAY.

GOOD LUCK WITH THOSE. AS I RECALL, YOUR LAST PROGRAM PRODUCED A SUIT OF ARMOR THAT BURST ITS WEARER'S HEART THE FIRST TIME HE PUT IT ON. VERY IMPRESSIVE.

WHEN YOU COME BEGGING ME TO RETURN, I DO HOPE I'LL BE ABLE TO FIT IT INTO MY SCHEDULE-- AT A NEW CONSULTING RATE, NATURALLY.
ONE DAY AGO.

STAY PERFECTLY STILL.

SO THAT’S THE THING THAT’S GONNA JUICE ME UP?

NOT EXACTLY. THAT MODIFIED LINEAR ACCELERATOR IS MERELY THE DELIVERY SYSTEM. THE “JUICE” WILL COME—

THIS SHARD WAS TAKEN FROM AN INCREDIBLE POWER SOURCE THAT PROPELLED AN ALIEN ROCKET ACROSS GALAXIES—APARENTLY FROM THE SAME PLANET AS SUPERMAN HIMSELF.

MY EMPLOYER CALLS IT “KRYPTONITE.”

—FROM THIS.

WHAT, THAT LITTLE CRYSTAL? IS THIS A JOKE?

DON’T CONFUSE SIZE WITH POWER.

IN THEORY, BY THE TIME WE’RE DONE, THE PROCESS WILL SUPERCHARGE YOUR CELLS TO A DEGREE EVEN GREATER THAN SUPERMAN’S.

HOW DO I WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

DON’T WORRY, I’M JUST GOING TO THE SHIELDED CONTROL ROOM NEXT DOOR.

THE IDEA IS TO IRRADIATE YOUR CELLS, NOT MINE.

THE PRINCIPLE IS SIMPLE. OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, THIS MACHINE WILL SLOWLY IRRADIATE THE CELLS OF YOUR BODY UNDER CONTROLLED CONDITIONS.
THIS IS JUST THE FIRST TREATMENT. SO WE'LL KEEP IT MILD UNTIL YOU BUILD UP A TOLERANCE. READY? HERE GOES ONE TWO.

THREE!

YEAAAAARRGGGHHH!

?1 I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND! IT—IT MUST BE THE KRYPTONITE! IT'S EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN I THOUGHT!

WELL, DO SOMETHING!
I AM!
BUT THE
POWER'S BUILDING
EXPO-
NEN-
TLIA!

IT'LL
OVERLOAD THE
SYSTEM IN
SECONDS!

AAAAARRGGHHH!

MAKE IT
STOP!

I'M
TRYING!
I'M TRY-

IF I
CAN HIT THE
EMERGENCY
CUTOFF
IN TIME.
FIFTEEN MINUTES AGO.

HELP ME! SOMEBODY HELP!

--WHERE A CRANE COLLAPSE THREATENS THE LIFE OF THE HELPLESS CONSTRUCTION WORKER TRAPPED INSIDE, NOT TO MENTION COUNTLESS PASSERS-BY--

COME TO YOU LIVE FROM DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS--

LET'S GO, JIMMY! YOU CAN GET A BETTER SHOT FROM CLOSER UP!

MAYBE WE CAN EVEN FIND A WAY TO HELP.

SURE, LOIS, WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG WITH THAT?

GIMME A BREAK, YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE CLARK! IF WE CAN JUST--

WHOA!
If you’ve got your photo, you’d better clear out. I can’t hold this forever.

MISS LANE.

AND THAT MAKES THE FRONT PAGE.
NOT USED TO FIGHTING SOMEONE TOUGHER THAN YOU, HUH?

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT I'M--

YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM? YOU BUST UP MY MARRIAGE, THROW ME OUT A WINDOW, AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM?

NO! THE PEOPLE--!

WHUWWUH!

I--

WHY'S THIS CAR SO HEAVY?

WAIT "RAMMY? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?"

I--
Yeah, that's right, Clay Ransay—but now they call me K-Man!

I've got power of my own this time! Enough for payback for busting my legs for stealing my wife!

"Stealing your wife"? You were beating her!

You've been doing it for years!

So I stopped it!

I knew the fall into the river wasn't high enough to kill you but you sure wouldn't hit her again.

Especially not after I helped her settle into a women's shelter where you'll never find her.

You self-righteous son of a—she was my wife!

She was terrified of you!

You had no right!

I had a responsibility!
I LOVE HER!
STAY BACK! IT'S A BATTLEFIELD OUT THERE!

WHAT—WHAT'S HE DOING TO SUPERMAN?!

BACK.

BATTLEFIELD.

WHAT'S HE POINTING TO SUPERMAN?!

LOOKS LIKE CHRISTMAS CAME EARLY THIS YEAR.

TELL ME WHERE MY WIFE IS AND I'LL FINISH YOU QUICKLY.

HOW...?

OH.

HERE.

LETS TRY THIS...

N-NOT A CHANCE! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME—SHE'LL BE SAFE FROM YOU.

STUPID CHOICE, NOW THIS--

--THIS IS GONNA HURT!
Yeah, it probably will.

HRA DOOOOMM

Seems like watching your back is getting to be a habit. Good thing they're broadcasting these bulletins live... and that my grandmother is so addicted to her "stories."

Here—this sash for you.

Give him a hand with that will you, ma'am?
WHAT, NOW THE SECOND STRING WANTS A PIECE OF ME TOO?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT THAT SUPERMAN DOESN'T?

WELL, FOR ONE THING, I RECOGNIZE YOUR ENERGY SIGNATURE. I KNOW YOUR POWER SOURCE—

AND I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD THEORY ABOUT HOW YOU BEAT SUPERMAN!

IT'S NOT JUST YOUR STRENGTH YOU'RE THROWING OFF KRYPTONITE RADIATION!

THAT'S HURTING HIM MORE THAN YOUR BLOWS!

THINK YOU'RE SMART, HUH?

KRAK
WELL, YOU HAD TO BE PRETTY STUPID TO THINK YOU COULD TAKE ME!

OH, I DIDN'T THINK THAT.

Huh?

YOU'RE STRONGER THAN SUPERMAN. I COULDN'T BEAT YOU HEAD TO HEAD.

BUT I COULD BUY SOME TIME.

YEAH, RIGHT. FOR WHAT?
thanks FOR THE SUIT.

r i, uh, A THINK I'LL LET YOU TAKE OVER NOW.

THANKS FOR THE SUIT.

IT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.

NOW, LET'S TRY THIS--

YOUR ONLY PROTECTION IS THIS FLIMSY PIECE OF CLOTH--

AND NOW, NOT EVEN THAT!
Honestly?

It's l-like white-hot needles... in my blood... but not nearly as s-362 as before...

It must've taken a l-lot of energy to... blast me with radiation...

... but you're not going to get one!

I'm s-betting you need a recharge...
Hope you don't mind if I sit down now.

Yeah! Hooofff! I wouldn't mind a breather myself.

Thanks for the help back there. That's another one I owe you.

Looks like Metropolis has two protectors now. You'll have to call yourself something.

See, you're definitely what the newspapers call you—a superhero swooping in singlehanded to save the day.

But that's not really my style.

Back when the collector of worlds stole Metropolis a few weeks ago, what did you do? You jumped into space—I mean jumped into space! To bring it back.

I did what I could to help out too, but I was down on the ground, along side the rescue workers and all of the everyday people who were pitching in too.

It gave me an idea— to be my own kind of hero.
"Steelworks"?

My new startup: a socially responsible tech company!
I figure I'll travel the world for a while...

Bring my technology to the neediest places on earth, and see what I can do to help people help themselves.

I'll travel the world for a while...

Just like I helped people in Metropolis when they needed it.

Just like I helped you.

Guess I don't have to worry about you, huh?

Ha, you might have something else to worry about, though.

What's that? As far as I know, the only kryptonite on earth was in your rocket. So if that's what powered K-Man, no. I don't know... but I know just the person to do some digging.

Where did he get it?
Dear Natasha,

Surely, I know how you feel about email mail. But wireless signals aren't so easy to come by in the middle of the Australian desert.

Training sessions with the local Anangu have been going great. We're well on the way to rigging up the whole village for solar power.

The villagers may be too poor to buy electricity from the power company, especially those far off the grid—but they always have plenty of sun.
I've been learning so much from them too—like their traditional techniques for environmental sustainability.

It's already sparked ideas for some new tech applications that I'm dying to try out.

Not to mention I'm learning to play a mean didgeridoo.

Richard Feynman would be proud.

In another month or so, we should have the whole village done. Then I'll move on to some other part of the world.

Although, to be honest, the ripples really extend back to the person who inspired me.

Meanwhile, the Anangu will use what they've learned to train people in the neighboring village too.

If all goes well, the ripple effect will carry forward long after I'm gone.
I wonder... maybe that's the mark of a superhero. Not just incredible powers or saving the day, but the effect you have on other people.

**Inspiring them to keep trying...**

**TWO DAYS FROM NOW.**

**COME ON SHUFF! IT'S GOT TO SHUFF BE HERE.**

**GOT TO... THERE!**

**ALMOST ALMOST THERE.**

**GOT IT! I SHOULD HOPE SO THAT XENOMINERAL IS IRREPLACEABLE.**
MISTER LUTHOR!

I DO NOT APPRECIATE CARELESSNESS WITH MY PROPERTY, ABERNATHY! ESPECIALLY WHEN THE PROPERTY WAS SO DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN.

I'M NOT GOING TO REMIND YOU THAT ANYTHING YOU SEE IS NOT FROM SCI-FI, IT'S NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE AND POWERED BY A RADIOACTIVE CORE OF ALIEN CRYSTAL. "KRYPTONITE," PERHAPS?

SPECIAL CLEARANCE IS REQUIRED FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANY SPECIMENS.
BUT THE IMPORTANT POINT REMAINS: WE NOW KNOW THAT K-RADIATION CAN HURT, OR PERHAPS EVEN KILL SUPERMAN...

I-I'M SLAP YOU SEE IT THAT WAY. I HAVE MANY IDEAS FOR WAYS TO EXTEND OUR WORK. MAYBE THE ENERGY OUTPUT COULD BE MADE MORE CONTROLLABLE OR EVEN MORE DEADLY—

BY EXPERIMENTING WITH THE HARMONICS OF THE KRYPTONITE CRYSTAL OR WE COULD TRY SHIFTING THE WAVELENGTH OF ITS RADIATION INTO OTHER PARTS OF THE VISIBLE SPECTRUM...

OAH, YES, FINE.
One day from now.

The science boys tell me that they act like control rods to dampen your radiation and nullify your power. You're not going anywhere.

Those manacles are some kind of cadmium-iridium alloy.

There's kryptonite in this building somewhere... I can sense it... I need it.

At least, not without my say-so.

General Samuel Lane, U.S. Army.

Well then, maybe we can help each other.
THE PUBLIC SEES SUPERMAN AS SOME SORT OF HERO NOW. I CAN'T AFFORD TO BE SO TRUSTING.

SUPERMAN HAS TOO MUCH POWER TO BE ALLOWED TO WALK AROUND WITHOUT SOME SORT OF COUNTERMEASURE IN PLACE.

WITH THE PROPER TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE, I BELIEVE YOU COULD BE THAT COUNTERMEASURE. INTERESTED?

IF IT MEANS KRYPTONITE AND A CHANCE TO KILL SUPERMAN, THEN YESH-I'M IN. BUT ONLY IF YOU DO SOMETHING FOR ME FIRST.

OH? WHAT'S THAT?

YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND MY WIFE.