



### **All-Star Superman #1, cover**

This needs to be placed next to the most iconic Superman covers of all-time- Shuster's Action Comics #1, Neal Adams' cover of Superman #233, Superman #75, Superman #14 (Superman posing with an Eagle perched on his arm, which has been aped time and time again) and more.

The serenity of the scene is what makes this stand out. Metropolis lies below, the Daily Planet building in view. Superman has a moment of peace before flying back into chaos and danger again.

It feels intimate, yet mysterious. What could he be grinning about?

And how about the fact that the iconic chest shield is hidden? We get the yellow duplicate on the cape, but this manages to be iconic without showing the bulk of his costume, which in itself is a feat.

Frank Quitely did himself proud!



### All-Star Superman #1, Page 1

The origin page. Much praise has been given to this simplified, four panel retelling of the origin. It deserves all the praise and more.

We have seen the origin countless times, from **Superman #53**, to the Richard Donner movie, to Byrne's **Man of Steel**, to **Birthright**, and so on.

Yes, we get it.

While each telling has variations, these four points are constant. The planet goes boom, baby goes bye-bye, and lands on Earth to be raised. Even **Red Son** keeps these points to some extent.

This is master storytelling. While Grant Morrison is always phenomenal in Vertigo-esque books, his mainstream superhero material can go awry. *Batman R.I.P.* and **Final Crisis** come to mind, though I lean on Dan Didio and the WB accountants for that. Though his JLA run managed to be mythic, and mainstream. The potential is there for Morrison, when left to his devices, and these four panels are the proof.



### All-Star Superman #1, pages 2-3

The Money Shot!!

Frank Quitely has always been an acquired taste. My enjoyment of his art varies from character to character. His Wonder Woman looks more Special Olympic, than Olympian. But his Wolverine is hardcore.

When he was announced for All-Star Superman I shuddered, until I saw the preview in Wizard Magazine.

Quitely nails it on the head. Many times we see Superman with a dancer's body- toned, but not bulky. Ed McGuinness added a lot of bulk, but it was hard to imagine how the Man of Steel moved with those inflatable muscles.

Quitely adds weight to Superman, a thickness which is tangible. But, there is still grace. This simple image with it's solar flares and Superman's pose creates yet another iconic image. 3 pages in and 3 icons (Including the cover)

Another thing that Quitely does is add the right amount of age and wariness to Superman. This is, after all, a Superman that has been around the block many times, but still has a lot of miles left on him. He looks like a veteran hero, but not over the hill.

This is gasp and awe worthy art!



#### All-Star Superman #1, page 4

Right into the action!

No set-up, and no need for one. The crap has hit the fan before we even cracked this issue open.

A little dialog gives us what we need to know, but keeps us going at a brisk pace.

Speaking of dialog, Luthor's killing machine suddenly and nonchalantly remembering he was sent there to kill made me wet myself. Casual killing machines do that.

With four small panels, we are treated to "Death! Courtesy of Lex Luthor!"

If that is death, it is glorious and terrifying.

Also, the bubbly sun effects in Quitely's backgrounds, combined with Jamie Grant's digital colors actually seem to radiate heat. I can't look at this page without sweating a bit.



### All-Star Superman #1, page 6

Confession: The girl narrating in the top panel, with the glowing eyes is pretty hot.

How cool is it that the ship is called the Ray Bradbury? Which is a reference to the short story "Golden Apples of the Sun" about an expedition to the sun.

It is panel 5, second from the left in the sequence at the bottom of the page that shows the intensity. We are told it is 6000 degrees, then Superman's face SHOWS us. Still sweating at this point and my adrenaline is pumping.

If Christopher Nolan or David Goyer are listening- THIS IS HOW TO START A SUPERMAN MOVIE!!!! Jump in, pump it up, and explain in-depth while the audience's heart rate settles.



### **All-Star Superman #1, pages 8 and 11**

Meanwhile, back at The Daily Planet...

Right in the midst of this epic nail-biter, we get a scene of exposition. Morrison ramps up the tension here. Superman is on the sun with a failing ship full of astronauts, and a Luthor killing machine and we stall with a piece of exposition.

This is our chance to breathe out, as things heat up (no pun intended) in the next few pages.

The Planet staff (including Steve Lombard making his return to the pages of a Superman book, and returning well) muse on how big the sun is as Lois types up the story before it happens.

I love that Lois is so cavalier about the fact that Superman will triumph. Jimmy's Super-Watch is a nice upgrade to the signal watch. It is the 21st century and he is basically wearing an iPhone on his wrist.

One detail that blows my mind is in panel 3- the name Quintum has the red point underneath- spellchecked!!

Even though Perry is explaining yet another real-estate scam by Luthor, it comes off as charming rather than cheesy, and ends up being an afterthought by the next page.



### All-Star Superman #1, pages 12-13

Lex Luthor has been, and may never be, cooler than he is in these 12 issues! Smug, brilliant, and absolute evil incarnate!

I love Morrison's Lex!!!

I can hear the monotone faux-guilt in his snide, arrogant voice as he explains to General Lane that he blatantly screwed the government over. On page 13, panel 4, the slight stammer as he says, "I am getting OLDER and... and he isn't" suggests a boiling madness under that demeanor.

Quintely's facial expression in the same panel seals the deal. Luthor realizes, and states, that if he doesn't kill Superman NOW, he never will.

I found myself believing that Luthor would outright cut Superman's throat given the chance. No longer the cackling menace who can't seem to get it right, Morrison unleashes an evil that wasn't matched until Heath Ledger donned the purple suit and latex scars of The Joker!



### All-Star Superman #1, page 16

This page resonates one of my favorite qualities about Superman: When he shows up on the scene, no matter how bad the predicament, you instantly sigh with relief.

Even Bruce feels better. This man, in blue tights, tells you everything is okay and you believe him 100%.

He's Superman, and Superman has everything under control.

Try to read this page and not give a little jump for joy, Supes is one the scene and this is going to get handled!!!





**All-Star Superman #1, page 18**

“Help, help. I am being oppressed.”

How awesome is the fact that this genetic bomb feels like Superman is oppressing him. This was both hilarious, and unnerving.

The thing was created to kill, and manages to give a speech worthy of an Oprah episode. These are the little things that make this series stand out.



### All-Star Superman #1, pages 23-27

Superman saves the day by extending his own bioelectric field. I arched an eyebrow for only a split-second. Compared to shooting rainbows, or a smaller version of himself from his hands, this is pretty tame.

Byrne had even tried to use a version of tactile telekinesis to explain Superman's powers. Then there is Super-ventriloquism. \*SHUDDER\*.

Back on Tatooine/the moon Supes pushes against some strange plunger... not quite sure how that works, but Okay.

However, Quintum's coat rocks!!! I love how the guy comes across as a space-faring Willy Wonka. I'm looking for the glass elevator that brought them there.

As whimsical as he is, when he tells you Superman is going to die, it certainly takes some of the sheen off of his Technicolor Dream Coat.

But, I am rambling. What I want to touch on is [this](#) and [this](#). The debate on whether Leo Quintum is, indeed Lex Luthor.

Don't completely shrug it off. There are some valid points raised. Leo vs. Lex- X vs. O. and the line, "I'm trying to escape from a doomed world too, Superman... It's called the past."

Since All-Star Superman could return as a one-shot, or another Mini, maybe Morrison was laying the groundwork. After all, he did plant the seeds for Final Crisis all the way back in the "Rock of Ages" story.



### All-Star Superman #1, pages 30-33

There is just something about a scene filled with weird science projects that makes me giddy.

A voyager Titan? Bizarro drones? Agatha reading Superman's DNA? Priceless.

What stands out in these pages is Superman agreeing that a replacement clone of himself is "Smart Thinking."

Superman has always had a child-like innocence that can be confused with gullibility. He seems to trust Quinnum, and the audience has to guess if it is blind trust, or earned trust.

The second thing is- The Voyager Titan looks like Dr. Manhattan. I don't know if that was intentional, or if the edict was to just make a creepy giant blue thing. I wouldn't be surprised if Morrison's script called for a "genie, like Robin Williams in Aladdin."



### All-Star Superman #1, pages 34-35

Superman's dual identity as Clark Kent has never been more plausible than in this series.

This is a master stroke. Clark shifting his body to create a dumpy pot belly is believable. Quitely shows us how a pair of glasses and different mannerisms can change a person into somebody else.

The best part is the background. While Clark is stumbling and mumbling, he is actually helping people under the radar. Knock a guy over, or have him get hit by a flying muffler. These are the choices Superman makes every ten minutes.



### All-Star Superman #1, page 39

And the reveal. I love that we don't see the reaction. A dropped bag of apples says it all. No dialog, nor gasp. Quitely and Morrison leave you the reader to fill in the gap, which is a touchstone of storytelling when it is done right.

And it is done right in this scene. Simple, silent, but oh, so effective.



### All-Star Superman #1, The Neal Adams Cover

I have to be honest: I don't like this cover. I loves me some Neal Adams, but this doesn't work for me.

Even though it displays the story's content better than the Quitely cover, I think Superman's position is awkward, the flare effects are distracting, and the veins on Superman's neck are a little too freaky.

But, that is just my opinion.