



An Untold Story from *The Adventures of Superman*

By Bruce Kanin

*June 2012*

***MASTER MIND***  
***Episode 2 of 3***  
***“Man in the Shadows”***



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*"Hello. I think you all know who I am. What you are about to see is a special story in **The Adventures of Superman**. Simply put, it's about a brilliant man who turns to crime after an unfortunate turn of events. But life didn't start out that way for him, and perhaps that's what makes this story so interesting.*

*"What also makes it special is that it's essentially told from his point of view. The faces familiar to you also don't make an appearance until, well, halfway through the story. You know, Perry White, Lois Lane, young Jim Olsen, Inspector Henderson and, well, me, of course.*

*"Anyway, I hope you enjoy our tale. It's a sequel to the previous one, 'Attack of the Zombies' and sets up the finale of our three-part epic, 'The Super-Menace of Metropolis'.*

*"Now, you might want to get something to munch on, and something to wash it down. Then sit back and enjoy, 'Man in the Shadows'. Oh, and... see you in Metropolis."*



## ACT 1: "OAK RIDGE BOY"

### **MAXWELL'S ROCK**



**IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF METROPOLIS** not far from the point where a tributary of the Hobbs River widens to become the Metropolis Sound sits a grassy ridge known as Maxwell's Rock. Below this formation lies a series of natural limestone caves of varying sizes. Several underground passageways wide enough for a person to somewhat easily navigate connect the caverns. The easternmost cave is joined to a man-made tunnel carved from rock that leads a hundred yards or so to the Sound.

It was not known who built the tunnel, nor when. What was recorded is that a local Cherokee tribe used the labyrinth until the late Nineteenth Century before being abandoned. Then, in 1920, the underground facility found a new purpose. Prohibition had taken hold, and with that came a need to store and transport alcohol, illegally, of course.

Old-timers who remembered the Indians under Maxwell's Rock spread the word amongst Prohibition dodgers. Before long, the caves became a distribution and storage point for illicit booze. The liquor was transported into the underground location via the tunnel from boats docked by the Sound, and then distributed using trails rising from the caves to the surface.

After the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the caves fell into disuse once again. They remained that way, more or less for almost two decades until a man named Alexander Endicott and his sister Elena found the location convenient as a hideout and much more. Alec, the name by which his sister called him, was a man of grandiose plans. By 1954 he was building towards his most incredible scheme ever – predicated on a major theft – hatching plans with his sister, along with several hired hands, underneath Maxwell's Rock.

He had, over time, built a sophisticated laboratory – clearly ahead of its time – in one of the larger caverns. As well, Endicott had outfitted the other caves with power, plumbing and other amenities as necessary. Electricity was plentiful, having been tapped from the *Project X* nuclear pile facility less than a quarter of a mile away via a clandestine underground cable.

Alec Endicott rarely took time out to reflect on anything. He was always moving forward, maintaining momentum towards his goals, whatever they were. But there he was, amidst his cavernous Maxwell's Rock lair he'd built, sitting at a makeshift wooden desk next to the large telephoto of Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Endicott was waiting for a key step in his operation to reach a major milestone, and as he did, he reflected on the events that brought him to this point in his life.

Randall Endicott, his father, was born on the day that William McKinley was sworn in as America's twenty-fifth President. It was a glorious and promising time for the United States and rest of the Western world, what with the dawn of Twentieth Century being less than three years away. Industry and technology were on the march during the final decade of the Nineteenth Century. The use of electricity, particularly in the form of lighting, was spreading. Inventions of all kinds were proliferating, including the wireless radio and wire photos, the Zeppelin airship, motion pictures, the diesel engine, Ford's "quadricycle", aspirin and x-ray photography.

World-changing scientific discoveries were abundant, such as radiation, including its relationship with magnetism, as well as Radium, alpha, beta and gamma rays. Adrenaline was discovered and a vaccine for the killer disease cholera was created. The first open heart surgery was performed.

And H. G. Wells published "The Time Machine".



Randall's father, William, an engineer, spent much of his adult life working on Reconstruction – specifically, the rebuilding of Southern cities devastated, for the most part, by Union soldiers. William spent a great deal of his time supervising the rebuilding of Richmond, Atlanta, Columbia and Savannah.

He even took a cadre of engineers along the route of Sherman's devastating march from Atlanta to Savannah, surveying the damage and laying plans for the rebuilding of towns, farms, railroad lines and such along the way.

Given this, it was not so surprising that Randall Endicott, being born in an age of scientific discoveries and breakthroughs, and being born to an engineer, himself grew up to be a scientific engineer, and a good one. Before long, as a young adult, Randall and his bride Miriam moved to Washington, D.C. where he would work as a scientist for the National Laboratories, a major government research firm.



Randall and Miriam then exhibited an uncanny ability to synchronize their growing family with world history: on the very day that the United States declared war on Germany, beginning America's participation in Europe's Great War, Alexander was born. And then, a little more than two years later, Elena was born – the day that the *Treaty of Versailles* was signed, ending what would eventually be called World War I.

Of course, Alec knew this only from his parents' stories. But it was his family history following this that he remembered firsthand, for better or worse.

With National Laboratories receiving a number of contracts from Federal Government, especially for the Department of War, Randall's job flourished, as did his income. This enabled the Endicott family to withstand the Depression sweeping America and the world.



**OAK RIDGE AND BEYOND (FLASHBACK)**

And then, with Fascist storm clouds spreading across Europe, a fateful day arrived when the Endicott family moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. It was there that Randall joined a team of lead scientists on the top-secret *Manhattan Project*. Due to various circumstances and given his clout, Randall was able to have Alexander, an M.I.T. student, work alongside him as an apprentice in one of the labs with lower security clearance.

But it wasn't long before the Endicott son proved himself to be worthy of working in the main top-secret lab. In fact, the scientists employed alongside Randall, among them the lead man Robert Oppenheimer, the famed Enrico Fermi and equally renown Edward Teller, not to mention an up and coming technical wizard named Howard Stark, all believed that one day the son would eclipse the father, i.e., that Alexander was a *genius*.



Throughout his years in private school and M.I.T., Alexander earned nicknames that resulted from his being an egghead, e.g., *Alexander the Greater*, *Smart Aleck* and even *Brainiac*. His friends called him Alec; his parents never stopped calling him Alexander.

Being exceptionally smart did not go unnoticed by Alec himself. He believed that he was right 100% of the time and it showed. He exuded an air of pomposity and developed an impatience for those who couldn't keep up with him - which seemed to be most everyone.

Alec was also a prankster. In the main college-dining hall he gained access to a coat closet and fed low voltage electricity to a steel bar upon which metal hangars sat, giving patrons an unexpected shock. During an overnight field trip sponsored by the school for a geology class, Alec added a laxative to the dinnertime stew, resulting in many irate campers.



On several floors of his dorm building Alec added a colorless, odorless and otherwise harmless chemical to water coolers that turned peoples' skin a pale green.

Given Alec's straight A's and family name, the M.I.T. Trustees did everything they could to look the other way. Eventually, though, the Trustees and Randall Endicott made a deal, which was to have Alec complete his studies remotely in the Oak Ridge surroundings and via the University of Tennessee.

Alec's propensity for pranks, as well as his pomposity, had a side effect: people tended to shun him as a freak.

The result was a dearth of friends.



However, in the new setting of Oak Ridge, Alec did in fact develop two close relationships, albeit with people older than him, not peers. One was Milton Adams, a professor at the local University of Tennessee branch. Adams taught, amongst other things, Introductory Physics that Elena, a freshman, attended. Alec would often escort his sister to class and as it was during a break in his schedule. He would stay and sit in the back, listening to Adams. Sometimes he would raise his hand to ask challenging questions, beyond the scope of the introductory class. Alec and Adams would enter into debates during class that would carry over afterwards. Before long, both men would meet each other in *Compounds*, an off-campus bar.

Alec and Professor Adams quickly developed a great admiration for one another. Whereas Alec would describe wild and fantastic theories, Adams would initially regard them as science fiction. But then the two would often reach a common ground, each taking satisfaction that they had led the other to a mutual understanding.



The pair also had a fascination with uranium. Both men knew about its use in an atomic bomb, but felt that it could be used for additional purposes – both peaceful and otherwise.



On one fateful night, however, at the end of a semester in which Adams was set to leave for a work assignment out west, the two did something they hadn't done before: they made a bet. Both were aware of the *Manhattan Project* and its goal. After they put air in a bottle of *Jim Beam*, the pair settled down to a game of "challenge" over shots of *Southern Comfort*. With every shot, each man would "up" the ante. It started with innocent ideas, such as Alec claiming he could invent a pill to quadruple automobile gasoline mileage and Adams saying he could build a Geiger Counter that would detect radiation hundreds of miles away.



Then after additional shots, they went after more fantastic ideas, such as Alec bending space and time to shorten trips by rocket ships across the universe, and Adams designing a machine to transport matter from one location to another.

Finally, at close to 2:30AM that Sunday morning, with only Alec, Adams and Artie the bartender left, the student and the professor made a bet. Alec, being "well away" and oblivious to the fact that all the other patrons had probably gone home, lowered his voice in deference to the *Manhattan Project's* work being a secret.

He said to Adams, "Perfessor." Alec paused, and then sat back, saying proudly, "I can build an atomic bomb." He stuck a delayed finger in the air to drive home his claim.

Adams put an unsteady finger up to his lips, *shshhing* Alec, saying, "You – you wouldn't know the first thing."

Alec looked behind him and then back at Adams, "Excuse me? Were you talking to shomeone behind me? Because I not only know the first ... the first thing, but all things, my good man and perfessor, about what you just ... *shshh'd* me ... about." Alec nodded his head like Stan Laurel.

Adams looked at the man across the table and shook his head. "OK, Alecks ... Alecks-ander. Let's say, for arguments sake, you can in fact build a—"

This time Alec put an unsteady finger up to his lips and *shshh'd* Professor Adams.

Adams continued, "—a *shshh*. Well, my friend, I'll bet you that **I** can build a better, more powerful, b—" he put his finger up to his own lips "*shshh* ... and do it **before** you can." Then Adams nodded proudly, lifting his shot glass.

Alec squinted at Adams' glass and said, "Perfessor, I do believe there's too much air in your glass." He pointed at the bottle of Southern Comfort. "May I, shir?"

Just then, a third voice joined the conversation. "OK, lads, how about I pour, then both of you drink and let me close up my place with you on the other side of that" It was Artie, who nodded at *Compounds'* door. It wasn't a question, either.

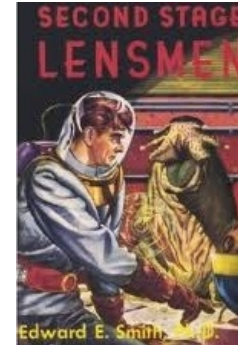
The bartender filled their shot glasses and then walked back to his bar with the near-empty bottle. The pair of inebriated eggheads then toasted to their "bet" and unsteadily headed out the door into the chilly April darkness.

The Professor and student would not see each other again for several years and then, under quite different circumstances.

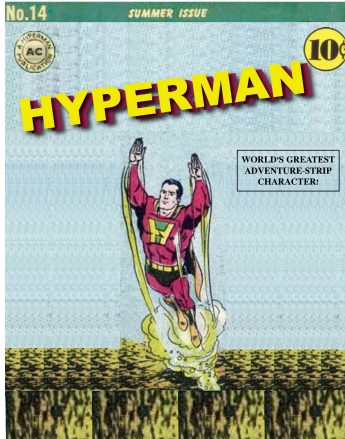
At the other end of the spectrum, Alec had befriended a machinist working on the *Manhattan Project*, a fellow a few years older than him named David Redfield. Unlike Professor Adams, Redfield wasn't in Alec's league when it came to IQ.



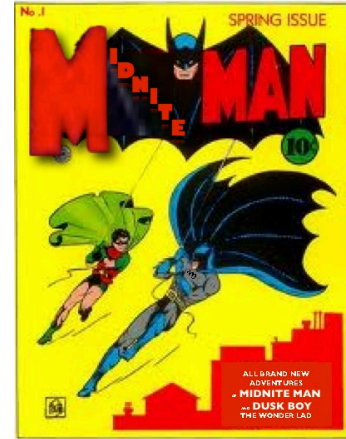
However, what brought them together was their mutual interest in fantasy stories – Alec as a diversion from the intensity of his work and David as an escape from his often humdrum job. They would often trade their opinions on books by Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein, as well as "Skylark" Smith and *The Lensman* series in *Astounding Stories*.



Redfield had come across a fan magazine containing short stories by an obscure writer named Ray Bradbury, and that piqued Alec's interest, as well.



The pair would spend their lunch breaks and evening hours at a tobacco shop in nearby Maryville, bringing the latest issue of *Astounding* and even *American Comics* issues of *Hyperman* as well as *Midnite Man* and his young sidekick *Dusk Boy*.



Alec felt a real kinship with David, a bond formed by their love of fantasy. Once Adams departed, Redfield was really Alec's only friend. David and Alec's fantasy reading were Alec's only real diversions, as the Endicott son was otherwise busy helping his father in the laboratories almost seven days a week on the top priority government project.

And then one morning, Alec's world quickly came apart.

It started when he heard that David Redfield had transferred to Los Alamos, New Mexico. That was distressing for Alec, for now with Professor Adams also gone, David's absence would leave him without any real friends.

But what came next was *beyond* distressing. Sitting at a workbench reviewing technical diagrams, Alec barely noticed four well-dressed men walk into the top-secret lab where his father worked. Fifteen minutes later, the men emerged, with Randall Endicott in the middle of the entourage, being escorted out of the lab.

Alec saw the grim look on his father's face and called to him. When his dad just silently shook his head at his son, Alec ran over, but the men in suits kept him at arms length from Randall. He asked his father what was going on, but Randall just winked and smiled back at his son.

For Alexander Endicott, it was the first defining moment of his life – a scene he would replay in slow motion for a long time to come. The men with crew cuts wearing dark suits, black ties and white shirts, all with their somber looks, Alec would soon learn, were Government Men – *G-men*. They sent by some high-up authority figure to insure that those who committed crimes against America would be dealt with.

Over the next days, the storm clouds around Randall Endicott intensified. Miriam, Alec and Elena learned that he had been charged with "stealing private property". No other details were provided. As they waited for the trial, Alec found himself

unable to focus on his work, whether in school or at the Oak Ridge facility. All he could think of was his father's innocence and unjust arrest.

Alec then began to deliberate on the power that the authority figures and the G-men wielded - how they could, at a whim and perhaps based on no solid evidence at all, snatch away someone of good standing. Like an invisible hand from above, they could without warning could pluck a person straight off the face of the Earth, just like that.

They could do this, Alec thought, because they were in a position to do so. They weren't scientists, teachers, students, homemakers or any of the so-called common people who lived out their daily lives in the hope of some semblance of an enjoyable existence.

No, these were people who had attained a position of unthinkable *power* over others, whether they were elected or via inheritance or some other means.

### **Power.**

They had *power* and used it as they wish against anyone they wished. To Alec Endicott, this was *wrong*. He knew his father was innocent, because well ... he *knew* his father. His dad was a patriot, just like his grandfather, William. If anything, Randall was involved in an effort to *defend* free men everywhere from the threat of those who were against democracy and freedom!



And instead of being recognized and treated as such, the men who had *power* decided otherwise. They deemed Randall Endicott an *enemy*, intending to put him away.

As a result, when Randall Endicott was led out of the *Manhattan Project* facilities by G-men, it hatched what would become Alexander Endicott's lifelong hatred of the government - particularly the **power** it wielded. *Something must be done about that*, he thought, *and someone must take them on*.

In the meantime, though, Alec's attention was on his father. Later, on the day of his arrest, Randall was allowed a phone call to his family. When he spoke to Alec, he urged his son to take care of Miriam. The conversation ended with Randall saying, "Son, everything's going to be all right."



But even if the elder Endicott meant those words, things would turn out otherwise. Within days of his arrest, Randall Endicott appeared in Washington, D.C. before the Congressional *House of Un-American Activities Committee* (HUAC), in a closed-door session. Alec and his mom drove to Atlanta catching a flight to D.C. where they met Elena, who had flown in from California. The family of three waited in a hotel for word on what was happening.

The Endicott trio learned the hard way, via a newspaper headline:

### ***GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST ACCUSED OF TREASON!***

They read in the *Washington Post* that Randall Endicott had been accused of passing top-secret plans from the *Manhattan Project* to the Soviet Union. He denied it vehemently, of course, and his family was aghast. Miriam believed in her husband's innocence – she knew that Randall was a fervent patriot, believing in America first and foremost – she was *sure* of it – so the charges *must* have been false.

The Endicott children felt the same way about their beloved father. Moreover, Alec, who had worked closely with his dad, knew how passionately Randall felt about the *Manhattan Project* and how much America needed it.

The family was allowed to sit in the courtroom during the trial. The actual secrets supposedly passed on by Randall Endicott were alluded to but never identified specifically. The few prosecution witnesses mainly served to authenticate sensitive information supposedly passed to the Soviets.

But then the prosecution had one final witness who made Alec's heart sink: *David Redfield*. He testified that he saw Randall Endicott pass secret designs to someone who would later be known to be a Soviet spy. It occurred in a gymnasium on the Oak Ridge grounds. Redfield explained that he had dozed off by a locker, and then was awoken by whispers and a shuffling of papers nearby. He of course recognized Randall Endicott, but didn't know the man with him.

A few days later, Redfield testified, when the unknown man's photo appeared in the *Chattanooga Times* as an arrested Soviet spy, David was shocked to recall that it was the same man with Endicott. Reluctantly, he went to the authorities to explain what he had seen in the gym locker. Endicott's prints were on the secret papers, and the arrest followed.

This came at a bad time for Randall Endicott. Though World War II was at its peak and the Soviets were technically allies, particularly after Hitler had invaded Russia, the *Manhattan Project* had been a U.S. government secret. Great Britain was the only major ally having knowledge of the effort. The Soviets under the oppressive dictator



Josef Stalin were considered, at best, to be a “friend” only because they were the enemy of an enemy.

It was widely accepted that once the war would be over, the fragile friendship with the U.S.S.R. would disintegrate. As such, passing secret information that could provide them with a major military capability was a very serious matter.

As a consequence, the scales of justice often became somewhat lopsided during these tense times and Randall Endicott suffered for it. Whereas in a true peacetime a jury might have acquitted him due to “reasonable doubt”, here they erred on the side of caution – in favor of protecting America. There was sufficient evidence to *suggest* that he might have been a spy or collaborator with the Soviets, and that was enough to convict him.



And in these times, with the world fighting a war in two theaters - Europe and Asia - and people everywhere being on edge, conviction for treason was a very bad thing – not only in this case for Randall Endicott, but for his family.

With Randall’s conviction, the world of Miriam, Alec and Elena completely unraveled. They went from having a solid, thriving, affluent family life in Tennessee – to being scorned as the wife and children of a traitor – someone who *betrayed* America during wartime.

And as if to cap the bleak series of events, the charges on Randall Endicott would put him on death row.

Just prior to Randall’s arrest, Alec’s sister escaped the turmoil somewhat in that she had gone to U.C.L.A. in Los Angeles where she eventually married and was now Elena DeWitt. She was still distraught for her father, not to mention her mom and brother, but more or less avoided the glare of flashbulbs and newsreel cameras, except when joining her mother and brother at Randall’s trial.

Besides what Randall was going through, the brunt of the tormenting experience was left for Miriam and Alec. Both worked with lawyers, day and night, in an attempt to secure an appeal. They were determined to prove that the evidence against Randall was circumstantial and that the conviction should be overturned. Alec also intended to use his former friendship with David Redfield as a way of finding out the truth.



But then came the final nail in the coffin, so to speak. In the prison holding Randall Endicott, on a snowy New Years Eve in the waning hours before 1947 was welcomed in, a riot broke out during a gathering of prisoners in the canteen.

One of the prisoners was a fellow who had murdered his wife but at the same time was still fervently patriotic and abhorred the thought of a traitor in his midst. He somehow got hold of a kitchen knife and targeted Randall Endicott, a convicted spy for what was now the enemy, the Soviet Union.

The wife-murderer stabbed Randall in the gut.

Prison medics tried in vain to save the former *Manhattan Project* scientist, but minutes after 1947 had been cheered in, the husband and father of two was gone.

When word reached Miriam and Alec, they had different reactions. The two were sharing a quiet New Years Eve in their small Metropolis apartment rented after Randall had gone to prison. Upon hearing of his father's murder, Alec went into a rage and destroyed every glass and porcelain object in the small living room. His screams could be heard throughout the building and onto the street, although some thought that they were simply revelry from drunks bringing in the New Year.

Whereas Alec outwardly showed his emotions, Miriam did not. Instead, this was the last straw and her 47-year old heart that had been tested in recent years, gave out. She had a massive attack and, after an ambulance call by Alec, was rushed to Mercy General Hospital. Miriam survived, but was in a comatose state for days and remained on a respirator to take pressure off her badly weakened heart.

In the end, though, the ordeal was too much, and with Alec and Elena by her side, one week after Randall's murder, Miriam passed away.

After burying both parents, with Elena having returned to California, Alec could no longer live in a world in which the Endicott name was well known for the wrong reasons. Though his face was not familiar to the casual bystander, he felt that in the end he would be scorned, particularly here on the East Coast, despite the tragedy of losing his parents.

But he was not a suicidal sort otherwise he might have taken his own life. Instead, Alec packed his bags and decided to banish himself to oblivion.

## ACT 2: "ALEC IN WONDERLAND"

### CODY, WYOMING (FLASHBACK)

**ALEC ENDICOTT BOARDED** a westbound coach at Metropolis's *Ulysses Grant Station* that offered trains running virtually everywhere across America. Eventually, after a cross-country trip that involved two trains and a bus, Alec found himself in a remote town about as far from civilization as possible, that being Cody, Wyoming.



The only thing noteworthy about Cody, it seemed to Alec, was that it was the eastern gateway to one of the world's grand marvels, Yellowstone National Park. The west itself was a wonderland unlike the Eastern U.S., and for Alec that meant a much-needed diversion.

He figured that news didn't travel well to this remote outpost of 3,000 people. He didn't want to escape to a city or large town where the Endicott name might be known, nor too small a town where he might stand out like a sore thumb.

Alec settled in a boarding house along Highway 14 to the north of town. The small place was just right for him – no reminders of home – and his past. He took it as a sign that the gods approved of his escape from the horrid recent events when the local paper, the *Cody Enterprise*, advertised a job for a pharmacist's assistant at the *Rexall* drug on Main Street. Alec went there in the morning to learn that the prior assistant, a middle-aged married man, had run off with the pretty young stock girl. Both were fleeing to California via Yellowstone when they got stuck in a blizzard and died.

Alec applied for the job. He had no credentials as a pharmacist to speak of, yet he probably knew chemicals, medicines and pills as well as any druggist in the forty-eight states – enough so to qualify as an "assistant", he hoped. He told the storeowner, a sixty-something man named Thaddeus ("just call me 'Tad'") Horton, that he was new in town.

Horton, a warm, fatherly type, smoked a corncob pipe that made Alec think of General Douglas MacArthur. The storeowner studied the face of the young man who stood before him. Horton seemed impressed by Alec right off the bat - funny eastern



accent, he told the Endicott son, but he was polite as anything. "You say you worked in a place called *Big Lows*?"

"*C. O. Bigalow*, sir. In New York City. Been there since 1838, I believe." Neither was a lie. Alec had worked there for six months one summer and the store had been there since Martin Van Buren was President.



"*Woo-wee.*" One more puff, then Horton rested the pipe down on an ashtray sitting on the counter. "OK, well, I'll give you a try." Alec had shown Horton around his own pharmacy, explaining almost a quarter of the medicines and pills sitting on their back shelves. Horton was immediately impressed by the lad's familiarity with virtually every medicine they passed.

"Thank you, Mr. Horton. I can assure you that you won't be disappointed."

Horton reached for a paper form he had under the counter and placed it in front of Alec. "So what brings you to Cody, son?" As he waited for an answer, Tad quietly inhaled his pipe fumes.

"I love the west. Traveled here as a kid with my..." Alec hesitated, as a chill went up his spine. "...mom and dad." That was no lie, either. "I'm on my own now and always wanted to see how I'd do settling here. Love the National Park, too."

Horton took a pen from his shirt pocket protector and handed it to Alec. "Can't think of a more beautiful place than western Wyoming. Ya got the Big Horns to the east and the Wind River range to the south. An' Cody's a mighty fine gateway to it all."

"Yes, sir."

"You know, I plum forgot your name when you introduced yourself."

Alec was almost finished filling out the form, which required very little information. He had decided on the train ride out west that he was making a clean break from the past. He had considered changing his name, but all of the personal information he carried, including his Metropolis driver's license, wouldn't allow for that. In the end, Alec remembered that the newspapers always referred to Randall's son as *Alexander*, not Alec. So there was a chance - and a hope - that his true identity - and past - would remain a secret.

When he handed the form back to Horton, Alec studied the man's face carefully as he inspected the form and then read the applicant's name aloud: "Alec Endicott."

Alec braced for an eyebrow being raised – or both brows narrowing – or even a gasp. But the next thing he knew, Horton was sticking his hand out, backed by warm smile. "Alec Endicott, welcome aboard."

The *Rexall* proprietor could not detect surges of relief flooding through the young man.

**CODY, WYOMING – A FEW MONTHS LATER (FLASHBACK)**



Springtime in western Wyoming is something that can make a person grateful to be alive. This was particularly true in Cody, with the snowy Bighorn Mountains to the east, and Yellowstone, in the Rockies, to the west. The melting snows that fed streams bordered by brightly colored wildflowers only added to the area's beauty and exhilaration felt by locals.

For Alec Endicott, springtime meant a personal renewal. The past could never be forgotten, but it could be temporarily ring-fenced and avoided by drinking in the wonderment around him. Every breath of cool, clean, almost alpine air was a tonic that helped him move ahead in his new existence.



There was another development that filled Alec with hope and – exhilaration. Her name was Louisa Horton, daughter of the man who employed Alec at *Rexall*. Two years younger than him, Alec was smitten the first time he saw her on a Cody street corner. Little did he know then that she was Horton's only child.



It took awhile for the tall, slim girl to warm up to him, but his eastern accent, intelligence and confidence won her over. At the same time, Alec felt that Louisa was unlike any of the other women in town he'd encountered. Beyond her shoulder-length blue-black hair, alluring smile and full figure, there was something about her he couldn't put his finger on that drew him in.

Just as he was getting to know Louisa, several months after his arrival in Cody, Alec received a letter from the only person from his old life that was aware that he lived in Wyoming: his sister, Elena. Their relationship could effectively be called estranged by now. With her husband, Jock, a California oil baron of sorts, Elena and their two daughters, Jan and Cindy, lived quite comfortably in Pasadena. As such, when the executors of the Randall and Miriam Endicott estate reached out to the only heir they could find – Elena – she wasn't interested.

Elena forwarded the paperwork and a curt note to her brother, leaving him to decide if and how he would deal with the reading of the will and its consequences. The paperwork explained details of the will reading in a Metropolis lawyer's office – an attorney named Walter Canby. After reading the letter, he threw it in a wastepaper basket and set it on fire.

That was his old life. He was enjoying his new one. As Alec watched the paperwork burn, he felt like his last links to the past were literally going up in smoke.

Another aspect of Alec's existence in Cody was a renewal of interest in his scientific passions concerning chemistry, biology and physics. Through one of Tad's contacts, Alec paid a mere fifty dollars for a shack on the outskirts of Cody off Highway 14/20. On days off and evenings, especially when he wasn't with Louisa, he would spend time in the shack stocking it with chemicals and laboratory equipment. Eventually he was able to tinker with all sorts of experiments in the name of keeping his scientific curiosity alive.

He also used the shack to store some of his mementos – reminders of the past such as newspaper clippings he brought west. These were copies of the *Daily Planet*, *Washington Post* and *New York Times* all of which had coverage of the Randall Endicott trial. *Never forget*, Alec thought. Even if the past was receding, with Cody and Louisa forming his new life, he felt a need to preserve the painful memories of his father's demise, not to mention his mother's.

Alec also purchased a 1940 Chevy Coupe Pickup not long after arriving in town, and made frequent use of it to explore the region. As he and Louisa spent more time together, growing closer, the couple would take the pickup around the west – to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, the Devils Tower National Monument and even as far as Mount Rushmore near Rapid City, South Dakota.

It was on these trips that Louisa and Alec fell in love. At the same time, Louisa also learned of Alec's two sore spots. He would avoid talking about politics, particularly anything concerning the U.S. Government. As well, he became withdrawn when asked about the past, particularly regarding parents. Louisa pried once, and Alec grew silent, saying that they died tragically, not wanting to talk about it.

She learned to avoid these subjects going forward, although her curiosity was piqued.

**CODY, WYOMING – SEVERAL MORE MONTHS LATER**

Almost a year to the day after Alec arrived in Cody he decided that he would ask Louisa to marry him. He'd already gone to Thaddeus for permission, and Louisa's father approved enthusiastically. One snowy January evening, Alec took her to his shack west of town that by this point was a budding laboratory. The place sat at the end of a dirt road, next to the Shoshone Reservoir.

Alec took Louisa inside by the hand. The room was filled with spectacular chemicals in beakers that were phosphorescent and gave the shack's interior a magical glow. He showed her all sorts of things, including a pill, when added to gasoline, which would quadruple the miles per gallon. He told Louisa he was going to patent it and make *millions*.



While Louisa's eyes filled with amazement, he grabbed her and they embraced. Then Alec told her to wait as he went back to his pickup truck to retrieve the engagement ring left in the glove compartment.

As Alec headed back to the shack, he felt his heart racing. The thought of asking the woman he loved that he wanted to marry her made him feel on top of the world. He felt confident she would say "yes" and he tried to squash any thoughts of a possible rejection.

Alec entered the shack and almost unconsciously removed his gloves, putting them on a table. He then looked at the woman he had hoped would in moments be his fiancée.

To his distress, Louisa’s former look of wonderment had been replaced with something else – a face full of *horror*.

She was standing next to a pile of newspaper clippings and herself holding one. It featured a photo of Randall Endicott with a caption referring to his arrest, trial and conviction. It was clipped to another one showing a photo of Miriam, Elena – and – Alec. Louisa looked back and forth between Alec and the face in the newspaper clipping.

“You’re – *him*. The son of the man—“

“Louisa, I wanted to tell you—“

“Your father *betrayed* us to ... to America’s *enemy*!”

Alec shook his head. “Louisa – *please* – it’s not like that at all. And, to be honest, Dad never betrayed—“

“*You* want to be *honest*? Have you been honest with *me*? I thought I – I – *loved* you. Now I don’t even *know* you.”

That was like a dagger to Alec. But he wouldn’t give up. He took a step towards Louisa. “Louisa, *please*...” When he did, she recoiled and bumped up against a table full of colorful beakers. In no time at all, chemicals spilled and liquid went splashing everywhere. An electrical box mounted on the wall above the floor became doused, and sparks flew in all directions. They ignited a flame that quickly spread under the wooden table and up the wall.

In seconds, Louisa’s clothing caught fire. Alec moved towards her again, this time in an effort to tear off her flaming coat. But an explosion in back of Louisa sent him in the opposite direction such that he crashed against a wall containing more chemical-filled beakers. Alec heard Louisa’s screams as he was being doused and all but blinded by the liquids that spilled on him. Worse still, he inhaled noxious fumes that burned his nostrils, sending a searing pain throughout his head and lungs. Despite it all, Alec struggled to his feet, desperate to rescue Louisa from the growing inferno.

But it was seemingly hopeless. Most of the shack quickly became a raging firestorm. Alec tried in vain to enter the blaze that had enveloped Louisa, but each time he made a move he was repelled by the heat and flames.



What sealed things was a final explosion that hurled him out of the shack and into a foot of freshly fallen snow alongside a bank of the reservoir. It also sent him into a few moments of unconsciousness. During that time, the shack was quickly consumed. By the time Alec could clear his head, he could see that only a few smoldering beams of wood that were left standing.



Alec once again struggled to stand, and when he did, he rushed into the still-hot embers and remnants of the shack. At the sight of what remained of Louisa's body, he shouted out into the night. He had no gloves – they went up in flames after he removed them in the shack. When he tried to touch her smoldering remains he recoiled from the heat, causing him to cry out once more.

He then stumbled over to a clear patch of snow and collapsed, in a state of shock.

The heat from the fires gradually diminished in the frigid winter air. After what seemed like several minutes, Alec was shaken from his funk when an arctic blast swooped through nearby fir trees, bringing with it a burst of snow showers. To Alec it was like an icy wake-up call from *Zamhareer*, the Islamic Hell of cold, ice and snow that he had read about in his college History of Religions class from seemingly another lifetime. This brought him back to his senses, enough so that he could think somewhat clearly about his next action.

But instead of his usual cool, logical thinking, Alec Endicott panicked. *Once again the Devil is proving to be my partner in life*, he thought. The woman he loved. *Gone*. The new life he had built. *Surely over*.

In one instant he then thought – *I'm not **meant** to be here* – and – *I need to get **away**!*

Alec got up and ran through the swirling snow – no longer showers but a blizzard of flakes falling in a howl of wind – towards his pickup truck. He got in his Chevy and then realized that a few inches of snow needed to be cleared from the windshield. He cranked the vehicle – it took a few tries – and when it started, he hopped outside and cleared the window off with his bare hands. He did the same with the back window.

Once he put the wipers on, he looked over at the passenger seat where less than an hour ago sat the woman he was going to ask to be his wife. That sent Alec into an uncontrollable bellow. Within a minute, he composed himself and looked into the mirror. It was at that point that he saw his face for the first time since the shack burned down. Just looking at the burns on his skin and the seared hair shot a chill up his spine.

But there was nothing he could do for that at the moment. He couldn't even chance going back to the *Rexall* store to pick up gauze and ointment.

No, in his frenzied state, all he could think of was getting out of Cody. And while his conscious mind developed a tactical escape plan, his inner wheels were slowly spinning to life, piecing together a strategic scheme connected to his former existence on the East Coast. It was the only thing he could do without going mad over the thought of losing Louisa and what was a promising new life in Cody.

Alec backed up and then put the vehicle in Drive, spinning the wheels a few times in the snow but ultimately able to get the pickup moving ahead down the dirt road. Once he reached Highway 14/20, he turned east towards Cody. He wanted to avoid the town but the other direction would only take him to the National Park. Its road was closed and likely not passable, anyway, in the winter, so he had to head east.

He carefully moved down the highway towards town. It was still early in the evening but the roads were practically deserted due to the weather. Alec's Chevy had snow tires and was capable of making it through several inches of snow without much trouble. The pickup's 18-gallon tank was nearly full and he had a spare container with 12 gallons in the flatbed. Alec thought, *the main tank alone, assuming the snowstorm doesn't stop me, should be able to get me get the 120 miles to Billings.* Despite that, he cursed at not having any of the gasoline-extending pills which were likely destroyed during the shack debacle.



Alec slowed things down once he hit the center of Cody. Sherrieff Granger would likely be out on a night like this, looking to help people who were stuck. Whether the Sheriff had been called about the shack explosion was another matter. The shack had been nestled between the reservoir and Cedar Mountain. It was likely that no one would have seen the flames, although the explosions might have been heard by anyone nearby. Then again, it wasn't uncommon in a snowstorm, especially out west, for there to be occasional lightning and thunder, so any noise sounding like an explosion might have been ignored.

As he reached the outskirts of town, Alec considered turning back. He thought of going to Louisa's dad – his boss Thaddeus ... or the sheriff. He hadn't committed a crime. Louisa's death was an accident, as was the lab explosion. But before long there would be a lot of focus on him such that they'd figure out who he was – the son of a convicted spy and enemy of the United States. Who knows then what would happen to Alec – for all he knew, they might believe that he *caused* the explosion that killed Louisa.

One path meant an almost certain dredging up of the past and a possible conviction of a crime he didn't commit. The thought of a Wild West lynching momentarily flashed through his mind.

The other choice - to flee - offered freedom, though a tenuous one. He could still disappear from it all - and if he played his cards right - he could have some much-needed cash to help him settle into a new life of oblivion.

It was another moment of truth for Randall Endicott's son.

Alec made his fateful decision and put these thoughts behind him as the lights of Cody faded in his rear view mirror. He headed north and east on Highway 14. It was pitch black as he crossed the narrow Shoshone River. By the time he reached the small town of Powell, the wind subsided but the snow had thickened. The town's lights were on but its streets were deserted.



As snow piled up on his pickup while he slowed down on Highway 14 driving down the center of Powell, Alec mulled over the lesser of two evils. He could continue on and attempt to drive through a worsening snowstorm. He still had 90 miles to go and there were few towns that could be considered safe havens in a blizzard, at least between here and Billings, his immediate destination.

On the other hand, if he holed up in Powell to wait out the storm, he might find himself a prisoner by morning. Tad Horton expected Louisa back sometime that evening, certainly well before ten on a stormy, wintry night. It wouldn't be long before Louisa - and Alec - would be considered "missing". The Sheriff's department would no doubt conduct a search - first in and around Cody, and then in a widening area, as much as the weather would allow. Alec's shack was not well known, but Tad Horton was aware of it. It would be checked and once the remains of the shack - and Louisa - would be found - if Alec wasn't presumed dead, too, he would almost certainly be considered a wanted man.

It was just a matter of time before the law would close in on him.



So Alec kept moving. He turned north from Powell onto Highway 114. That led to a major junction at the small town of Deaver, the last sizable settlement in Wyoming before the Montana state line. He could feel the pickup slipping and sliding despite the grip of the snow tires. Fortunately the roads were still empty, save for one or two delivery trucks he'd passed and a few passenger cars.



Once past Deaver, having turned onto Highway 310 north towards Montana, as Alec settled into a groove of sorts, focusing on the snowy scene ahead, the Chevy's headlights lit up a small black object ahead in the middle of the road. As he closed in, two tiny green lights glowed back, unmoving.

Alec guessed that it was a wolf – or maybe a dog – but whatever it was, he was going to hit it. Alec swerved to the left, into the oncoming lane, where there was hopefully more road to support the pickup. But it all happened too fast – he skidded and the pickup spun around. It then ran out of road, into a ditch. While the front tires of the pickup were still on the highway, the rear wheels were off the road on an embankment and deep in snow, causing the vehicle to tilt down at an angle. He tried drive and even *will* the vehicle out of the ditch, but the rear tires kept spinning in the snow.

Alec uttered an expletive and put the pickup in neutral. Then, making sure it didn't move either way, he jumped out, and with the driver's door still open, walked around to the rear of the pickup and dug his boots deep into the snow. He applied force to the rear fender but it wouldn't budge. He tried three more times before giving up, thinking that he'd have to be super-human to move it at this angle. Alec walked around the open driver's door and reached in the cabin to shut off the engine but left the headlights on. Then he slammed the door in disgust, uttering another nasty word before looking at his watch and then surveying the scene.

It was close to 10PM. The snow was now flurries and the wind had died down. He could see a few faint lights from Deaver in the distance, back down Highway 144, but other than that it was pitch black. He looked up and saw hints of a tapestry of stars that were mostly covered by unseen clouds. It was a moonless night.

As the cold began to nip at his chemical-scarred face, Alec suddenly noticed a light emerging from the direction of Deaver, about a mile or more away. Clearly a vehicle

was heading in his direction. He had mixed feelings: he really didn't want contact with others at this stage, but was literally stuck if he couldn't get help of some kind.

The light coming down the road became two high beams, and before long Alec could make out the vehicle as it approached in the light provided by the Chevy's front beams. His heart sank as he saw the outline of a small globe on the roof of the sedan, and soon could barely make out a white star painted on the driver's white colored door.

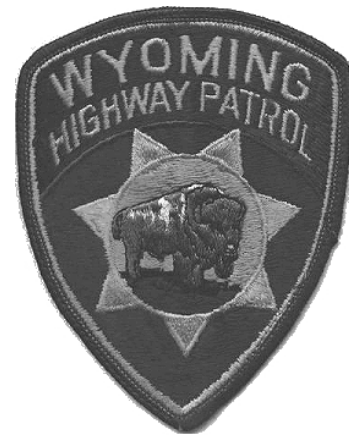
As the Wyoming State Police car pulled to a stop a few yards away, Alec wondered, *friend or foe?* A bespectacled highway patrol officer clad in a heavy jacket and winter hat with earmuffs opened his door. He was carrying a flashlight and, shining it towards Alec, nodded as he shouted, "Evenin'."

Alec half-shouted back. "Evenin' officer."

The cop walked to within a yard of Alec, looking at him and the pickup. "What happened here?"

"Tried to avoid what appeared to be a wolf. Maybe a dog."

The officer pointed his torch at the snow-covered road a few yard beyond the scene and after a minute, nodded and said, "Coyote".



Alec, not really caring but wanting to seem amicable, said, "Oh? How can you tell?"

"Did it have a bushy tail?"

"I think so – but things happened so fast, officer."

"Yeah, coyote. Paw prints aren't too deep. Your beast was light on its feet. Wolves are heavier than coyotes. Not a wolf, but a coyote." The officer seemed rather proud but then got down to business, "Got a chain in the trunk. Make sure it's in Neutral and no hand brake set. You push and I'll pull."

Alec was relieved that the wildlife lesson was over. "Thank you. Don't seem to have much of a choice."

The officer attached a chain to the chassis of the patrol car while Alec did the same to the pickup. Before long, with Alec pushing once again but with the force of the patrolman's vehicle pulling, the pickup was soon fully back on the road. The officer put the chain back in the trunk of his patrol car and then walked back to Alec. The pickup's headlight beams continued to illuminate the men and flurries all around them.

"Where ya headed on a night like this?"

"Supposed to stay over with a friend in Bridger". Alec lied. He didn't want anyone, much less the police, to know where he was going.

"Helluva night. You take care and watch out for coyotes." The cop was either serious or had a dry sense of humor, for he did not smile at his remark.

But Alec smiled. "Thank you – thank you so much, officer."

The patrolman finally smiled and started to walk away but then looked down at Alec's hands. "No gloves on a night like this?"

Alec could have lied again and said that they were in the pickup, but he was momentarily thrown back in time to the recent nightmare. He had left his gloves on a table in the shack and they had no doubt burnt to a crisp.

When there was no response from Alec, the policeman instinctively walked back to his vehicle, shouting back, "Hang on – I gotta spare pair."

Alec finally shouted back, "No need – I have a pair in the truck", but the officer either didn't hear or was so intent on helping that he kept walking towards his patrol car where he opened the passenger side door. Alec could see the patrolman lean over to where the glove compartment would be, but then heard a crackle of static coming from the police vehicle. The cop then picked up a microphone. All Alec could barely see was his lips moving along with hearing a few sporadic words, but not all that much.

Then Alec froze – not because of the wintry temperatures – but because the cop was nodding and staring back at Alec, as if he was comparing what he was hearing over the police radio to Alec's features, as well as his pickup. The cop then exited from the passenger side.

Instead of holding the spare pair of gloves he promised, the Wyoming State Trooper was holding a pistol aimed at Alec.

Instinctively, as the officer got closer, Alec raised his hands – only because he'd seen that in the movies. He didn't even bother speaking. He'd assumed that Louisa had told her dad where she was going – to Alec's shack with the laboratory – and when she didn't return home that evening, Tad went to the place and to his horror found it burnt to the ground. Since Alec's pickup was missing, the police were told to look for that, presumably, possibly along with a description of him.

Still aiming the pistol, the cop asked, "Your name Alec Endicott?"

"Yes, sir."

"From Cody?"

"That's right."

"Keep your hands up. I'm going to have to take you in with me."

Alec didn't even bother asking why – he *knew* why – instead his mind was furiously racing to figure a way out. But then, for a change, the gods smiled, or it seemed that way. The officer took one step too many towards his prospective prisoner and slipped on an exposed stretch of ice. As he lost his balance, Alec pounced. He immediately took hold of the pistol, squeezing the bare gun hand of the officer with his own. The officer wouldn't give up so easily and as he was trying to regain his balance, struck out at Alec's face with his gloved hand.

He missed, but as Alec dodged the blow, he, too, slid on the ice, into the officer. They both fell, with the officer landing on top of Alec - along with the muffled sound of the pistol firing. Alec pushed the officer off of him, rolled away over top of the ice and snow, scrambling to his feet. He almost slipped again on the ice and fell, but then steadied himself. Alec then stood still for a moment – to sense any pain – and to look for movement from the trooper.

A mix of relief and dread filled Alec as he realized that he was unscathed but the cop was not. Illuminated by the beams of the Chevy's headlights he saw a bullet hole in the prone man's winter jacket. He then quickly pulled down its zipper. The trooper was wearing a khaki colored winter shirt that was fast turning maroon. Alec saw that the man was unmoving and not breathing, so he felt the man's neck for a pulse. There was none.

Now Alec was more frantic than ever. His best girl killed and now an officer of the law – it could all be blamed on him. It would all be *traced* to him. He stood and once again let the arctic air envelop him. The shiver he felt was a combination of the cold and the dire situation filling his mind.

But then something guttural took over. Alec took the cop's flashlight that had fallen in the snow and sprayed its light all around him. Barely ten yards down the road, in the direction of the state line, was a clump of trees off the left. He then looked in both directions down the highway. No lights. No cars coming.

Alec shut the Chevy's lights so as not to drain the battery further. After pocketing the keys from the ignition, he went over to the corpse of the patrolman and, lifting the man under the arms, dragged the body to the patrol car. He was careful not to get any blood on him. He opened the left rear door and lifted the body into the back seat. Once the body was completely inside, he shut the door and got in the driver's seat. The officer had left the patrol car running, thankfully, so it was just a matter of

Alec putting the vehicle in gear. He then drove it up the highway a few yards. Next, accelerating quickly, he aimed the police car just to the left of the clump of trees. The deep snow slowed it down, but the car's momentum carried it far enough.

Quickly shutting the patrol car, Alec found himself in two feet of snow once again. He then pulled the officer's body out of the rear seat and dragged it as far as he could away from the vehicle and the highway. Willing away the increasing exhaustion he was beginning to feel, Alec went to the rear of the police vehicle and used the keys to pop the trunk. In it, as hoped, he found a snow shovel.

He trudged back to the trooper's body and began digging a makeshift grave out of snow. After several minutes of shoveling, he went over and dragged the body into the icy pit. Then he shoveled once again, this time covering up the poor patrolman's lifeless body.

As he finished, he felt snowflakes on his face and a chill from the wind: the winter storm was returning – it was both a blessing and a curse. Alec went back to the patrol car and shut the trunk. Then he used the shovel one last time to cover as much of the vehicle as he could with snow. With luck, the new snowfall would further cover both the body and trooper's vehicle, along with any footprints and tire tracks.



Keeping the shovel, as it might come in handy, Alec slogged through the snow back to the highway and then walked to his pickup truck. He was covered in snow and shook as much of it off as he could. Then he threw the shovel in the rear of the truck, jumped in the cab and tried to start the engine.

The only problem was that the keys wouldn't fit the ignition. He was frantic until he realized that they were the trooper's. For a second he debated whether to keep them or throw them in the snow. Alec chose the former and would discard them later. With the correct keychain retrieved from his coat pocket, he engaged the ignition and the pickup's engine rumbled to life. He checked the fuel gauge. A half a tank left. *Hopefully enough to make it to Billings.* The thought occurred to him earlier to appropriate gasoline from the now-buried patrol car, but that would have taken precious time and who knew if the cop had had a siphon, anyway. Again he regretted not having his gasoline extension pills.

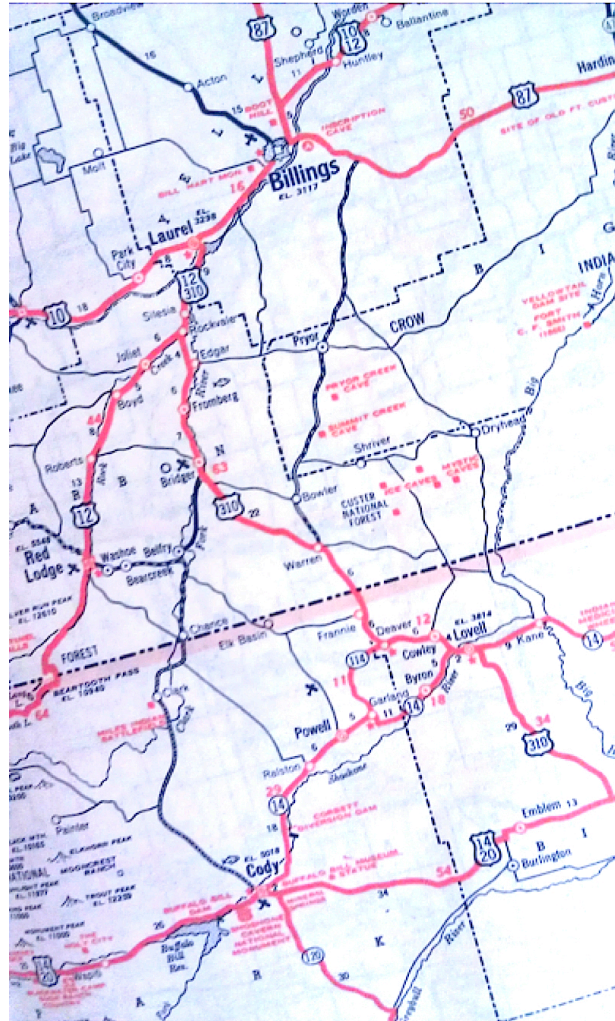
Alec put the pickup in Drive and swerved back in a northward direction on Highway 310. He hadn't checked his watch but figured it was closing in on 11PM. The pickup's headlights illuminated a swirl of snow coming down hard. If the resurgent storm was a blessing in terms of covering up the evidence, it was a curse because it slowed his progress.



As well, as he drove on through the worsening weather, Alec wondered how long it would be before the Wyoming State Trooper would be reported missing and his body would be found. At that point, Alec would be wanted for more than just questioning in the death of Louisa Horton. The trooper had presumably radioed back that he had a suspect, including a description of the pickup truck, along with the location.

Alec knew that it was only a matter of time before every lawman in Wyoming – if not Montana and the Western U.S. – would be on the lookout for him. And who knows if they'd then realize that this was really Alexander Endicott, son of Randall, *traitor* to the United States.

In the midst of those thoughts, the headlights lit up a snowy "Montana State Line" sign, followed by a "Welcome to Montana – Big Sky Country" sign that, too, was partly covered by snow.



Alec kept moving as fast as he could, but the snow was piling up on Highway 310. A piping hot cup of black coffee would be perfect now, but he knew that nothing resembling that would be available on this desolate stretch of road, especially this late at night.

Eventually, though, he saw the lights of Bridger, a small town in south-central Montana. As Alec slowed down, he spotted a tavern, perhaps appropriately named *Custer's Last Stand*, with a few lights on. He took a chance, parked out front, and went in. He badly needed something to keep him awake.

The place had one or two people left at the bar and was clearly about to close, but the rotund bartender obliged him with coffee. As the man poured it in a mug, he warned Alec that the coffee was "as old as the hills". But to Alec, the bitter coffee full of stale grinds still had enough punch to feel like an electric charge, whether due to any residual caffeine or its awful taste.

As he took sips, Alec got a few strange looks, presumably because of the chemical burns on his face and head, but the patrons were somewhat out of it. In the end no one made anything of his appearance. The bartender recommended a place to stay overnight and Alec thanked him. After a much-needed trip to the bar's washroom, Alec was back on Highway, feeling somewhat refreshed, although still greatly troubled about his state of affairs and recent events.

An hour or so later, with the storm abating once again, Alec reached the town of Laurel, where he turned east on Highway 10. Before long he was in the great Montana city of Billings. It was past 2AM. The coffee helped him stay awake to Billings, but he was running on fumes now.



However, there was still a lot of work to do, as the strategic plans he was quietly working on in the back of his mind began to kick in.

Alec drove to the *Northern Pacific Railroad* train station in Billings. It appeared to be deserted, although there were a few lights on inside the waiting area. He parked outside and slogged through the snow into the warm interior.

There was no one inside – no workers and no one waiting for a train. He spotted a train schedule on one of the waiting room benches and brought it over to one of the lights hanging from the medium-height ceiling.

The *North Coast Limited* ran between Chicago and Seattle. Alec looked at the schedule for Chicago-bound trains. His heart raced as he read that the next train would be at 10:45PM. The thought of waiting all that time – while word spread amongst sheriff departments, state troopers and other law enforcement – maybe even the FBI – was alarming.



"Can I help you, son?"

It was an elderly man who had come out of the washroom. A *Northern Pacific* hat sat on his head. Alec's weary face offered a meager smile. "Oh hello. Didn't think anyone was here."

"No one besides you'n me. But there will be..." The man looked at a watch held by a chain from his belt, and he added, "...in, oh, two hours or so."

"Oh? The westbound train?"

"Nerp. Train t'Chicago."

Alec perked up. "But I thought that wasn't till tomorrow night – I mean, tonight. 10:45."

"That's probably true, but this's yesterday's train. Avalanche at Bozeman Pass. They held it up in the state capital."

"Helena."

"Yep. But I jus' heard they got th'tracks cleared. Should be here no later'n 5 o'clock, I'd say."

Alec had to confirm that the old man meant five in the *morning*. "A little more than two hours from now."

"Yep."

Alec, relieved, renewed his tired smile. "Thank you." He tried to imagine the scene – the snow everywhere and tons of it having to be cleared away. Hardship and delay for others, but a *godsend* for him.



He waited for the man to go into his booth and then bought a ticket to Chicago with cash. He was running low and would have to deal with that later. He'd have to tend to his wallet, too, that ID'd him as Alec Endicott, something that would be a liability soon, but he'd get to that as well.

Alec checked his watch and then went outside. A snowy block away was a small storefront that said "TAXI". A light was on inside and he could see a figure behind a counter. Alec went in and five minutes later was in his pickup, driving back down Highway 10, the way he came. The fuel gauge was on empty but hopefully there was enough left for the remaining short ride.

Not long after leaving a residential neighborhood, he passed through an industrial area in the outskirts of Billings that contained a used car lot with all sorts of vehicles mostly from the 1930s. They were all covered to varying degrees with several inches of snow.

In complete darkness, Alec drove the pickup as far as he could down a dirt road separating two sides of the car lot. He pulled his vehicle alongside a sedan and shut off the lights. He pulled a screwdriver from the glove compartment and went to the rear of the pickup. From his pocket he took out the state trooper's flashlight. Holding

it with one hand, he bent down and removed two screws holding the rear license plate in place. There was no plate at the front of the pickup.

Then he shut the flashlight and pocketed it, walking briskly away and out of the used car lot. He walked down Highway 10 and within fifteen minutes was back in the residential neighborhood. Right on schedule, a taxi pulled up and Alec got in. A few minutes later he was back at the train station. He paid the cabbie, thanked him and got out of the vehicle.

Once on the street, Alec spotted a curbside drain, into which he threw the pickup's car keys. Next he then went into the train station, and, nodding to the familiar old train worker who was in the ticket booth, entered a door marked "Gentlemen". Inside, after making sure that he was alone, Alec wrapped the pickup's license plate in a discarded newspaper he had found in the waiting area and threw it in the washroom trash bin.

Though he was dead tired, Alec forced himself to remain awake. He chitchatted with the ticket man as passengers slowly trudged in out of the snow and into the station in anticipation of the train's very late arrival.

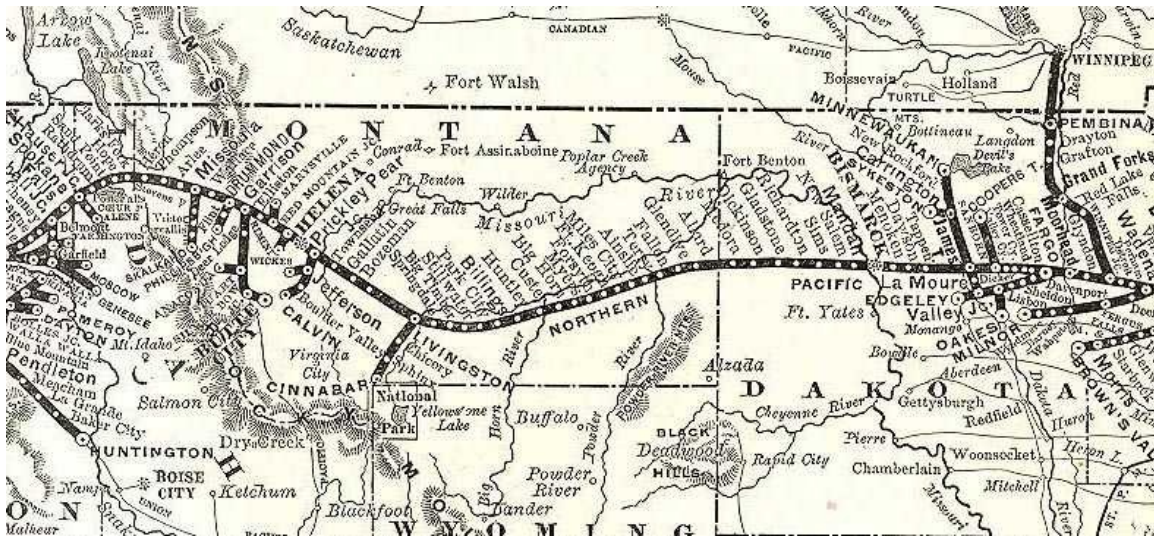
At 4:40AM, with snow flurries outside, the boom of a horn far away pierced the winter air. It was the *North Coast Limited*, coming down from the Rockies to Billings.



By 5:30AM the diesel locomotive was pulling into the Billings station over six hours behind schedule. An older style locomotive to help it through the snow was pulling it. Alec Endicott, with no luggage, boarded the train and found a seat. The train was about one-third full. Before long, it was pulling out of the station for points east. Alec waited for his ticket to be punched before mercifully closing his eyes.

The last sight he saw out the window was a glimmer on the eastern horizon that cast a hint of orange on the rushing, icy waters of the Yellowstone River that flowed alongside the tracks on its journey to the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico.



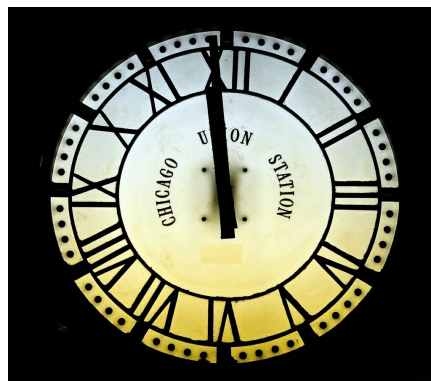


Despite recent events, Alec fell into a seemingly dreamless deep sleep. Sometime later he opened his eyes at Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota. It took him a few moments to realize where he was. That was followed by a sudden remembrance of the horror of what had happened during the past twenty-four hours. An old woman sitting across from him noticed his face and asked if he was all right. Alec nodded that he was, but then ignored her.

He looked at his watch. It said 9:15AM, but he knew that it was really an hour later, as they had crossed from Mountain into Central Time. As the train pulled out, it lulled Alec back to a welcome sleep. He woke again in Fargo and then remained up, barely, all the way to Minneapolis, where there was a change of trains.

After an hour's wait, the next diesel locomotive pulled out of Minneapolis at 6:30PM, bound for Chicago's *Union Station*.

The train pulled into *Union Station* ten minutes before midnight. Alec had no intention of staying for very long in Chicago – his goal was Metropolis and he needed to be there in two days to



appear at the reading of the Endicott will. Although attending that event was wrought with all sorts of dangers, it gave Alec a reason to head back east, for better or worse.

As he walked into the nearly deserted main hall of the station – empty save for passengers debarking from the Minneapolis train – he mentally reviewed the plan he'd formulated on the train. Soon after a ten-minute stroll to a cheap boarding house he'd checked into under a false name, in downtown Chicago, he was fast asleep.



The next morning, Alec showered and dressed – he had no choice but to put on the same clothing he'd worn since the evening he was going to ask Louisa to marry him. That time, a mere day and a half ago, was already beginning to seem like another life.

He checked out of the boarding house and stopped at a newsstand in The Loop, under the El. As trains clattered above him, he picked up a copy of the *Chicago Daily News* and scanned the front page. Nothing there about him. Then he opened it and carefully thumbed through the paper. There, on page six under *National News* was a small headline "**Wyoming Sherriff's Dept. Seeks Suspect**".



The article said that someone was wanted in connection with an explosion outside Cody. Nothing about Louisa. And nothing about the state trooper. *I hid him well enough*, Alec thought. Fortunately there was no mention of Alec or his description. At least not yet. *Tomorrow's papers might tell a different story*, he thought.

Alec next walked a few blocks to Michigan Avenue and then a few more blocks north to the *Ritz-Carlton*. He wistfully remembered a convention Randall had taken him to as a teen in the days before the *Manhattan Project*. Once inside he went to a row of phone booths. Alec selected one, closed the door, causing the automatic light to go on, and opened the *Yellow Pages*.

Minutes later, Alec was again on his feet, heading just south of The Loop to *Klein's Jewelry*. The *Yellow Pages* had advertised them as having the "Best Deals in the Windy City." Inside, he approached a middle-aged woman who Alec learned was Mrs. Klein from the patron who had just finished doing business with her.

"I'd like to have this appraised." Alec pulled a small box out of his pants pocket and opened it, revealing a diamond ring. At the sight of it, he choked back tears.

Mrs. Klein apparently noticed Alec's face go pale. "You OK? You want water? Glass tea?"

Alec cleared his throat as a way of shaking off his funk. "No, thank you." He mustered a smile. "That's very kind of you, no."

The woman examined the ring and then looked at Alec. "Whatever happened, I'm really sorry." She had a very distinctive accent, like she was a Brooklyn transplant.

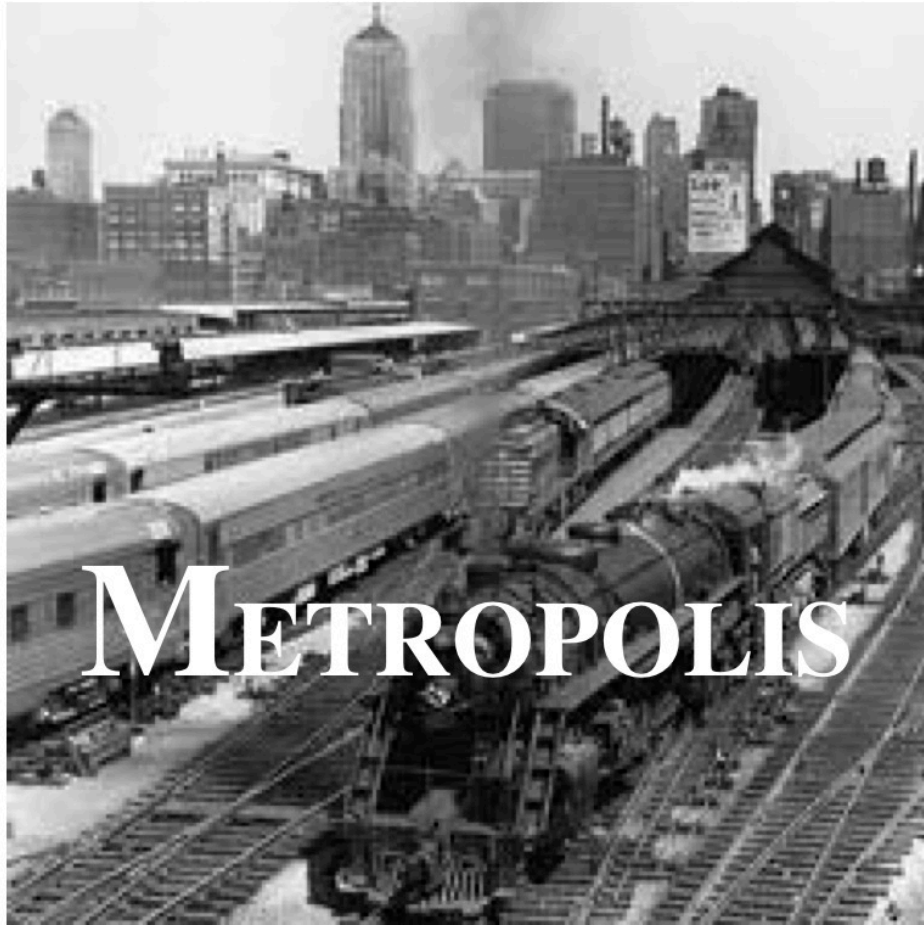
Alec swallowed his "me too".

He had driven to Billings, of all places, a little less than a month ago, to buy the ring. Cody had had no jewelry shop with enough of a selection to his liking, but Billings did. He'd spent a little less than a grand on it and hoped that he'd get some semblance of that back from Mrs. Klein. After five minutes deliberation with her husband in a back room, she returned and gave him a price - \$850. Alec was disappointed, and showed it, but wasn't in a position to bargain. Plus, if things went as hoped, the shortfall would be made up rather easily.

Most importantly, he needed to pay for a train ticket to Metropolis and a few other things. \$850 would more than cover that. Alec told the woman he wanted to exchange the ring for cash and twenty minutes later the deal was done. His next stop, three blocks away, was a *Brooks Brothers* store. Two hours later he was dressed in an off-the-rack three-piece charcoal grey suit, white shirt, dark maroon tie and a new pair of black shoes. He topped it off, so to speak, with a black & charcoal grey fedora that covered the unsightly scars and semi-charred hair on his head.

Alec added a tan-colored attaché case to complete the illusion of a well-dressed businessman.

As he headed towards *Union Station*, a new sense of confidence surged through Alec. Until recently, his appearance was the same as the man wanted in Wyoming in connection with an explosion, perhaps a woman's death, and certainly a state trooper's death. Alec had no idea how long it would be before a nationwide manhunt would be underway, if it wasn't already, but at least now he could melt into the overflowing crowd of Chicago commuters. *Besides*, he thought, *wasn't it Mark Twain who said that clothes make the man?*



Before long Alec Endicott was on the 10:40AM train to Metropolis. By day's end, he was in *Great Central Station*, where he picked up an afternoon edition of the *Daily Planet*. Alec scanned the news section for anything about him, but there was nothing – not even an article about the Wyoming blast. His real interest was in the classified ads. Alec needed a place to stay for the evening, and he found it via the *Daily Planet* classifieds that advertised a place in the Lower West Side. Before long he once again settled in for the evening, mentally preparing for the big day ahead.

The next day, Alec took the subway to the *Central Court House*. He carefully strolled to within a block of the courthouse steps and then pulled out that morning's *Daily Planet* that he had picked up earlier. In the distance he spotted a man bounding up the stairs and into the courthouse. He knew his face from the papers – he was the prominent Metropolis attorney named to officiate the Endicott will, Walter Canby.

Alec remained a block from the courthouse as a precaution. As he did, two alarms went off in his head. First, in the *Daily Planet*, his heart sank as he saw a *front-page* article with the headline "**FBI Manhunt for Endicott Son**". So, after two days and two nights, the pieces had been put together, and Alec was officially a wanted man. The newspaper article was small – it was not the top story – but it was alarming enough, especially as it continued inside on Page 7 that included the last known

photograph of Alec. It was a picture of him from his father's trial. Not a good photo, but unfortunate because it presented Alec in a suit and tie, not unlike his current appearance.

The other alarm concerned the courthouse, as it was swarming with police. Other men were milling around – presumably plainclothesmen. No doubt Alec was expected to show for the reading of the will and the authorities were waiting.

Alec had a rare moment of indecision. It was hard to walk away from presumably a great deal of money that was rightfully his. But entering that courthouse would almost certainly lead to a prison cell – and possibly the electric chair.

"You don't want to go in there, Alec."

He spun around in response to the familiar voice. For the first time in a long while, a smile came to his face. "*Elena!*"

The woman who was Alec's estranged sister smiled, too, but when her brother made a motion to hug her, she backed off and slowly looked away, as if she was lost. "No, not here. If they're watching me, they'll be onto you. It might already be too late."

"But how did you know--"

"Never mind that. Down the block. The subway. The uptown *Valley Express* platform, by the newsstand. Let's walk there separately."

"What about the hearing? Mom and Dad's will?"

But by then Elena was already heading for the subway and was out of listening range or deliberately not responding. Alec stood for a moment, wondering what he should do. He looked around, carefully. There were no suspicious movements – no one walking towards him – at least no one who looked like a cop or a plainclothesman.



He crossed the street and bought a pack of gum from an outdoor newsstand. As he did, he noticed two fairly hefty men in raincoats headed in his direction. Alec was sure they were looking at him, for each time he looked back they turned their eyes away.

He turned the corner and as luck would have it, a cab was letting a passenger out. Another man was waiting for it, but once the exiting man paid, Alec shoved him and the prospective customer out of the way. He pulled out a \$20 bill and handed it to

the cabbie, saying, "You get another \$20 if you pull away now" as he entered the rear of the taxi.

The driver didn't need convincing and once completely in, Alec shut the passenger door. The man outside pounded his fist on trunk, but in an instant the cab had pulled away. Alec pulled out another \$20 and held it in the air so that it was visible in the rear-view mirror. "As promised." He held it back for a moment. "I want you to make a right on Pine Street, then another right on Worth, a right on Lafayette, and then let me off by the subway entrance on Broadview Way." He continued to hold the \$20 as the cabbie obliged.

Soon they were in front of the subway entrance kiosk. Alec handed over the \$20. The cabbie hadn't even bothered to set the meter. He said, "Geez, Mac, that would have been no more than five dollars." He pronounced it as *fi dollahs*.

Alec said, "Keep the change" and bolted out of the cab, slamming the door. He then bounded down the kiosk stairs while fumbling for a dime. Soon he was through a turnstile and taking another set of stairs down to the track-level platform.



In the distance, he saw Elena by a newsstand. When he reached her, he put his arms on her shoulders, but once again she restrained herself from an embrace, instead looking back towards the direction of the staircase. She said, "Don't turn around."

Alec didn't turn, but asked, "Now what?"

"Two men. Have to be Feds."

Alec was surprised at the toughness in his sister's voice. She seemed so different from the last time he saw her at their mother's funeral.

"I can—"



"No, listen. They're after *you*, not me, but I can help." A change in air pressure and a warm breeze from the subway tunnel heralded the approach of the uptown *Valley Express*. "Take the train. Meet me at the restaurant by *Tower Square* where Mom and Dad used to take us. *Wait for me.*" She offered a little smile and then spun, walking towards the stairs – and the two apparent plainclothesmen.



As the uptown *Valley Express* pulled in, Elena approached the beefy men in overcoats. Alec discretely eyed her encounter as he pretended to watch the train come to a stop. He could see his sister talking to them, as if she was lost and needed directions. She, too, glanced ever so slightly in her brother's direction presumably to make sure he made it safely onto the train.

The doors open and Alec hesitated. He didn't want to leave his sister in the thick of trouble. He turned away from the subway and began walking towards her. But she turned completely to look at him and shouted, "*Go! Now!*"

Alec froze and as he did, the train doors began to close. In a split-second, he turned and managed to slither in before the entryway was shut tight. In parallel, the two men with Elena did the same. But one of the men was too close to her, and Alec's sibling nonchalantly stuck out one of her high-heels, tripping him and causing him to crash to the concrete platform.

The other man managed to sneak onto the train just before the doors closed, just like Alec. As the uptown *Valley Express* pulled out, a downtown train pulled in across the platform. Elena saw this and briskly walked around the stairs leading up and out to street level until she was at the far end of the platform. When the downtown train doors opened, she got on.

In the distance, she saw that the man she had tripped was back on his feet. Angry, he, too, boarded the downtown train, presumably to go after her as a consolation prize. As the doors closed, he walked through the cars toward the front of the train where Elena was. To his dismay, though, he looked out the train window at the platform – from which Elena was smiling and waving.

Meanwhile, Alec was unsure if one of the apparent plainclothesmen had boarded his *Valley Express* train. He stood in the second-to-the-front car of the train, cautiously

looking through the rear window connecting it to the next car down. The subway train was in its long underground run whizzing by local stations on its way to *Great Central Station*. After that, *Tower Square*. With any luck, he'd be there within ten minutes, hopefully sipping coffee with his sister.

But Alec's luck of late had been a mixed bag. He felt a gnawing in the pit of his stomach as one of the men he'd seen before had just opened the sliding door at the far end of the train car before him. Alec could see the man briskly walking through the car, staring at passenger's faces. Endicott thought, *so he doesn't know exactly where I am*.

The man reached the end of the third car. He had two more to go, but knew that the big turn into *Great Central Station* was coming. His quarry could get off there and then disappear into the crowds that filled the vast hall above the subway and commuter rail platforms.



The burly plainclothesman opened the sliding door in his third car that led to the second car and then opened *its* sliding door. Once again, the man checked out all the faces, this time in the second car – those sitting and those standing. He had to ruffle a newspaper that was blocking a face, much to the chagrin of the little old lady behind it.



Soon he was at the front of the second train car. *One more to go*. The man thought, *Endicott **has** to be in this one*. He reached for the handle of the sliding door and opened it with a loud clank. The roar of the subway train and rush of warm air from the tunnel met him as he stepped onto the metal platform that marked the beginning of the second subway car.

The man then put another foot on the next metal platform – the tail end of the first train car, and held onto the left-side chain that prevented anyone from falling from the train when walking between cars – exactly what *he* was doing.

As the train began the pronounced cavernous turn towards *Great Central Station*, a high-pitched squeal echoed through the tunnel, a result of the steel wheels of the subway train grinding against the curve of the tracks. Train car lights winked on and off as the power shoe that carried electricity from the third rail repeatedly lost and re-gained contact.

While this was happening, the man hunting Alexander Endicott attempted to put his right hand on the other chain that hung across the opposite side between the cars.

But there was nothing there – the chain had become unhooked. As the man tried to balance himself, in the strobe-like tunnel lights he saw his quarry the front of the second car, beyond where the chain would have been, hunched against the outside of that car’s motorman window.

The man turned completely towards Alec Endicott and reached out with both of his hands to grab the fugitive’s shoulders. But by doing so, he was no longer holding onto any part of the subway car. As the train strained in its sharp turn, the man lost his balance. Then he lost his footing. Alec, who had unhooked the chain in order to allow him a hiding place between the train cars, had been clinging to a handle jutting out from the front of the second car. He saw what was happening to his pursuer and tried to reach for the man to grab him, but it was too late.

As the train lights continued to flicker, the large man in the overcoat plunged over the side of the connector between the first and second train cars, slamming into the tunnel wall before falling into the narrow space between the train and the slim catwalk that ran alongside the tunnel. His scream was drowned out by the squeal of the train as it was beginning to complete the long turn.

Alec remained in place, frozen in horror, feeling helpless to do anything. Out of nowhere the almost unnatural and near-blinding brightness of the subway station platform abruptly appeared, as if someone suddenly flicked on a light switch. That was Alec’s cue to get back inside the first train car, which he did. Still stunned, he found an empty seat and stared at the floor as the train slowed to a stop. He closed his eyes but could still imagine the screech of the train combined with the scream of the doomed man.

The train doors opened and this time, he heard *shrieks*. Alec realized that they were coming from commuters standing on the subway platform. He hesitated, but then got up and walked off the train. To his right he saw a crowd surrounding the junction of the second and third subway cars. He rushed into the throng and, pushing people aside, saw what they were looking at.

As expected, it was the man who had been hunting him. He had fallen over the side of the subway car. His coat had somehow snagged on part of the train, dragging him into the station. Alec could see a great deal of blood, but wasn’t sure if by some chance the man was still alive.

He wasn’t going to stick around to find out, as police began bounding down the station stairs. As Alec slowly walked towards another staircase further down the platform, he heard the conductor shout that the train was being taken out of service. *One more stop and I would have been at Tower Square*, he thought.



Soon Alec was hastily walking through the vast waiting hall of *Great Central Station*. More police were rushing through the hall towards the stairs leading down to the subway platform. Alec kept moving at a brisk pace and made it outside, on Thirty-second Street, walking west towards *Tower Square*, five long blocks away to the west.

As he hurried down the sidewalk, Alec wondered if the Metropolis Police were armed with a photo of him. *Just how extensive a manhunt is going on?* He wondered.

Finally he was at *Tower Square*, the intersection of Broadview Way and Seventh Avenue. As he walked past subway station entrances, he wondered if train service was being suspended because of what was going on at *Great Central*. Sure enough, he saw people streaming out of the subway kiosks, grumbling about the trains not running uptown.



Soon after making his way through the crowds in *Tower Square*, he had reached a restaurant that Randall and Miriam had taken him and Elena to during excursions to see plays and movies, as well as Christmas pageants, in the city. Alec went inside and sat on a cushioned stool in front of a counter, next to his sister. Before saying anything to her, a waitress came over and he ordered a cup of coffee along with a toasted, buttered corn muffin.

Then he finally spoke to his sister. "I'm surprised you recognized me back there."

"Why? Because of the scars? The hat? I guess I'd know my own brother anywhere."

Alec's coffee and muffin came. He took a much-needed sip and then a bite of the mouth-watering muffin. Then he looked again at his sister. "Elena, I can't believe it's you. What are you doing here?"

Elena took a sip of her own coffee. "You realize we can't stay here. Not for long. They'll be looking for you."

"You know about me? You know about what's happened?"

"Well, what I read in the papers, but—"

"Well, soon there'll be more in the papers, given what just happened on the subway."

"You mean those men chasing us? Hopefully they gave up."

Alec choked on his coffee and then told her about the accident on the train that was still fresh in his mind. Then he said, "Elena, I'm not a criminal. Whatever the newspapers say, I—"

She put a hand on his. "I know, Alec. I know that if there is one thing that burns in you, it's not a desire to kill, but to avenge our father's death."

He swallowed, and then said, choking back tears, "Mother died, too, because of it all."

Elena replied softly, "Yes, that's true."

"But, Elena, you didn't answer me. What are you *doing* here? I mean, it's not like I'm ungrateful. You were a sight for sore eyes. You *are* a sight for sore eyes."

"Well—"

"You're the only family I have left." He paused and for a moment his eyes welled up again. Alec composed himself and then said, "But *you*. You have Jock. Plus Jan and Cindy. You—"

Elena put two fingers on her brother's lips. "*Shssshh*. I have something to tell you."

"I thought so." He took a sip of coffee and another bite of his muffin.

"When you wrote that you had found yourself in Cody. That you found that woman..."

Alec's eyes welled up yet again at the thought of her. He choked back her name. "Louisa."

Elena put a hand on Alec's hand. "I'm sorry, Alec. I think the papers said something about what happened." She paused and took her hand away. "Anyway, I didn't have the heart to tell you the truth when I wrote you back."

"About what?"

"That Jock left me. And took the kids."

"*What?!*"

"Everything was fine. Fine until someone at his company saw a photo of me. Well, me, you and mother – from the trial. You know."

"Wait -- did Jock know about--?"



"You mean, did he know that I'm Elena Endicott, daughter of a traitor?"

"I wasn't going to put it that way—"

"No, I ... meant to tell him. But I was living there, in California, under my married name of DeWitt."

"Of course."

"But once my past was uncovered by someone at his company..."

"*What?* What happened, Elena?"

"Jock had a temper. A nasty one."

"Did he beat you?"

"No, all of his abuse was verbal."

"Go on."

"When he came home with proof of my past, he let me have it. At least he had the sense to send the kids to his sister's that night, so they wouldn't hear it."

"Nice of him."

"He shouted at me until well past midnight. I tried to explain how hard it was for me to live like this – the thought of being persecuted for something that I didn't even believe my father – *our* father – did."



"Believe me, I know only too well..."

"I'm sure you do." Elena went on. "Jock calmed down and we reached an understanding. But it didn't last more than a few weeks. His co-workers shunned him. His so-called 'friends' – and his management – *pressured* him to do something."

"*Something?* Like what? Throw you in prison?"

"No, Alec. Not quite. Jock's rich. An oil baron. His family grew up in Texas. *Dallas*, where the oil is. You know. Plus he has connections. Powerful legal connections. Oh, he's a devious one, that Jock." She started to cry. Alec reached across to hold her and she went on with a sobbing voice. "One day, while the kids were in school, I got a call from the Principal's office that there was trouble. So I went down there." She sobbed

again but quickly composed herself so as not to make a scene, as more patrons were arriving in the restaurant.

"What did the Principal want?"

"That's just it – he didn't want anything. The call wasn't from him. It was from – *someone* – who wanted me out of the house."

"No."

"Yes. At school, I figured, since I was there, I could check in on Jan and Cindy. See if they were all right. But their teachers said they weren't in school any more."

"What?!"

"One of their teachers said that their father had stopped by earlier to take them out of school. Jock apparently told the school he didn't know if they'd be returning. It was a 'family emergency'."

Alec uttered an expletive. Elena continued. "I was frantic. I went home. But when I pulled in the driveway, the police were there. I didn't know what to think. They showed me some legal papers barring me from the house and from seeing the children."

"Oh my god!"

"They let me pack a few things. They weren't real nice to me. You know – daughter of a spy."

Alec's blood was boiling as she continued. "I had no place to go. No friends. No family. Well – there was you – in Cody. But I didn't have the heart to destroy *your* new life." She sobbed again.

"You would have been welcome. You wouldn't have destroyed anything. It would've been wonderful, Elena." He stroked her hair. "If anyone destroyed my life in Cody, it was *me*."

She looked at her brother and said, "I'm sure that's not true."

Over another round of coffees, he told her his entire story, soup to nuts. When he was finished, the siblings embraced once more. As Elena pulled away, she asked, "What I don't understand is – you went west to get away from – what happened with Dad."

"And Mom."

"And Mom." Elena paused. "Why did you come back? To Metropolis? Surely you must have realized that showing up at the will reading was dangerous."

Alec looked away and then back at his sister. "I guess ... at first ... in Cody ... I panicked." He paused. "And then I got this crazy idea that ... if I could somehow get hold of the inheritance that is rightly mine ... *ours* ... I could use the money to right the wrongs of the past."

"What do you mean?"

"What I mean, Elena, is that the money could help me ... *us* ... find out what really happened to Dad and expose the real spy. And maybe ... somehow ... it could help prove my innocence regarding those so-called murders."

When Elena said nothing, Alec added, "But now there's no inheritance, because neither of us can show up at any will reading."

"Jock did leave me some money. I guess he felt guilty. Or he figured it was a bribe to keep me away." She paused and added a postscript to her story. "In case you were wondering, after Jock barred me from the house, I remembered the reading of the will and came here. I couldn't believe my eyes when the paper mentioned you and what had happened in Wyoming."

"Well, now you know..."

"Call it women's intuition, but I thought you might try to go to the will reading. I milled around, near the court house, hoping you'd show up – but intending to intercept you, as I saw some suspicious characters waiting for you."

"I'm grateful, Elena."

"We'd better get going. From what you've told me, every cop in America will be looking for you, if they're not already."

"I rented a place downtown, but—"

"You can't go back there. And to be honest, as welcome as you are, you can't stay at my place. I'm renting a room by Riverview Park near the Hobbs. We need to get you out of sight." She paused. "In fact, given what's just happened, maybe we *both* need to disappear for awhile."

"What do you mean? I just found you – or you found me. You already want to separate again?"

She put a hand on her brother's cheek. "No, my dear brother. We're in this together. Life has dealt us a cruel blow – more than one, for sure."

He smiled for the first time he could remember since the happy days of Cody.

Elena continued. "Not long after I got to Metropolis, I considered living outside of the city. I took a train ride to the suburbs and found a decent house in Andersonville, on the *New Haven Line*."

"I see."

"If it's still available, it'd be perfect for us. Andersonville may be a suburb, but it's off the beaten path. No one will be looking for us there."



"You might – we might – have to disguise ourselves – change our names."

"I think, Alec, you'll have to stay out of sight for awhile. I can do things to blend in. Maybe wear glasses to fool people." She smiled. "And do something about my name."

Alec chuckled. "You can't use 'Endicott'. Or your married name."

"How about ... Elena *Anderson*?"

Alec chuckled. "Somewhat apropos. I like it."

The weeks and months passed quickly as Alec and Elena settled into their small house in Andersonville. Elena found a clerical office job in Metropolis under the name of Elena Anderson. Her paycheck nicely supplemented the diminishing funds from her ex-husband.



Most of the Elena Endicott's money was gradually consumed by her brother. Alec spent his time on two fronts. Most important to him was to find a way to clear the family name. He put aside his disdain for the government and authority in general in order to gather evidence that Randall Endicott was, in fact, innocent. He even thought of tracking down David Redfield, rumored to be dying in a Mexican jail, of all places. But Elena convinced him that such a journey was too dangerous.

Regardless, even if he, Alec, would continue to be a wanted man, albeit for crimes he did not commit, at least clearing the Endicott name would put his sister in good standing – hopefully.

It might even enable Elena to see her children again.

So Alec visited libraries, newspaper facilities and even bookstores to gather as much information as he could. He did this at night, though, for fear of being recognized in daylight. Even at night, he would try to remain in the shadows. Alec would wear, weather permitting, an oversized trench coat and large fedora that would hide part of his face. He would sit with his back to others in libraries and bookstores, shunning well-lit sections of the facilities.

But putting together facts and figures to prove the late Randall Endicott's innocence wasn't why Elena's money was being depleted. It was Alec's second interest, which was a fledgling laboratory he was building. Alex was, of course, a scientist at heart, and scientists need a place to do what they do best: experiment, analyze and even ... invent.

It was the laboratory and his research towards clearing the family name that gave Alec Endicott a reason to live. In terms of his lab, Alec returned to a place called Maxwell's Rock. Years ago, when he was a teen, his dad was asked to scout possible locations for the *Manhattan Project*. One such place was in a coastal area just northeast of Metropolis.

While surveying the site, Randall and his aides found a moderately large limestone cavern within the ridge. As Maxwell's Rock itself was being considered for the *Manhattan Project*, Randall declared it to be unstable because of its hollow core – the cavern. Eventually they moved on and Oak Ridge, Tennessee was chosen.

However, a site nearby was eventually chosen for an atomic energy complex dubbed “Project X”. It became a vast facility that sat between the Metropolis Sound and Maxwell's Rock, a glacially carved ridge that ran for several miles inland.

In the meantime, it was under Maxwell's Rock that Alec decided to clandestinely create his new laboratory. There, too, he would only make visits in the evening so as not to be spotted by anyone.

As for his other crusade, eventually there came a day of reckoning, when he had amassed sufficient research to dangle it in front of prospective fish – *important* fish who might take the bait and help to exonerate the Endicott name.



## ACT 3: "THE ROAD TO RETRIBUTION"

### DAILY PLANET (FLASHBACK)



**AS ALEC ENDICOTT RODE UP THE DAILY PLANET ELEVATOR,** his mind thought about the stack of papers and photographs stashed in his overstuffed briefcase. Would it be enough to pique Perry White's interest? Alec had long known that White, chief editor of the newspaper, had many important political and civic connections. White himself had been mayor of Metropolis.

As well, the *Daily Planet* was not only Metropolis's *Number One* paper, but was a major daily nationwide and overseas publication. It had a reputation for printing the truth with great accuracy. It was widely quoted in political and other circles. Moreover its articles and even editorials tended to stay middle-of-the-road. This was true as well for political endorsements that at any given time could be viewed as Democrat or Republican, Liberal or Conservative.

All of this was believed to be due to the tireless conviction of Perry White. And that was both a blessing and a curse for Alec Endicott. For if White believed Alec's argument – and purported evidence – that his father was wrongly convicted as a spy – then not only would White want the exclusive, but the editor would no doubt go all out to convince others of Randall Endicott's innocence.

It wouldn't bring back the dead but it would rewrite history *correctly* as far as Randall Endicott went. It might even help to exonerate Alec of his crimes, for they were all, in his mind, accidents and not pre-meditated.

But if White saw any chinks in the armor of Alec's so-called evidence – if he smelled any hint of fabrication or too much reliance on supposition and hearsay – then the editor would likely stay far from it. Further, it could damage the *Daily Planet's* reputation to suggest that a "Red Spy" might have been wrongly convicted by America, even to the point of impacting its circulation - especially now, given anti-Communist crusades in government and elsewhere in the country.

Worse, still, was the possibility that White would turn Alec in to the authorities. Given that risk, he would have to approach White incognito, and then if the editor seemed interested in pursuing his claims, only then would he perhaps reveal himself. Elena had offered that she see White instead of her brother, but in the end, Alec won out, insisting that he be the one to meet with the *Daily Planet* editor, albeit under a false name.

It was all this that occupied Alec's thoughts as he left the elevator and approached the matronly *Editorial Offices* receptionist, Miss Bacharach. Alec had a four o'clock appointment with White; Bacharach buzzed the editor's own secretary, Miss Ames, to let her know that *Richard Fleming*, Alec's alias, had arrived.

Endicott took a seat in a hallway waiting area around a corner from Bacharach. He deliberately positioned himself furthest from two lamps sitting on tables next to the seats in order to avoid illumination of his face as much as possible. As he sat down, he noticed a man sitting across from him. Alec nodded a polite hello, and the well-dressed, bespectacled man nodded back.

Alec, focused on his task at hand and not interested in small talk, nonetheless was curious about one thing and spoke to the man. "Been waiting long to see Mister White?"

The man smiled back with just a hint of weariness. "Oh, pretty soon it'll be close to two hours."

"Two hours!? You're a patient fellow." Endicott tried to hide his disappointment. *If this guy's ahead of me and he's been waiting that long...*

"Well, I'm new in town. Looking for my first job, in fact."

"Oh? If you don't mind me asking, where're you from?"

"*Smallville*. Born and raised." Alec saw that he said it proudly. He sensed something less than a country bumpkin, though - something suggesting the man was from somewhere else, perhaps far off. Even his accent wasn't like that of a *hick*.

"Smallville, eh? What brings you to the big city?"

"Oh well, after my father died—"

"Sorry." Alec was genuinely apologetic.

"Thanks. Well, after Eben died, Ma insisted that I go off on my own. She had help for the farm, and—"

This was more than Alec wanted to hear. He let the man drone on about having taken Journalism in Smallville and always wanting to be a reporter. Before long the man stood up and walked over to Endicott with his arm thrust out. Alec said, "Excuse me?"

The man pulled his hand back. "Oh, I'm sorry. I've been talking so much and I forgot to introduce myself." Then his hand went right back out. "I'm Clark Kent."

Alec paused and then grasped Kent's hand. "Pleased to meet you. I'm Al— Richard Fleming."

"Did you say 'Richard?'"

"Yes."

"Nice to meet you, Richard." Instead of returning to his seat, Clark sat down right next to Alec. "So, if you don't mind me asking, what are *you* here for? To see Mister White?"

"That's right." Endicott stopped there.

Clark said, "I see." Endicott thought he must be coming off as either shy or not willing to talk much about his appointment with White.

But Alec had taken somewhat of a liking to the farm boy. *There's something about him – more than meets the eye. Can't quite put my finger on it.* And so he added: "I'm sorry to seem secretive."

"No problem. We all keep secrets." Then Kent smiled.

"Yes, well, maybe so. But I'll tell you, Clark, if I may call you that—"

"Sure ... Richard."

"Clark, I've got a story that I'm hoping will knock Mister White's socks off."

At that moment, Miss Bacharach called Kent over to her desk to complete a form required by job applicants. Kent looked at her, nodded and got up to walk in her direction. He shot a "Really?" and an "Excuse me one minute" back at Alec before reaching Bacharach's desk.

In the meantime, Alec noticed one of the *Daily Planet* staffers – clearly so because he was carrying a heavy stack of white writing tablets and a mouthful of rubber band-wrapped pencils – walking slowly and deliberately down the hallway right past him. The college prankster in Alec made him ask the worker, "Excuse me, do you have the time?"

The worker – a kid – mouthed, "Uh huh" but kept walking. Alec got up, tapped him on the shoulder and the kid turned around to look at Endicott with a muffled "Huh?"

"What I meant was – can you please *tell* me the time? That is, if you know."

The bow-tied boy said, "Shrurp." Then he bent at the knees, putting the pads carefully on the floor. He then twisted his left arm, looked at his watch and said, "Trennee-koo-kide".

"Excuse me?"

"Trennee—Oph." Then with his right hand, he removed the pencils from his mouth. "Twenty to five."

Alec smiled and all-too-gratefully said, "Thanks."

The boy then grimaced and licked his lips. "Jeepers. I never realized how *lousy* pencils taste."

Alec said nothing. The boy then put the pencils on top of the stack of pads and lifted everything, this time balancing the pencils to make sure they didn't roll off. As he walked away and rounded the corner near Miss Bacharach, he turned back to the man who asked him the time, saying, "You're welcome", and smiled.

At the same moment, Alec caught a glimpse of Perry White, whose face he knew from the papers. White apparently had come down from the far-end of the hallway opposite his office. He had a look of anger and preoccupation on his reddened face, which Alec feared was the norm for the Chief Editor.

Alec then cringed as he watched White have a head-on collision with the young lad carrying the office supplies - and wasn't looking in the direction he was walking.

The moment White's belly smacked into the stack of pads - as well as the pencils precariously balanced on top - the materials went flying. Half of the pads headed towards the floor, the rest towards Miss Bacharach's "I LIKE IKE" mug filled with piping hot coffee - and - the newly sharpened pencils bearing down on her forehead.

But to Alec's amazement, it all ended well, and in an eye blink. The entire stack of pads magically appeared on Bacharach's desk, neatly piled. And the pencils - on top of them. Alec stood up and just stared at White, Bacharach, the kid - and Clark Kent.



The kid stood there dumbfounded while Bacharach composed herself. White, clearly ready to explode, turned to the young employee. "Why can't you *watch* where you're going? This is the *last* thing I need after a *shouting* match with the Board of Directors!"

The kid was clearly rattled, “I- I-”.

“And I *would* have to run into *one* the person who *least* deserves to be on this newspaper’s payroll – and that’s *you*, Olsen!”

“I’m – I mean – I’m really sorry—”

Alec then watched White steer around the boy and continue bounding down the hallway before disappearing into his own office reception area. Kent looked in Alec’s direction and mouthed a “well”, raising his eyebrows. But Alec was so mesmerized by the neat landing of the pads and pencils on Miss Bacharach’s desk that he didn’t think to intercept White and then privately cursed himself at missing the opportunity.

Soon afterwards, as Kent finished his paperwork, Bacharach’s phone rang. After answering and listening, she hung up and said, “You may go in now, Mister Kent.” She nodded in the direction White had stormed away, earlier. All the while, Alec had been watching this. As Kent walked off, Endicott called out, “Good luck!” and was answered by a seemingly nervous smile from Clark.

At five o’clock, Miss Bacharach stood, put her coat on, politely told “Mister Fleming” that she was done for the day. She said that Miss Ames would come to get him *if* and *when* Mister White would ever see him. That made Endicott’s heart sink, but he wasn’t giving up yet. He walked over to the open doorway leading to, presumably, Miss Ames’ waiting area which in turn led to White’s office, and listened without going in. At close to 5:40PM, he could hear muffled shouting coming from what must have been White’s office. Then he heard the voice of White’s secretary talking to the editor over an intercom:

“Yes?!”

“That young man is still waiting, Mister White.”

“**What** young man?!”

“Clark Kent.”

“Who’s he?!”

“A young man who’s applying for a reporter’s job. He’s been here since three o’clock, Mister White. You told me to, uh—”

“I don’t care **what** I told you. I’m not hiring reporters at – at twenty minutes of six! Anyway, I’d like to **fire** some, instead of hire’em. Send Lois Lane in here!”



"Yes, Mister White."

"Well, obviously Mister White doesn't want to see me." Endicott knew Kent's voice.

*"I'm terribly sorry, Mister Kent. He's not in a very good humor today. Perhaps if you'd come back tomorrow."*

Alec's heart sank again and he pulled away from the door. He went back to the waiting area to sit and think. *Sounds like White's not in the mood to see anyone but his own staff.*

Then Alec saw Kent dart from the area of White's waiting room and out of sight down the hall. He got up and walked into the hallway, thinking he saw a door open and close. Endicott went over to the door, which said "STOREROOM". *Odd.* Then he slowly opened the door and poked his head in. "Clark? Clark Kent?" But there was no response. He walked further into the room and saw a small broom closet that led to an open window, but knowing that the floor was several stories up, shook his head and went back to the waiting room.



As he did, Endicott saw a pretty woman dressed in business attire disappear into White's waiting room. The sight of her gave him a rush of adrenaline, and he, too, went in, where he encountered Miss Ames at her desk. She asked, "Yes, can I help you?"

"I apologize for the intrusion, but I'm Mister Fleming. Richard Fleming. You see—"

"Oh that's right, Miss Bacharach said that you were waiting. I'm so very sorry, but Mister White is extremely busy. Why I just turned a young man away—"

"You mean Clark Kent?"

She smiled. "Yes, that's right."

Then suddenly, through the editor's closed door, both Ames and Endicott heard White say, *"Who the blazes are you?!"*

They thought they heard a voice respond and Endicott asked Ames, "Could that be Clark Kent?"

She replied, "Oh my goodness, that's not possible."

They heard some more interplay between White and the muffled voice of someone else – possibly Kent. Then the kid chewed out earlier by White came barreling through the door to the editor's waiting room and next burst into White's office.

*“Mister White!”*

*“Who gave you permission to barge in here like a bull?!”*

But then the door slammed and all that could be heard was more shouting. Then Endicott saw the pretty girl, with the kid in tow, hurry out of White’s office and out of his waiting room, slamming both doors.

Alec then had a brainstorm. Getting to see White seemed hopeless right now, but maybe the kid – or better yet the girl – could open up some doors, so to speak. He darted out behind them, but to his dismay, missed them as the elevator doors closed.

Behind him, he heard footsteps and thought he had heard the same storeroom door open and close, as before.

All Endicott could think dejectedly was the metaphor of a doors slamming on *him*.

Alec was frustrated in not being able to see White, but not daunted in his quest and it remained his singular focus. Over the next few days he attempted to present his documentation on Randall Endicott’s innocence to over half a dozen media organizations: the *Daily Star*; the *Metropolis Herald*; WMTT radio; WMET radio and television; and even phone calls to New York’s *Daily Bugle*, as well as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* plus other outlets. He even considered his local *Andersonville Courier* before squashing the idea of using such a small-market newspaper.

But there were no takers. Some listened for a few minutes, some said “try again in a few months” and some apologized politely as they hung up.

And in almost every conversation, whether talking in person with a secretary or to someone on the phone, he heard a similar retort: “Are you *kidding*? Don’t you *know* what the number one story is?” or “Most of our staff is occupied by – you know. Sorry.”

Still, Alec wouldn’t give up, and with great resolve, he made another appointment at the *Daily Planet*. This time he did manage to see Perry White, again as Richard Fleming. White was so busy that he wouldn’t let “Fleming” sit down. The two men stood facing each other in the center of White’s office.

The editor was holding an unlit cigar and pointed it at Alec. “Now, son, remind me why I made an appointment with you. And I don’t need to tell you that we’re very busy, *particularly* these days.”

"Well, sir, Mister White, I've done a great deal of investigation into the case of Randall Endicott. You may remember –"

White's eyes narrowed as if he was thinking for a moment, and then he came close to shouting. "**Endicott?** *The Red Spy!*?"

A shiver went up and down Alec's spine. The words stung, particularly coming from a respected man such as White. "Randall Endicott, yes, but I have evidence of his *innocence*, Mister White."

"Now look here, Mister ... Mister *Fleming*, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"If I even went *near* such a story, I'd be blacklisted in a *Metropolis Minute*. Are you *crazy?*"

"But Mister White" Alec put his briefcase down on a table, opened it and pulled out some papers. He held them up, careful not to annoy the editor by shoving them in his face. "If you'd just take a minute to—"

There was a buzz on White's intercom. "Miss Lane is here with the galley you wanted."

"Send her in." Perry White turned back to "Fleming" and shook his head. Then, almost like a father, he put a hand on his visitor's shoulder. "Believe me, I've let my fair share of lunatics into this office."

"But—"

"Now, wait." The big-hearted warmth that Perry White was also known for seemed to be surfacing, if only for a moment. "I was going to say, you don't seem like one of them."

A surge of hope ran through Alec. "Well—"

White thought for a moment and then shook his head again. "No, it's just not possible. Not right now, especially. To be honest, even George Taylor at the *Star* would stay a million miles from this. I'm afraid—"

A well-dressed woman walked in – the same one Alec had seen the other day. He realized that she was the reporter, Lois Lane, based on photos of her he had seen. "Here's the headline you wanted, Chief." She said, "Excuse me" to Endicott and brushed right past him. She gave him a cold, quick quizzical glance and then plopped a newspaper galley down on the editor's desk.

White beamed as he read the headline.



*“Great Caesar’s Ghost! What a day for America! What a day for the world!”*<sup>1</sup>

The intercom buzzed again. “Mister White. The Mayor’s here.”

White said, “Send him in.”

Soon Mayor Michael Fiorletto and his entourage walked in, surrounding White and Lane. They all marveled at the headline while a discussion ensued between White and the Mayor. Endicott, ignored, slinked out of the room, a defeated man. Even White didn’t notice as he left. In the hallway, Alec stopped for a moment by a water cooler to gather his thoughts.

He felt like he had nothing left to live for.

Then he pulled out a cone-shaped cup from the dispenser, filled it with water, and took a sip. While doing so, Alec heard whispers nearby. He glanced and recognized White’s secretary standing and chatting with the other one, Bacharach, sitting behind her desk.

Alec tensed when he thought he heard Bacharach whisper, “Endicott”, “Alexander”, “wanted” and “FBI”. He sensed her staring at him, but when he glanced again, neither woman was looking in his direction, as if they had just darted their eyes away from

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<sup>1</sup> [“And Justice For All”](#) by Kirk Hastings, a “lost” episode of TAOS.

him. As he finished drinking, he was certain he heard Bacharach say, *"I'm going to call the police."*

And sure enough, she picked up her phone.

Alec then slowly but deliberately walked away. Upon reaching a bank of elevators, he instead found a nearby staircase and walked down the ten stories to the lobby. As he exited the *Planet* building and strode in the general direction of *Great Central Station*, Alec noticed two policemen heading towards him on the sidewalk. He didn't even think of fleeing. If this was the end, then that was it. *The end of a long road*, he thought, with disgust and resignation.

But the cops went right by him and he watched as they disappeared into the *Daily Planet* alcove leading to the lobby. It was at that moment that a crowd of people on both sides of the street gasped. Alec heard shouts everywhere as a throng built around him.

**"Look!"**



**"Up there!"**

**"My goodness – it's *him*!"**

**"He's *real*!"**

**"Flying like a *bird*!"**

**"Just like an *airplane*!"**

**"Lookit that costume!"**

**"*Wow*! Wotta guy!"**

**"He's a dreamboat!"**



And then, almost simultaneously, Alec heard cries of "***Superman!***" everywhere, followed by "*Hip! Hip! Hooray!*" Several men tossed their hats into the air. Alec looked up and all he could see was a brief red and blue streak disappear around one side of the *Daily Planet* building.

But even with Superman's flight above the street having finished, the crowd still teemed with excitement. People hugged each other like it was New Years Eve. Alec tried to avoid it all, but even he received hugs and a few friendly shoves. Some looked at him and asked, "*Didja see him?*" and "*Isn't that incredible?*" but their questions were rhetorical.



Little did those around him know that Alec Endicott didn't share their enthusiasm. In fact, he realized that his disdain and resentment for the "super" man was growing by leaps and bounds. *Leaps and bounds*, he thought, and almost chuckled, but was then immediately jostled by several more onlookers yelling Superman's name.

It was then that Endicott had yet another defining moment. The last half hour became the straw that broke the camel's back – *rejection* by the media and then by White – because of one man who held their undivided attention. And now every man and woman around him was shouting the man's name like he was a *god*.

It was because of this so-called "super" man that Alec couldn't plead his case – a case that meant everything to him and was perhaps his only reason for being.

And now he'd had *enough*!

Alec lashed out, pushing a man and woman to the sidewalk. He then plowed through people ahead of him, knocking some over and startling others.

He did that until he ran smack into a police officer.

"OK, kiddo, what's going on here? What are you causing such a ruckus for?"

Someone nearby yelled, "*He knocked me down! And my wife!*" and then someone else shouted, "*He's crazy! He **hurt** us!*"

The burly cop held Endicott by his arms as a crowd formed around them – most of the same people who had just cheered for The Man of Steel. Alec was forced to face them as they shouted at him, "*He's nuts!*", "*Lookit him!*", "*Crazy man!*", "*Putim' in the Funny Farm!*", "*Straightjacket him!*"

And then someone else in the crowd shouted, "***Superman** should get'im!*" And then another, "*Yeah! Let **Superman** at this guy! That'll teach'm!*" and "*Hey Jake, don't lock him up – give him to **Superman**!*"

Alec could do nothing but be captive to the humiliation and the policeman's grip. He had many low points in his life – his father's arrest, conviction and murder; his mother's death; the death of Louisa; and the accidents involving the death of two lawmen.

And now - he would've died in order to be put out of his misery.

However, the cop had had enough. He told the crowd to calm down. Then he parted them like Moses as he escorted Alec into the relative safety of the *Daily Planet* alcove. Alec thought, *this is the last place I want to be*, but had no choice.

The cop spoke, "OK, buster, what happened back there?" He had let go of Alec and was now facing him, with Alec's back to a wall.

Despite his resignation to the situation, Alec's survival instinct kicked in - he did not want to be arrested for disturbing the peace as that would no doubt lead the police to discover his real identity. He thought fast. "Sorry, officer, the 'moment' overwhelmed me, as did the crowd. You see, I suffer from *demophobia*."

The cop squinted. "Demo- *what*? What's that mean, you voted for Stevenson?"

Endicott briefly wondered about the quality of the Police Academy entrance exam but then answered the cop with a slight chuckle, "No, sir."

"You think this is funny? I'm going to haul you and your wisecracking face in to the station house in a minute."

"Officer, no. Demophobia is a fear of *crowds*. It's like, well, being afraid of getting on an airplane, a fear of heights or even being terrified of, say, spiders."

The officer's demeanor changed. "Oh. Why dincha say so? I don't like to tell no one, but those things with all those legs scare the *bejesus* out of me."

"Well, now you know how I react to crowds, officer. I'm very sorry for what happened."

The cop let Alec go with a warning and once again Endicott started down the sidewalk. As he did, Alec noticed two important things: glancing back, he saw the two cops who had entered the *Daily Planet* building earlier now conversing with the officer who almost arrested him - and was now pointing in Alec's direction.

At the same time, a taxi pulled up, letting a passenger out. As Alec traded places with the passenger, the cabbie said, "Sorry, bud, I'm off duty now." With that, Alec handed the driver his next-to-last twenty and said, "I just need to go to *Great Central Station*. You're making a fifteen-dollar profit. *Please*."

The cabbie nodded and pulled away without another word. He failed to notice his rear-view mirror showing three policemen frantically waving at and running towards his cab.

It wasn't until Alec was settled in on his commuter train to Andersonville that he realized the briefcase full of research papers he had brought with him to the *Daily Planet* was likely still sitting on a table in Perry White's office.

Alec eventually made it home and did something he hadn't done much since his Oak Ridge days - *drink*. He downed an entire bottle of *Jim Beam* and then went on a tirade, all in front of Elena. He smashed plates, vases and several of the other small

but breakable objects they shared, screaming at the top of his lungs. A neighbor must have called the police, but Elena was able to fend them off, saying that her brother was distraught because he had just lost his job.

Alex spent the next several days sequestered away in the basement while Elena went to work. He lived on coffee and sandwiches brought to him by his sister. They didn't speak all that much during this time. Finally, one evening, she got home late from work, finding him in the kitchen having finished nearly a pot of black coffee.

Elena saw a new face on Alec, one with a resolve and determination she had not seen before. And she saw something *horrific*, too, like that of a crazy, demented man. But she said little as Alec spoke.

"Elena, I have it all figured out now."

"Oh, do you?"

"Yes, I do. You see ... it's all about *power*."

"Power?"

"Yes, *power*. We grew up in Oak Ridge and were surrounded by people whose quest was the secret of a great power – the power of the *atom*. As you know, our father was deeply involved in this endeavor."

"Of course he was."

"But the power I'm also referring to is the power that a man – or men – can have – and how they *wield* it."

"I see." She didn't, but let him go on.

"Governments have power. They can use it to help people – or perhaps to *abuse* them. Even *enslave* them. The United States Government used its great power to stop an innocent man – Randall Endicott – then imprison him, and effectively, end his life."

Elena said nothing as Alec continued. "In essence, the U.S. Government abused its power in order to *murder* a man – the most important man in our lives." Alec's face grew tense and frightening.



He went on with his soapbox speech. "*Newspapers* have power." He paused and then chuckled. "Oh, they have great, *great* power. Millions of people read newspapers. Probably many of them *believe* what they read. After all, where else can they get this information?"

"Radio?"

"Yes, that's right. And even, I suppose, the television. Plus word-of-mouth. But there's nothing like a newspaper. One can sit there and read the same words over and over and over, until they make sense and sink in. Until those words are *believed* like the gospel truth."

"I suppose you're right, Alec." She didn't disagree, but the fiery look in his eyes scared her. Elena felt her brother needed to be appeased.

Alec Endicott continued. "Of course I am." He paused. "Perry White and the *Daily Planet* had the power to set things straight regarding our father."



"Or, at least help."

"*No*, they have immense power, Elena. One headline in the *Daily Planet* challenging the conviction of Randall Endicott and people would soon doubt that he was a spy."

"Perhaps."

Alec pounded a fist on the kitchen table and it frightened Elena. "*Not 'perhaps'!* Perry White could have *listened* to me! The *Daily Planet* could have been a **key** towards exonerating Randall Endicott!" He thumped the table once more.

Once again, Elena said nothing. She wasn't sure if her words would antagonize him further.

Alec sat back in his kitchen chair. He was still agitated, but it was as if he had reached a new plateau of realization – and something else. A need for *vengeance*? He continued. "Do you know why Perry White, in the end, wouldn't talk to me, Elena?"

She was walking on eggshells, trying to answer him as briefly as possible. "He was afraid?"

"Afraid? Perry White? Hardly."

But Elena didn't back down and said matter-of-factly, "You told me that White was afraid that if your material wasn't solid, he would risk his reputation and the newspaper's."

Alec reached out and put a hand on Elena's shoulder. Then he spoke softly. "No, Elena." He shrugged and offered a slight smile. "Perry White had no idea what was in my research. Perry White is, at the end of the day, a newspaperman, one who can smell a story a hundred miles away." Alec pointed a finger in the air. "He thought I had something and seemed on the verge of pursuing it."

Elena was afraid to ask, but did, "Then, Alec, what was it that dissuaded White from working with you?"

Alec stood, and then his face became a crimson rage as he once again pounded the kitchen table. "**SUPERMAN!**"

Elena was dumbfounded, "What--?"

Her brother once again thumped the table and remained standing. He maintained his angry, loud voice. "*Superman!* That strange do-gooder! The man with the bizarre abilities no *human* has!"

"How did he--?"

"Because when I finally got to see Perry White, everyone was *consumed* with this 'super' man, an agent of the government now - because of President Eisenhower, mind you."

"I see."

"If not for Superman, Perry White would have looked at my materials. *Worked* with me. Who knows what would have happened next?"

Elena gathered her resolve, for she was in fact enamored by The Man of Steel. She considered him a *hero*. "But Alec, Superman had nothing to do with our father's demise. It's not his fault that he arrived on the scene just when you were presenting your evidence to White."

Alec stared at his sister with a look of disgust. "You're like the rest of them, Elena. I had hoped you wouldn't be."

"I'm just saying—"

"You're really saying that you *like* Superman. His flashy red and blue outfit. The red cape billowing in the wind. The fact that he leaps into the air and is stronger than a



hundred Hercules put together. And the fact that bullets bounce off of him. You *adore* him, like everyone else.

"Well, I—"

"Let me tell you something. I was talking about power before. Well, Superman is the *ultimate* when it comes to power. He's a threat much greater than the U.S. Army – *all* the world's militias – combined."

"But—"

"Mark my words. Whatever he is. Whatever he can do. Whatever the reason why he suddenly showed up on the scene. He will *turn* on us one day. Today. Tomorrow. Whenever." Elena was silent as Alec went on. "You know, there's someone else with power."

"Oh?"

Alec laughed and put both hands on Elena's shoulders. "You're looking at him."

"*You*, Alec?" She dared not chuckle.

"Yes, me. Right now, my power's up here." He pointed at his head. "For you see, I know how things work. At all sorts of levels. Atoms and molecules. Elements and compounds. Mechanics. Biology. Chemistry. Physics. And even whatever's up there." He pointed at the ceiling, suggesting the sky and the universe.

"And with my mind – my *master* mind, so to speak, I see things that no one else has ever imagined. And I can turn this mental power into a *superior* power. A power greater than the government, the media – and even a power greater than *Superman*."

"Really. *Greater* than Superman?"

"Yes, Superman." He was irritated that his sister doubted him. "They say he's for Truth, Justice and the American Way? Ha! Tell that to Randall Endicott!" Alec paused, and then proclaimed. "Elena, from this point on I will be on a mission. Every waking hour will be spent on planning, designing, building and deploying whatever is needed to seek retribution for *crimes* against the Endicott name."

Elena remained a silent prisoner to her brother's ravings.

He took her by the shoulders yet again. "My sister. You are the only family I have left in this world. The only reminder of the life we had with our parents – one that we *cherished*."

Then Alec hugged her. She could feel him tensing up. He continued. "But they all took that away, and I aim to not only make them *pay* but make the world know the *truth*." He pushed away from her and concluded with. "To do this I need more than the mental power that I have. I need physical power. Tangible power. *Devastating* power.

"We are in the atomic age, Elena. *Atomic* power is what I need. With it in my hands, I – we – can be *invincible*."

"I don't understand."

"I've done a great deal of research into depleted uranium. Those late-night trips to the library – I spent a lot of time reading the works of Rabinowitch, Goldsmith, Grodzins ... more ... and of course, Albert Einstein. There is no doubt that uranium – and atomic power – can be harnessed – *I* can use it – to help me make a statement. To give me an *advantage* over people with authority."

"What will you use it for? This power. To *kill* people?"

"*No!* I am not a killer. *They* are. *They* kill. Not *me*."

Elena stared.

"I know what you're thinking. I'm wanted for murder. But you *know* that I've committed no crimes."

"I know, Alec. I know."

"So then you should know that I will *never* cross that line. I will *not* be like them!"

"Then why do you need – *atomic* power?"

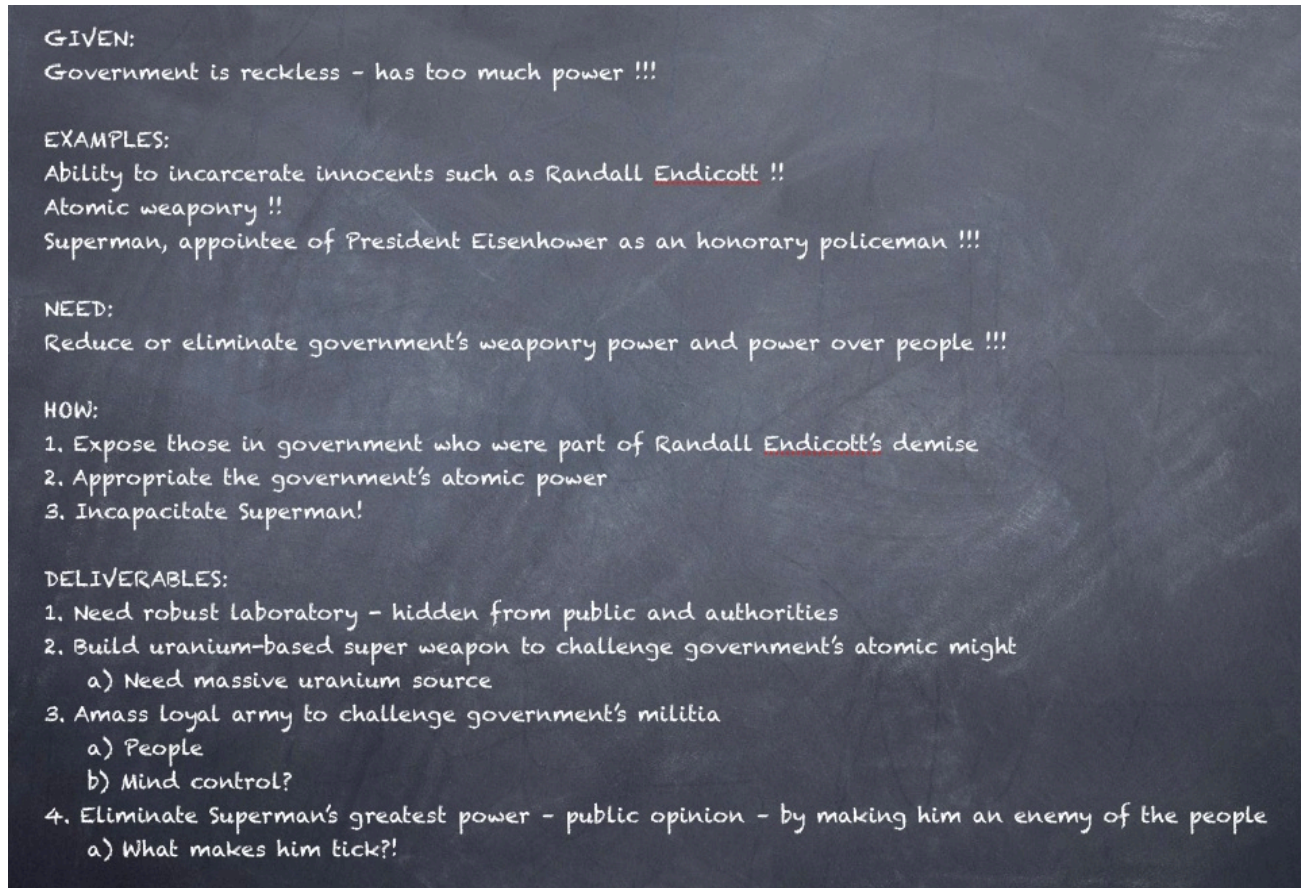
"I need it. I need it to gain the upper hand. To hold all the cards in the deck. It will give me – *us* – a voice. A voice that cannot be threatened or silenced. And it will give us a platform from which we can tell everyone that Randall Endicott was a *patriot*, not a traitor."

"And the authorities, the newspapers and – Superman? What will this power do against them?"

"It will allow us to seek retribution, and prevent them from, well ... *stopping* us."

Elena shrugged and said, "Alec. I'm tired and going to bed soon. But I have one more question." She paused. "Just what is it that you plan to do?"

He took her into the basement, a place he used as his own private research area. Alec showed his sister a blackboard and what was written.



"You see, Elena, I've spent the last several days considering my life's purpose. And this is *it*." He paused and then asked. "Are you with me?"

She nodded, hugged him, and then went upstairs to bed.

Several weeks later, after Elena had gone to work, Alec found copy of the *Daily Planet* on the kitchen table while having breakfast.

Later, over dinner with Elena at the same kitchen table, Alec mentioned it to his sister. He took out the paper and read the announcement: "Professor Nathaniel Roberts hosting private dinner party at Metropolis Observatory." He looked up from the paper and said, "This Saturday night." He continued reading. "Several prominent scientists to attend, along with a hopeful surprise guest."

Alec thought Elena might react, given that the pencil mark was no doubt hers, but she merely nodded, saying nothing. He then said, "Well, I found it interesting, so interesting in fact that I made a few phone calls."

"Oh?"

"I have it from reliable sources that this is a long overdue conference to discuss – *Superman*. These men are going to figure out what makes him tick – or at least – discuss him in detail."

"I see."

"*I* need to know what makes him tick, Elena. I *must* be at this dinner party."

"But Alec, it's a *private* party."

"*You'll* find a way to get me on the guest list."

She paused and wondered why he would even think that she had such power. "Even if I could, the risk of you being seen in public—"

"By what? By a bunch of old scientists who have never met Alexander Endicott?"

"They read papers."

"Hardly. They don't have time."

"It's too dangerous. Maybe one or more of them worked at Oak Ridge and will remember you."

He got mad and pounded the table. "I *must* be there. I *must* know what Superman is all about! It's the *only* way to prevent him from meddling in my plans ... *our* plans!"

Elena took the chance of raising her voice. "I'll not be responsible if someone calls the police!"

Alec calmed his voice, locked his eyes on Elena's and said very deliberately, "I'll take that risk."

Elena stared at her brother for a half-minute and then broke her silence. "All right then. But *I'm* going with you. I'll attend as your ... *nurse* ... and you'll go ... disguised as a man wearing sunglasses due to a ... *stigmatism*. Not blind, mind you. But you'll be less recognizable."

Alec smiled. "*Brilliant.*"

"But the guest list. How will we get you on the guest list?"

"I've been thinking about that. Get down to the Observatory tomorrow. Find a way to get the current guest list. Then we'll put my plan into motion."

Twenty-four hours later, Alec and Elena were in their Andersonville kitchen once again. Alec asked, "Well, did you get the guest list?"

"No. Despite my best efforts, the Observatory secretary would not divulge it."

Alec pounded the kitchen table. "*Damn!*"

Elena held a hand up. "However, I did learn something."

"Oh?"

"I overheard the secretary on the phone. A Doctor Bernard Smothers of the *Toronto Science Institute* is on the list."

"I've read about him. Hmmm..."

"She said that a limousine would pick him up at the airport that evening."

Alec Endicott's wheels were turning. Then he said, "Those men we hired at Maxwell's Rock."

"You mean ... Grodd, Scudder and Dillon?"

"That's right. Here's what we're going to do..."



**METROPOLIS OBSERVATORY**

The Metropolis Observatory rose from an arid plateau forty miles southwest of the city. It was built in the 1920s far from Metropolis so that bright lights wouldn't interfere with the views of the night sky. By the early 1950s, though, city and state officials proposed a bill that would limit development within twenty miles of the observatory, as suburban growth was beginning to infringe on stargazing at the Observatory.

On this particular Saturday evening, a thin pale orange line defined the horizon far to the west of the Observatory as a simonized sleek black Lincoln Continental pulled up to the entrance. The limousine driver, sporting a black coat, hat and mustache, got out and scooted around the trunk in order to open the rear door. The two shapely legs that emerged, one at a time, were ignored by the driver but turned the heads of men entering the Observatory. Soon they could see the rest of the woman, who was blonde and sported a nurse's uniform. The men at the Observatory entrance were now completely stopped in their tracks, captivated by the alluring figure now standing next to the hired car.

They watched as she turned and bent slightly to help another passenger exiting the rear of the vehicle. He wore a large fedora and seemingly oversized raincoat, along with a pair of dark tinted eyeglasses. As he stood, the nurse held his arm as the pair walked gingerly onto the slightly raised sidewalk that led to the Observatory entrance.

Alec nodded at the onlookers, who continued to stare not only at Elena but now at him. *I must be an odd sight for them. The best is yet to come.* He chuckled at the thought, and when he did, the bystanders misread his face and returned what they thought was a smile. As his sister steadily "helped" him towards the Observatory entrance, Alec recognized some of the men who had resumed their stroll inside.



He immediately identified Fred Hoyle, the English astronomer and mathematician, an expert in cosmology and Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, Indian astrophysicist whose expertise was the stars, as well.



Each man was greeted at the front door by the evening's host. Alec knew quite a bit about Professor Nathaniel Roberts, the chief astronomer at the Metropolis Observatory since the end of World War II. He recalled reading that Roberts had had a fascination with outer space ever since he was a child. As a young man Roberts had the great fortune of working as an apprentice in the Lowell Observatory, in Flagstaff, Arizona. Roberts' mentor at Lowell was the astronomer Clyde Tombaugh who discovered the planet Pluto in 1930. Tombaugh, one of the guests entering the Observatory, embraced Roberts as he walked in.



Alec was next. Roberts, known for being blunt, asked, "Who in *blazes* are you?"

"Professor Roberts. I'm assuming you received Doctor Smothers' telegram." Alec didn't yet hold out a hand.

Roberts paused for a moment and stared at Alec's face, tinted glasses and all. *Did he recognize me?* Alec wondered. *Maybe Elena was right and this was a mistake. Any one of these scientists might figure out who I am. Roberts and I have never met, but maybe he reads the papers.*

Elena jumped in, perhaps sensing that a distraction was needed. "Why Professor Roberts, this is Doctor Richard Steglitz." She didn't add anything, hoping that the plan she and Alec put in motion would do the rest.

Roberts pulled on his white goatee. "Steglitz. Steglitz." He paused and shook his head. "No, I—"

Alec looked at Elena. "Didn't Bernie send the telegram? He said—"

Roberts' eyes lit up. "Oh yes, my secretary got a telegram not thirty minutes ago. *Steglitz*. You're here for Bernie Smothers. He's got the flu, I take it?"

Alec replied, "Yes, poor man." Then, hoping to move things along, he smiled and offered a hand, "It's an honor to meet you, Professor." Roberts shook the hand of "Steglitz" and then semi-bowed at Elena, saying, "Charmed." He stared at her for a moment as if to ask why she was there.

Elena read Roberts' mind, saying, "Oh, Richard has a stigmatism. Worse at night. The tinted glass..." She pointed at her own eyes. "...helps, but I'm here just in case, you know."

Roberts was stuck on what the nurse had called him. "*Richard*, eh? Something more than a professional relationship, eh, Doctor?" The Professor smiled and ribbed Alec,

and then the trio broke out in laughter. Alec and Elena next went fully inside and handed their coats to a woman checking them.



As the brother and sister entered a dining room, Alec noticed more scientists whom he recognized, and a few he didn't. He spotted Gerard Kuiper, Dutch-American astronomer with a specialty in planets and moons; George Gamow, Ukrainian-born theoretical physicist and cosmologist whose expertise was in stellar radiation, amongst other things; Carmine Meldini, an Italian scientist and cosmologist; Jan Oort, a Dutch prolific astronomer; Ejnar Hertzsprung, a Danish chemist and astronomer; and Johannes Lucern, a brilliant Swiss-American scientist.



Alec wondered why Meldini was there. Though brilliant, he had developed a tarnished reputation as a crackpot of sorts in recent years. There were even whispers of an association with underworld figures, but nothing was proven. Carmine was one of the few astronomer-geologists, and perhaps Roberts saw value in his being here, despite any supposed aberrant behavior or fringe activities by the scientific genius.

Before long the collection of scientists sat at a large round dinner table. Elena was politely asked to remain in the lobby. Roberts asked everyone for a brief introduction, and they all went around the table. After each man spoke, respectful applause followed. Following Alec's introducing himself as Doctor Steglitz, there was silence. Roberts himself had to jumpstart a few claps in order to stave off any embarrassment. He further explained Steglitz's presence via the telegram he received, not knowing that it was fiction and that the man for which Steglitz was a proxy, Bernard Smothers, was in fact being taken on a long limo ride from the airport in the wrong direction far beyond Metropolis by Alec's hired hands, Grodd and Scudder, posing as a driver and his helper.

When the introductions were over, Roberts spoke briefly to a headwaiter. As they spoke, Alec noticed that two chairs around the dinner table were empty and wondered if more guests were coming. His speculation temporarily abated as Roberts stood and spoke.

"Gentlemen. Thank you all for coming here this evening. I know that most of you have come long distances. Several of you have had to endure cramped airplanes and crowded, dirty airports. For that, I am sorry, but I hope that our main topic, not to mention the wonderful meal Chef *Broussard* has arranged, will in some way make up for your arduous journeys and time away from your valuable work.

"As for our main topic, you all know what it is." He paused. "There was a time when the planet Earth was a place where everything in the world pretty much made sense. The *science* of everything made sense. And when it didn't, scientists such as yourselves went to work and made discoveries – you analyzed the unknown, the contradictions, the impossible, and figured it all out." He chuckled. "Well, most of it, anyway.

"Now, I know that there are still many, many scientific frontiers to conquer. And I'm sure we will conquer them, given the brilliance and dedication of yourselves and others such as you. It's facilities such as our observatory that allow us, for example, to look into that *final* frontier, Outer Space." Roberts looked up at the ceiling as he said that.



"Not long ago, however, as you all know, the world was turned on its head. No, I'm not referring to the Second World War or anything like that. I'm referring to the sudden appearance of a unique individual, seemingly from nowhere. He's a man – at least he *appears* to be a man – who is like no *other* man because he defies the laws of *science* as we know it."

The lights were dimmed and a slide show began. The first slide showed the Superman "S" symbol. Roberts continued, "Of course, I'm referring to the gentleman who sports this symbol ... *Superman*."



"We've seen that he can defy gravity. He's stronger than a hundred – maybe a thousand men. Bullets bounce off of him, and perhaps much more. He seems to have extraordinary eyesight, hearing and other abilities.

"And best of all, this Superman seems like he's on our side – the side of all good men everywhere.

"But tonight, we're here to discuss the *science* of Superman. What makes him tick?"

Alec thought, *Exactly why I'm here.*

More slides were shown. Superman leaping and flying. Bullets bouncing off of him. Lifting great weights. Bending steel with his bare hands.

While this was going on, someone was escorted into the darkened room. The man sat in one of the two empty chairs, this one on the far side, opposite Alec. And then when the slide show ended, the lights went on and a surge of electricity went up Alec's spine: it was *Professor Milton Adams!*

Roberts introduced him. Adams apologized for being late, referring to his work at a new atomic research facility outside Metropolis. Then Alec watched as the Professor scanned the room, looking at the faces. To Endicott it was like a bullet with his name on it making its way around the table. Finally Adams looked at Alec. To his relief, the Professor offered the same nod and smile he gave to the others. *But did he linger a moment more with me?* Alec couldn't tell. He had hoped that his clean-shaven head, along with the tinted glasses, would throw people off in case they knew the face of wanted criminal Alexander Endicott.

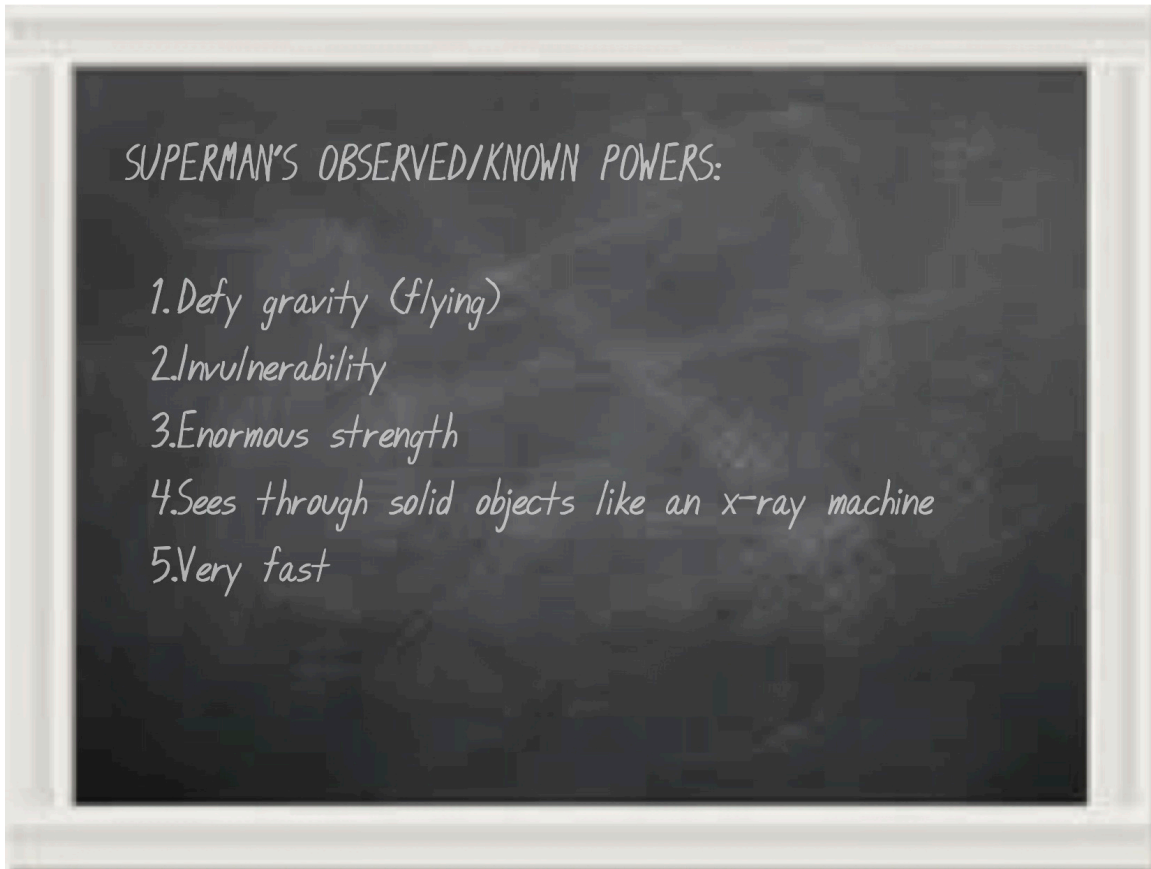
Soon, the multi-course dinner began to be served, and conversations about The Man of Steel ensued. Alec listened politely but said little. His job here was to learn what powered Superman so that he could be stopped and as such wouldn't be able to interfere with his grandiose plans.

On the far side of the table he heard snippets of a conversation about radiation that involved Professor Adams. When dinner was over, after-dinner aperitifs were served and Roberts, sitting, led a new discussion.

“If you all don't mind, I'd like to cover two main topics. First, what are Superman's apparent powers and abilities? That's mostly an easy one to answer. But the harder question is, why does he have them? I'm sure that will lead to a speculation on where Superman's origins.”

A blackboard was wheeled into the room. Roberts said, “I prepared a list of observed abilities that Superman appears to have” and nodded at the board.





The professor read off the list and then looked at his guests. "Now, does anyone know of *other* abilities that this man has?"

Fred Hoyle answered right away. "I read an article that he once blew out a forest fire in Colorado. So that would suggest he's got incredible lung power."

Roberts replied, "Interesting. Super-breath, of a sort."

Hoyle nodded, "Yes, that's a good name for it. And on the flip side, he apparently can melt objects with his eyes. A sort of heat vision."

Now Roberts grinned as he wrote down these additional powers on his blackboard. "You're on a roll, Fred. Nice."

One of the few scientists Alec didn't know called out, "His so-called super-breath is probably related to his incredible strength. Super-lungs."

Roberts answered, "I suppose so. Good point, Bob."

Professor Lucern said, "Well, this may be related, but he rescued everyone on that Soviet submarine several months ago. That suggests he can *hold* his breath for long periods."

Meldini said, "Or maybe not even *need* to breathe."

Lucern nodded, "Yes, that's possible. Plus his invulnerability also helps him to withstand the depths of the sea and apparently resist getting a case of the bends."

Several scientists nodded in agreement. One called out, "Probably speaks Russian, too." There was some muted laughter.

Alec listened to all this, but began to drift off as the classification of Superman's powers was of little interest to him. He politely nodded at comments by Roberts and the others, but said nothing. He especially wanted to avoid having Professor Adams hear his voice – something Milton might recognize and associate with his former friend turned fugitive.

But then Endicott's ears perked up when the conversation turned to Superman's origins. Roberts once again drove the discussion. "Less than thirty years ago – I'll get you the precise date a little later – the Lowell Observatory tracked an unusual flash of light across the sky. It was *not* a meteorite – at least, I didn't *think* so."

Jan Oort interrupted, "*You* didn't think so, Nate?" He smiled.

Roberts responded with a smile, "Well, yes, it was *me* working at Lowell, with the man sitting next to you." Clyde Tombaugh grinned and Roberts continued. "Anyway, I didn't think it was a meteorite, because the light of whatever this thing was seemed to remain constant, not like a meteor that probably would've burned up or gotten smaller.

"Anyway, it was dawn in the east but still dark at Lowell, in Arizona, so we were able to still see the thing. My thinking is - if it wasn't a meteor, what was it? What else would come from the heavens and not burn up?

"A metallic object." It was Ejnar Hertzsprung.

Someone else called out, "A vessel of some sort."

"*Exactly*". Robert pointed at Ejnar and the other scientist. "And then, almost thirty years later, a man who appears to be thirty years old or thereabouts, a man with powers and abilities way beyond anything anyone's ever thought was possible, shows up. Like a baby who fell out of the sky and grew up."

Professor Adams asked, "Are you saying, Nate, that Superman is from up there?" He pointed at the ceiling. "From outer space?"

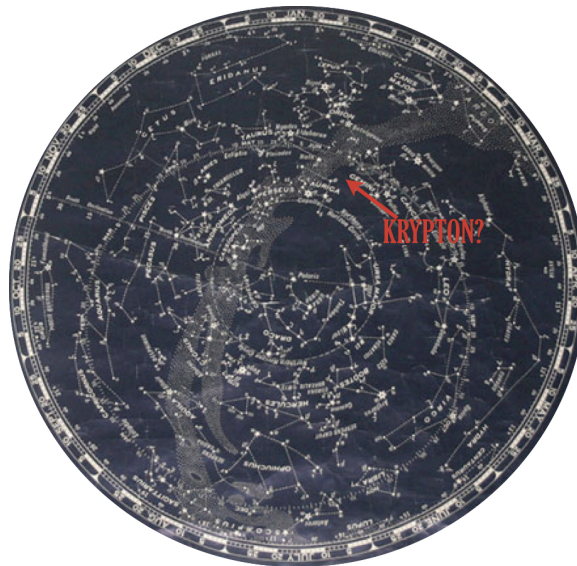
"Why not from Earth? An experiment by some country?" one of the guests remarked.

Roberts sucked on his pipe. "Possible. But I wouldn't know where to begin speculating on that one. Someone would have to have injected him with some bizarre chemistry set of compounds to make him do what we see him do. No, I'd rather venture that he's from another world." Roberts pointed up at the ceiling with his pipe. "Now, we computed a trajectory back at Lowell, and although all of this is speculation, we plotted a path back to a region of space."

"In the Milky Way, Professor?" It was Lucern.

"Yes, we think so. Mr. Chandrasekhar and I have been exchanging letters on the subject, and well, let's have Chandra tell you in his own words." Roberts nodded at Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, the Indian astrophysicist.

Chandra stood and looked around the room. He seemed to hesitate, as if he was going to reveal a secret – or something not to be believed. Then he spoke with a heavy Indian accent. "We believe that the super man comes from an extinct world we call ... *Krypton*." At the same time, Roberts had the lights briefly dimmed to display a slide from the projector showing a star chart.



There were gasps and murmurs around the room. Someone called out, "You mean, like the element?"

Chandra politely smiled and said, "That is correct."

Roberts nodded at Chandra, who sat down. Then the professor said. "I know what you're all thinking – that we're crazy." Roberts then chuckled. "And maybe we are."

But we pieced together as much evidence as we have." He pointed to the slide. "And as for this, well, we could be off by millions of light-years, but that's our theory for now." Roberts nodded to someone and the lights were turned fully back on.

As soon as the room was lit, Alec noticed a woman standing in the entranceway, Roberts' secretary, motioning for the Professor to come over. But Endicott's casual observation was interrupted by a voice behind him.

"Excuse me."

He turned and saw that it was one of the waiters that Roberts had apparently hired for the affair. Alec had noticed him before – his pencil-thin mustache, wire-rim spectacles with glass so thick they distorted the man's eyes, and peppery-grey hair seemed at odds with his tall, well-built physique.

The waiter had an accent, perhaps Spanish or Mexican, Alec thought. "Your empty plate, please." He offered a thin smile as Endicott leaned back in his chair to allow the waiter room to lean over to the table. As the waiter did, Alec next could not believe his ears when the man spoke and looked straight into his eyes. "Haven't we met?"

A chill went up Endicott's spine.

But any response or further thought was interrupted by Professor Roberts, who had returned to his podium. "Excuse me everyone, but my secretary has informed me of a *crisis* on the other side of the world I wanted to make you aware of." Roberts nodded at Subrahmanyam Chandrasekhar, of the scientists around the table. "Sorry Chandra, but this is in your neck of the woods."

"There's been a report on the wire that a dozen climbers are trapped following an avalanche on Nanda Devi..." Chandra gasped as Roberts continued. Alec noticed that Roberts had changed his gaze and seemed to be looking in his direction as he continued. "... second highest peak on the Indian Subcontinent." Then Alec noticed that the Professor was staring at something or someone just *behind* him. "Sounds like these people are in a bad way."

Alec turned to look back at the burly waiter who seemed to recognize him ... but he was *gone*.

Endicott sat there dumbfounded and sipped on a cup of coffee, trying to gather his thoughts on what had just happened in a short span of time – the announcement by Roberts and the strange waiter who seemed to recognize him.

After a few minutes, the conference continued and Roberts spoke again. "Let's move on. So Professor, let's say what you and Chandra have theorized is, well, a good one

– a good theory." It was Professor Lucern again. "Is he from a *race* of supermen? Do all men – and women – on this planet Krypton have his extraordinary powers?"

"There's no way of knowing, of course, but I would tend to doubt it. If the rest of'em had those incredible powers, we might have seen more of them here, I guess. I don't know. Perhaps they would have built spaceships given their abilities, and escaped whatever caused the planet to be *extinct*."

Lucern asked, "What makes you say that – that this so-called Krypton is - extinct?"

Roberts explained that records kept through the centuries showed evidence of something far out in space – something that is no longer there. "Again, it's only a theory. Our telescopes can only give us so much information. But we're guessing it may have exploded. May have even created many fragments that hurtled through space."

Meldini jumped in. "You mean, Krypton meteors. *Krypton-ite*?"

Roberts nodded. "That's one way of putting it."

Meldini went on with his accented English. "Possibly the meteors would be *radioactive*. Their radiation could be *harmful* to this super man. It's just a *the-ory*, of course. But it could be substantiated by the *Delphian* Theory of Reverse Effects."

"Funny you say that, Carmine, because I've had such a discussion with Chandra. But let's hope none of that stuff – if it even exists – ever makes it to Earth. Superman's a good man and none of us would want to see him harmed – or worse."

Alec took note of this discussion, but it was so seemingly far-fetched that he put little credence in it. After all, even if these planetary fragments hurt Superman, where would he get hold this alien meteor rock from, anyway? Perhaps it could be synthesized, but where would one begin?

Another scientist, Georges Pleuseau of France, jumped into the conversation. "But Professor, suppose this so-called *Krypton* did not have a race of supermen. Suppose our super man was an ordinary person on his home planet, for argument's sake. In that case, can we think of a way he'd derive his powers simply by being on the Earth? Any theories?"

Lucern jumped in. "I was postulating that, myself, Georges. However, we need more information. For instance, is the star that Krypton orbited still there? Or was it destroyed? Did the star itself nova?"

Chandra, appearing puzzled by Lucern's question, answered. "No, it appears to be in place. It may be a red giant. At least, our spectrograph seems to detect a strong red spectrum emission from the star."



Lucern continued. "Fascinating. Then Superman's normal environment, when he *might* have been an ordinary man, could have been under a *red* star. But here on Earth, where he has all of these amazing abilities, he is under a *yellow* star. Our *Sol*, of course."

Roberts replied, "Sounds like you're onto something, John. I *like* that theory."

Professor Lucern added, "Perhaps his amazing physique is able to *absorb* the energy of Sol. It could be soaking up energy and *re-purposing* it – to give him his strength, toughen his skin, make his molecular structure more dense and so forth."

Alec found this part of the discussion fascinating – and it may have been exactly what he came for. He sat through the rest of the meeting, including dessert, and then it began to break up. As Roberts thanked his fellow scientists who beginning to leave, he called out, "Oh, a few of you may be wondering who this empty chair is for. I invited a fellow from Princeton I think you all know - but Albert couldn't make it in the end. A shame."

Finally Alec got up from his chair and smiled at the scientists around him. As he easily walked towards the dining hall's exit, he remembered that he had Elena deliberately escort him somewhat gingerly into the room as part of the ruse to make his stigmatism and tinted glasses convincing. However, at this point cared little about the chicanery he employed, for soon he would be gone from the Observatory. As well, following a walkie-talkie call to Scudder from Alec's limo driver, the man whose place he took, Doctor Bernard Smothers, would soon arrive at the Observatory albeit a few hours late. Alec had no interest in being around when the frustrated and fuming Smothers would arrive, finding that the conference was over.

Avoiding most of the crowd, especially Professor Adams, Alec made his way out to the hallway where he spotted Elena sitting on a bench in an alcove. As she stood up, he said, "I hope they gave you something to eat. Anyway, I got what I wanted. Let's get the car."

"And what is it that you wanted, Alec?" It was Milton Adams, standing right behind him.

"Hello Milton." Alec extended a hand. Adams hesitated. Then he softly grasped Alec's hand as if Endicott had the flu. Alec added, "I see you recognized me after all these years."

"I might not have if I hadn't run into Elena out here, first." There was a gleam in his eyes when Adams said her name.

"Of course. That's why you were late. You two were talking here."

Elena remained silent. Alec sensed something different about her but couldn't put his finger on it.

Alec winked at the Professor. "So, Milton. Are you going to turn me over to the authorities?"

Any pleasantries in Adams' face vanished. "Should I?"

"Of course not. You know me. Or *knew* me. I'm no criminal."

Adams shook his head. "That's not what the newspapers say."

"Now, now, Professor Adams. Do you believe *everything* you read in the papers?"

"Quite often, in fact."

"I see." Alec was losing interest, but then he remembered something. He nodded towards the reception room from which they had just come. "You mentioned an atom plant where you work. I'd love to hear more."

Adams studied Alec's face. "Alec, despite everything ... it's ... good to see you after all these years." He turned to Elena. "And you especially, Elena. Good night."

With Adams gone, Elena resumed the pretense of being a nurse and escorted her brother towards the exit. As that happened, Alec noticed Professor Roberts in the hallway, patting the scientist, Chandra, on his shoulder, saying, "It's going to be all right. We just got an update on the wire. Your countrymen – or whoever was climbing that damn mountain in your homeland – will be ok." Roberts then pointed his unlit pipe at Chandra before adding, with a smile, "You'll never guess who appeared out of nowhere to rescue them."

Then Adams disappeared out the front door with his sister and into a waiting cab.

## **ACT 4: THE DIARY**

About a month after the Observatory dinner party, Alec began to notice that Elena spent less and less time in their Andersonville home. He'd try on a few occasions to wait up for her but eventually would nod off after midnight.

One morning, Alec called to Elena in her bedroom. She said she was half-dressed, getting ready for work and told him not to come in. However, he didn't want to miss an opportunity to confront her about her spending less time at home. He opened her bedroom door and saw that she was in fact completely dressed. Moreover, Alec caught a glimpse of Elena shoving something in a drawer. He asked her about where she was last night and she said "out with co-workers".

Elena then rushed out to work without another word.

Alec waited until he was sure Elena was down the block and then opened the drawer where Elena had hidden something. Beneath some undergarments he found it: a diary. In fact, there was more than one, and having no compunction about invading his sister's privacy, Alec pulled all five notebooks from the drawer and sat on her bed. Each had a time period on the cover printed in Elena's handwriting. He sorted them and opened the oldest one, assuming based on the date that it went back to the Oak Ridge days.

What he read right from the start was disquieting – about her unhappiness in Oak Ridge. Unlike Alec, Elena made lots of friends, but she felt something was missing. A few pages in, the diary hit on it: Alec's sister felt estranged from her father, Randall, because he showered attention on his genius son.

Alec looked up from the notebook and thought, *I never realized that, perhaps because I soaked up Randall's attention and, as well, was so busy.* He vowed to himself that in some way he would make it up to her.

He read on about the classes Elena took with Professor Adams. She developed a liking to him and the diary even went on to suggest that Adams was a kind of replacement father figure to Elena.

He shook his head at the newfound revelations concerning his sister.

Over the course of two hours, Alec read through the rest of the completed diaries that documented Elena's tumultuous times in California with her husband and kids, along with her trip east. He opened the final, unfinished diary – the one Elena was still working on that presumably brought things up to current times – and had the shock of his life.

Back when Alec was on the run from the Feds in Metropolis, Elena had told Alec that she came east to find and prevent him from getting arrested at the will hearing. But

her diary caught his sister in a lie: she had really come east to find *Professor Adams*. Unsuccessful in locating him, Elena was hopeful to find her brother at the will hearing – and perhaps through his former connections he would be able to help find Milton.

But, as the diary went on, Elena felt sorry for her only living family, Alec, save for her children, and decided to help *him*. He now read more carefully than ever...

October 23, 1952

7:00 A.M.

Alec explains his plot against the government as retribution for the demise of our father. As he put it to me, "What other reason for me is there to live?" It was a rhetorical question.

He seems half-crazed. This is truly a mad scheme. But maybe if I go along, I can steer him away from it.

October 27, 1952

5:00 P.M.

In order to have people help him Alec is looking into mind "influence" or mind control. His scheme requires a great many people and Alec feels that it would be difficult to enlist so many men to willingly do what needs to be done, especially given the risks involved. Nor does he have enough money to pay them. As well, Alec doesn't want everyone involved remembering him and his scheme.

So he is investing in mind control. He has actually studied it over the years, but given other circumstances has not had much time to delve into it closely.

Now he has time and a purpose.

It sounds like science fiction to me.

But I'll go along with it for now. Maybe in the long run, Alec can help me get my kids back. I miss them so.

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November 3, 1952

11:30 P.M.

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We read about a machine created by a Doctor Stanton that is supposed to influence thought at a distance. Despite my objections, Alec made a rare trip in public on his own, late last night. He followed a man named Hadley to Stanton's lab. After Hadley left, Alec broke into the lab to locate Stanton's plans for the mind machine. He found the paperwork and made off with it.

Alec brought Stanton's diagrams back to his growing facility inside Maxwell's Rock. With our diminishing funds, he's created quite a laboratory, plus a work and storage area, underground and out of sight from the authorities. I'm impressed.

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November 12, 1952

6:30 P.M.

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I brought home library books for Alec on the works of an Englishman, Richard Caton, and Adolf Beck of Poland, as well as Hans Berger, a German, who documented their work with brain waves.

Alec continues to exchange letters with a scientist, William Grey Walter, who himself is an expert in brain wave mapping.

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November 18, 1952

2:45 P.M.

We read an article in the Daily Planet on how Stanton's mind machine was stolen and used by a criminal, Lou Craneek, to overpower people at a government hearing implicating Craneek and his organization for major crimes. But the article says that at least one person subjected to the machine went mad and died.

As a result, Alec shelves plans to build a facsimile until that issue can be addressed.

November 27, 1952

9:15 P.M.

Over a modest Thanksgiving dinner between the two of us in an Andersonville diner (a rare public outing for my brother), Alec explained that each individual has a unique brain frequency that can be detected via a modified electroencephalograph. He believes that he can alter Dr. Stanton's mind control beam to target specific people using this principle.

Alec also thinks that through chemical "prepping" of the mind, the madness effect of the machine can be mitigated. If anyone can figure it out, my brother can.

I still can't believe I'm going along with his scheme. I must be just as mad!

November 28, 1952

9:30 A.M.

We both read a Daily Planet article about a mysterious doctor named Ort who used mind control drugs. Piqued Alec's interest.

November 30, 1952

11:15 P.M.

Alec learned through the grapevine that Doctor Ort faked his death via a serum and was able to escape from the morgue.

December 3, 1952

10:45 P.M.

Alec located Doctor Ort and turned the tables on him. Ort was subjected to his own drug and revealed its formula to Alec.

Ort was later killed in an incident involving Superman and the police. This time the police confirmed his death.

December 19, 1952

9:00 P.M.

Through testing, Alec determined that Ort's serum is not sufficient to prepare the brain for a modified version of Stanton's machine. His research continues.

December 26, 1952

4:30 P.M.

I reluctantly helped Alec collect eight homeless men from Christmastime shelters for an experiment of Alec's. They will remain in the Maxwell's Rock facility until they can be prepared for the experiment.

January 20, 1953

9:30 A.M.

Once again, the Daily Planet was a source of key information. An article told of a recent incident in Haiti concerning a man, William Johnson, captured there. Johnson used a powerful mind control drug on visitors and Haitian locals.

February 1, 1953

11:00 A.M.

Per Alec's request, I arranged a trip to Port-au-Prince, Haiti to visit Johnson in jail. I'm thrilled because it's good to get away from everything, despite the nature of the "mission". As I write this on the plane, I recall this morning's events while packing and listening to the radio with Alec about a very noteworthy bank robbery.

Looking up from the diary, Alec remembered it, too...



*"The top story is a multi-million dollar robbery of the Metropolis First National Bank. A swarm of eight armed men entered the bank, holding officials and customers hostage as the main vault was opened and looted. The police apprehended all eight men but the large haul of money was not found with them. It is believed that an unmarked van waiting outside the bank made off with the money. Police are questioning the eight robbers but strangely they appear to have no knowledge of the operation's mastermind.*

*"It should be noted that this is one of the few major crimes since Superman's arrival on the scene in Metropolis in which The Man of Steel was not on-hand to stop the perpetrators. This may be due to unconfirmed reports from Alaska suggesting that Superman was sighted in the skies above that remote territory.*



*"In other news, Mobsters Ace and Connie Chiles are wanted for questioning in the death of small-time hood Johnny Sims. Efforts to locate the criminal pair have been unsuccessful.*

*"Turning to sports, the National Football League Dallas Texans played their final..."*

*It was the eight homeless men that we enlisted who carried out the bank robbery. The operation was Alec's first attempt at using the Stanton mind machine, along with drugs to control anyone's actions. Although the results of the mind control experiment were mixed, the theft was a success: the First National Bank had housed the unclaimed Endicott Family Estate funds. Over \$1mm was recovered by us. Our only challenge will be to spend the money in such a way that the serial numbers of the cash are not traced back to us.*

February 3, 1953  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
2:30 P.M. local time

*Paid two guards \$1,000 each, U.S. currency, to look the other way while I walked out of a Port-au-Prince jail with William Johnson. With the promise of his own \$1,000, Johnson accompanied me, courtesy of a fake passport, back to Metropolis.*

February 5, 1953  
11:15 P.M. (Metropolis)

*Alec met with William Johnson in Metropolis café and learned the secret of his so-called zombie powder. But Johnson took too much of a liking to Metropolis and tried to amass his own army of voodoo-inspired admirers, using them to rob banks. He was captured by Superman but succumbed to a curare-tipped dart from one of his disgruntled followers.*

March 11, 1953

1:00 P.M.

Having added Johnson's feedback to his drug formulae, Alec feels comfortable that he can successfully prepare subjects, using drugs, for control via the Stanton mind machine.

Alec turns more of his attention to Superman, trying to determine what gives him his amazing abilities. My brother feels that Superman will be his greatest adversary and needs to find a way to thwart him. He has watched from afar Superman's prowess during the so-called "crime wave". Alec and I are shocked when Superman brings to justice the Number One crime boss in Metropolis - someone who no one expected - prominent attorney Walter Canby.

(Unrelated to this, I read an out-of-town birth announcement from Brooklyn, NY for what would turn out to be a brand new admirer of Superman.)



April 9, 1953

8:30 P.M.

I read an announcement about a dinner party being hosted by Professor Roberts of the Metropolis Observatory. On a hunch, I made a few calls and found out that Professor Adams is on the guest list!

But then Alec found out that the conference concerns Superman. Alec wants to know more about Superman so he can be prevented from interfering with his plans. So now he's involved.

He wants to go and wants me to get the complete guest list so he can "sneak" in.

Damn!

April 11, 1953

1:30 A.M.

Alec and I attended the dinner party hosted by Professor Roberts at the Metropolis Observatory. It was really a conference held by the Professor to discuss the science of Superman. Alec's goal was effectively to learn enough about Superman to possibly uncover his weaknesses, if he has any. (I personally hope that my brother is unsuccessful)

As I posed as a nurse, I was not included in the dinner, and had to wait in the lobby (at least one of the waiters brought me food...). But as hoped, an old acquaintance arrived - a guest of Roberts. It was Professor Milton Adams, the man I had come east to find!

He looked older and greyer than the last time I saw him, years ago. I saw a lot of sadness in his face. Perhaps it was loneliness. But no matter what, it was wonderful to see him. Just his appearance brought back memories of how like a father he was to me back in Oak Ridge. Dad had given virtually all of his attention to Alec. Milton was a mentor to me. After class, when he wasn't with Alec, he would spend time tutoring me.

I always found Milton to be a warm person, and missed him dearly when he moved from Oak Ridge. I still think of him like I would a father - unlike the father I barely had.

Moreover, Milton is a levelheaded man - unlike Alec, who seems to have become nothing less than a mad scientist.

April 21, 1953  
2:15 A.M.

Met Milton again last night in a little diner not far from where he works at the so-called "Project X". He shares things he probably shouldn't have - such as the atomic pile being built and the mass quantities of uranium stored there.

But the two of us confide in each other. We have an amazing rapport and comfort level with one another - as we did years ago.

Alec looked up and smiled at the thought of the uranium stash. Then he continued reading, and finally came to the most recent entry:

May 25, 1953  
12:15 A.M.

I've decided to leave Alec. Professor Adams has offered me safe haven with him.

I won't betray my brother and his ungodly plans to the police, but no longer want to be a part of his mad schemes. But if he tries to stop me, though, I will find a way to let the authorities know where he is and what he's up to - and let them do the rest.

Alec again looked up from the diary. A surge of *anger* ran through him. *Elena, leaving. My own flesh and blood. She says it's not a betrayal, but it is.* He was going to hurl the diary against the wall, but caught himself at the last minute.

*I need her. My scheme needs her. In the name of our father, I can't let her leave! Plus - I cannot let her stop me now.*

After much deliberation with himself, Alec went out to his Maxwell' Rock laboratory where he made an agonizing decision. Then he put his new plan into motion.

Several months later, while Elena was out, Alec read her diary once again. It re-confirmed what he already fairly sure of. It left him feeling content that things were on track. *It had to be done*, he thought, with a buried twinge of regret.

~~~~~  
June 15, 1953  
3:45 P.M.  
~~~~~

Alec laid out his complex plan to steal uranium from Project X. He decided to build it with contingencies that would kick in if parts of the plan fail. He called it "Operation X". The scheme makes use of Professor Adams, the mind control machine and drugs – plus Superman himself, if necessary.

~~~~~  
July 13, 1953  
10:00 P.M.  
~~~~~

Alec enlarges his moderate force of men to support Operation X. Like Grodd and a few others already on-board, the newcomers are a mix of small-time crooks that have completed their time at Cunningham Prison. Alec readily offers them job – they have signed on to work as helpers to Alec, who, like me, will become his eyes and ears while he remains more or less in seclusion at his burgeoning Maxwell's Rock lair.

July 23, 1953  
10:15 P.M.

Alec realized the need for medical expertise – not for his health, but an “inside man” who could administer the mind control drugs. During his research, Alec came across several documents mentioning a Doctor Horatio Brentwood and another one, Doctor Wallace Reed.

Brentwood had a part-time private practice in the seedy Fort Granville neighborhood of Metropolis. Reed had a part-time job in the Cunningham Prison Infirmary. The documents Alec found were quite interesting and before long it led him to believe that the two men were in fact the same person.

Alec soon found that Reed was the cover and Brentwood was his real name. That aside, the good doctor had enough skeletons in his closet to make blackmail an easy task. One of Alec’s bulky hires, Grodd, went with me to retrieve papers proving that Brentwood was involved in a multi-faceted fraud operation, i.e.,

1) He was ordering medicines for his private practice but billing them to the prison.

2) He was getting kickbacks from certain pharmaceutical companies.

And 3) he was receiving reimbursement for fraudulent medical insurance claims.

August 20, 1953  
11:00 P.M.

Grodd and I went to Doctor Brentwood's Fort Granville office. We waited until Brentwood stepped outside, on his way to prison for his evening shift as Doctor Wallace Reed.

At gunpoint, we took him to a car parked across the street. I drove while Grodd continued to keep a gun trained on him. When we got off Larson Street, Grodd put an eyeless black hood over Brentwood's head. He struggled, but Grodd threatened him and Brentwood stopped protesting.

Once Brentwood was in our hideout, we took the hood off and sat him down in front of Alec.

Alec looked up from the diary and remembered what happened next.

*Alec said, "Welcome, doctor. My apologies for the rough introduction. It was necessary."*

*Brentwood was furious. "Who are you? What's the meaning of this?"*

*Alec said, "Well, Doctor Brentwood." Then he smiled, "Or should I say Doctor **Reed**?"*

*Brentwood shifted nervously in his seat but said nothing.*

*"No, I got it right the first time. So, Doctor Brentwood, I'll respond to your questions in reverse and answer one **you'll** no doubt ask, first. You see, I know all about your indiscretions." Alec went through them, and as he did, Brentwood became noticeably uncomfortable, patting his glistening forehead with a handkerchief.*

*But when Alec had finished, Brentwood was indignant, despite the hold that Alec had over him. "You can't prove any of that. I'll go to the police. They'll throw you in prison. Hopefully not the one I work in." Now it was the doctor who grinned.*

*Undaunted, Alec returned the grin. "Well, doctor, if you want me to release my evidence of your wrongdoings to the police, the newspapers **and** the A.M.A., then feel free to go to the authorities. Although if I end up in prison, I won't be seeing you in your current capacity as a doctor, but perhaps as a cellmate - especially after your medical degree is torn up and you're convicted of thousands of dollars in fraud, not to mention the other crimes I've mentioned."*

*The doctor was silent for a minute, and then he seethed, "What do you want?"*

*Alec said, "To be honest, not much. Keep up your two jobs, including that Reed identity of yours. But back off on the crimes, or someone else **will** catch you. I'll pay you handsomely to make up for the loss in income."*

*"I see. But there must be something—"*

*"Yes, yes, of course. There **will** be something that I'll want. More than just some **thing**. But all in good time. First I need to know that we have an agreement."*

*"You know, I could anonymously tip off the police about you, and then you won't be able to threaten me with your evidence." He smiled.*

*"Why Doctor Brentwood, you've shown such a penchant for brilliance with your illicit schemes. Do I detect a whiff of stupidity, now?"*

*"Beg pardon?"*

*"What exactly would you leak to the police? Even if you knew who I was – and you will, eventually – you don't know where we are, and what would you tell them about me, anyway? That I'm threatening you?"*

*"Well—"*

*"What if I told you that I've deposited a copy of my evidence on you in a Metropolis Post Office Box and that upon my arrest or – worse – my demise – my associates will insure that it ends up with the law?"*

*"I see."*

Alec returned to the diary.

Alec and Brentwood agreed on a deal. Then the doctor was taken back home, again with the black hood. Back in our hideout I asked Alec why he was hiding a Metropolis PD Box from me. After all, Alec had been open with me until that point.

I remember Alec saying, "My dear sister, all I said to Doctor Brentwood was, 'what if I told you?'" and he believed it."

We had a good laugh together.

Every now and then, when Elena wasn't home, Alec would check the diary to make sure all was well with Elena. And now, with his plans in high gear, he checked the diary once more, and again felt satisfied.



September 18, 1953  
8:30 P.M.

At Alec's request, I've made a major acquisition - a soft drink company. It was slated to go out of business, anyway.

Might even make it profitable!

October 31, 1953  
8:30 P.M.

Superman saves Metropolis by stopping Project X from a disaster. But there are rumors that Superman has become radioactive.

November 22, 1953  
8:30 P.M.

The Daily Planet explains that Superman himself captured a Superman imposter. The man was surgically altered to look like Superman. Alec takes a great interest in this event.

December 1, 1953  
8:00 P.M.

Alec built a prototype red solar radiation beam. Testing it is another challenge.

December 5, 1953  
6:45 P.M.

Superman saves Metropolis - maybe the Earth - from an asteroid!!

January 14, 1954  
9:30 P.M.

Alec arranged to have Professor Adams see Doctor Brentwood who then administered one of his mind-control drugs to Milton. Alec's plan is to have Adams work late one night at Project X and then use our hired hands to carry away the uranium via truck.

The Stanton Mind Machine will be used here, too, to control Adams and possibly the hired hands.

January 15, 1954  
9:45 P.M.

Adams did not react well to the "mind prep" drug. He remained in his apartment. I went to see him. He seemed to be depressed. I called Brentwood who administered a modified drug, in the hopes that Adams can settle down and follow instructions, but Adams worsened. Seemed almost psychotic.

February 24, 1954  
11:45 P.M.

We've enlisted the aid of some neighborhood punks who are fairly adept at the game of baseball.

Alec gets Brentwood to offer free medical check-ups to longshoremen.

March 21, 1954  
9:30 A.M.

Alec heard it through the grapevine that the Feds will be moving the uranium from Project X to a more secure location out west. Timing unclear. Alec intensified all-out plans to retrieve it.

10:30 P.M.

At this point three cops have been "converted" to our operation because their snooping has gotten to close for comfort. They are under mind control now.

March 24, 1954  
11:45 P.M.

One of the things rumored about Superman is that he doesn't kill. It's supposedly a "code" of his. Alec is the same way. Despite what the FBI thinks, Alec is not a murderer and knowing him, he never will be.

But once again the death of someone – a law enforcement man, to boot, can be tied to my brother. Today our guards caught a man snooping around the surface above us on Maxwell's Rock. They grabbed him and found that he was a cop – name was Dithers.

Dithers managed to slip away but went in the wrong direction – towards a rocky precipice along the Sound. A fight ensued, and Dithers fell to his death on the rocks below. Grodd was called in to retrieve and transport Dithers' body by boat, at night, for a dumping into the Hobbs.

I broke the news to Alec, in his office. He stared at me for a minute, then at the large telephoto of Oak Ridge for another minute. Finally he looked at me. His eyes were full.

Alec once again looked up from the diary and remembered the scene.

*"Elena. I don't blame you, or the people we have in our ... employ ... for what happened. This ... this policeman knew the hazards of his job ... and we know the business **we're** in.*

*But ... I have enough blood on my hands. The government man in the subway. The Wyoming highway patrolman. ... " he whispered her name "... Louisa.*

*"And it started with the blood that is on the **government's** hands – their **murder** of **our** father.*

*He was all but crying. "I—We—don't need **another** casualty as part of our cause."*

*Then Alec composed himself. "Find out if this man left a family. If he did, send an anonymous \$1,000 to them. And write an apology."*

*We never spoke of the incident again.*

March 27, 1954  
7:30 P.M.

Alec tried another tack with Adams, which was to further drug him and use the mind machine once again on him.

March 28, 1954  
11:00 P.M.

Adams reported to work at Project X and Alec was hopeful. My brother readied his force to stand by at the nuclear facility under cover of a soda truck parked nearby (the truck will be used to haul away the uranium).

But then Adams left work mid-morning and seemed to disappear.

March 29, 1954  
8:45 A.M.

We learned that Adams climbed the Jefferson Bridge in a delirious state! He was rescued by, not surprisingly, Superman, and ended up in Mercy Hospital.

10:00 A.M.

I went to the hospital but Adams is under police protective custody. Concerned that Adams could reveal details of our operation, Alec had me arrange for Grodd to inject Adams with a drug to induce a coma. Grodd failed but managed to escape.

We decided not to make further attempts to subdue Adams and will focus on accelerating our revised plans.

11:00 A.M.

With Professor Adams no longer being an option to secure the uranium, Alec authorized his contingency to use a force of people he has "enlisted" to advance on Project X under mind control. Brentwood has, one by one, subjected them to drugging and recorded their brainwave frequency to hook up to the mind machine, which Alec will then program to give them orders via radio signals to their brains.

1:00 P.M.

Olsen, a kid reporter, is caught snooping around Brentwood's office. Alec told Brentwood to put him under mind control - possible "bait" for future plans.



March 30, 1954  
4:00 A.M.

The electricians hired by Alec finished their wiring just in time, before an early morning security force was to sweep the stadium in advance of all the dignitaries, including the Vice President.

3:00 P.M.

Alec leaked a rumor about a man wanted by the FBI in a warehouse - in order to keep part of the police force busy.

7:00 P.M.

The exhibition game began at Monarchs Stadium with Superman's appearance and Red Star Cola "sponsor". All the arrangements were put in place.

Alec was contacted from the stadium. Confirmed Superman is down, as expected.

Alec gave me green light to start the operation. I enabled the mind machine to signal all of the drugged men to advance on Project X. Most are from Fort Granville and nearby neighborhoods, but a few are scattered elsewhere, including some on the police force and of course, one from the Daily Planet.

We jammed all radio frequencies in and around Metropolis except our walkie-talkie and mind machine broadcast bands. The goal is to slow information exchange by police and delay their intervention at Project X. Long-distance phone calls are jammed, too. We certainly don't want the police to call for outside help.

No word from Billy and Mitch, who were supposed to have captured Superman and brought him here to Maxwell's Rock. Then we hear from two other watchers that there's been trouble with the Olsen kid. Eventually the watchers were severed, but Olsen is still under our control. The movement of mind-controlled people continued towards Project X.

10:00 P.M.

Superman recovered. Alec furious and severed everyone except Olsen. Now he plots Superman's capture as part of his final contingency to steal the uranium. Everything was put in place for this measure - the new drugs, the staged accident and the trap.

**MAXWELL'S ROCK (PRESENT-DAY)**

And now Alec sat in his office, having reflected deeply about the past. He thought about Elena's diary and shuddered to think about what might have happened had he not discovered it.

He marveled at the incredible power at his fingertips via the mind machine and mind-altering drugs. He was awed by a theory that was proven fact: that red solar rays can de-power The Man of Steel.

And because of his scheming, he had another power at his command – the power of *Superman*.

Endicott summed up the coming days in his mind. Using the incredible power of Superman, he would appropriate the uranium in *Project X* for himself, and then build the atomic-powered weapons that would enable him to challenge any force on Earth. It would enable him to avenge the murder of his father – against the United States for wrongly imprisoning and murdering his father - and against the Soviet Union, whose spy led to Randall Endicott's demise. Not to mention the untimely death of his beloved mother, whose heart was broken and life destroyed because of these events.

At the same time, he would *disgrace* The Man of Steel. Once Endicott was finished with his operation, no one would ever trust Superman again. It would forever make up for that September day when Alec tried to convince Perry White of his father's innocence - but with White and everyone else not caring because a new "hero" had shown up - an alien with strange powers who was *deputized* by President Eisenhower as an agent of the government.

Superman became the symbol of all that Alec Endicott *hated* and that made him want to *destroy* the "hero". And now, the so-called Man of Steel was under his thumb - with his amazing powers completely and utterly at his disposal.

Alec's reflection on the past and the future was interrupted as Elena called out to him from the laboratory. "Brentwood says he's ready, Alec."

The mastermind got up from his desk and walked into the laboratory. Elena opened a large grey door leading to a chamber that was not unlike Brentwood's examining room in Fort Granville. She smiled at her brother and then opened a large, heavy steel door.

In the room, he saw Brentwood checking a machine with dials and indicators. Beyond that, next to a scale, was a costumed man standing next to him. Alec anxiously walked over to the caped man. "I am Alec Endicott. I'm very pleased to meet you." He did not hold out a hand.

The uniformed man offered a thin smile, nodded and said, "Hello, Mister Endicott." His brief smile disappeared quickly. The man stood there and firmly asked, "Now ... what can I do for *you*?"



*To be continued in*

***MASTER MIND***

***Episode 3 of 3***

***“The Super-Menace of Metropolis”***

## **"MAN IN THE SHADOWS"**

### *Cast*

<b>Glenn Langan.....</b>	<i>Alec Endicott</i>
<b>Joseph Cotten .....</b>	<i>Randall Endicott</i>
<b>Barbara Stanwyck.....</b>	<i>Miriam Endicott</i>
<b>Barbara Bel Geddes.....</b>	<i>Elena Endicott</i>
<b>Joseph Forte.....</b>	<i>Professor Milton Adams</i>
<b>Ross Martin.....</b>	<i>Arte the Bartender</i>
<b>Peter Lorre.....</b>	<i>David Redfield</i>
<b>Frank Cady.....</b>	<i>Thaddeus "Tad" Horton</i>
<b>Elaine Stewart.....</b>	<i>Louisa Horton</i>
<b>Walter Brennan.....</b>	<i>Wyoming State Trooper</i>
<b>Raymond Burr.....</b>	<i>FBI plainclothesman #1</i>
<b>William Hopper.....</b>	<i>FBI plainclothesman #2</i>
<b>Almira Sessions.....</b>	<i>Miss Bacharach</i>
<b>George Reeves.....</b>	<i>Clark Kent / Costumed man</i>
<b>Jack Larson.....</b>	<i>Jimmy Olsen</i>
<b>Dani Nolan.....</b>	<i>Miss Ames</i>
<b>John Hamilton.....</b>	<i>Perry White</i>
<b>Phyllis Coates.....</b>	<i>Lois Lane</i>
<b>Robert Emil Schmidt.....</b>	<i>Metropolis Cop</i>
<b>Jonathan Hale.....</b>	<i>Professor Roberts</i>
<b>Everett Glass.....</b>	<i>Professor Lucern</i>
<b>Maurice Cass.....</b>	<i>Carmin Meldini</i>
<b>Ralph Clanton.....</b>	<i>Doctor Brentwood/Reed</i>