

Future Shock

Part 2

Cassie's Fury

Version: 3

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The crime computer failed to get a positive ID on any of the GenHancees at the Expo. Bruce finally gave up and joined the other attendees at the Expo to applaud as Lara flew the wreckage of the train to a metal salvage yard in the industrial section of South Gotham.

That turned out to be an event of its own, and was watched not only by Expo goers, but by everyone along her ten mile route. News helicopters followed behind. It wasn't everyday that a steam engine flew over Gotham City.

Especially not one being carried on the shoulder of an insanely cute blonde teenager.

While everyone was focused on Lara, Bruce slipped through a hole in the fence at the edge of the fair grounds and ran down to the shore of Gotham Bay. His small, black inflatable was waiting where he'd left it, hidden under a snag on the shore. He motored out into the bay while calling for the BatSub to surface. Once he'd scrambled aboard and stored the inflatable, he dove toward the underwater canyon that formed the center portion of the bay.

He'd relocated his operations center from its long-time location under the Wayne mansion. It now occupied what had been a secret Cold War bunker under Gotham Bay. There was a long tunnel that led to a camouflaged exit that was located in a thick grove of trees on land he owned just outside the city. The

SubCave, as he called it, also had an air lock which allowed the BatSub to dock along one wall of the underwater canyon.

His new location was both larger and more secure than the old cave, especially after the earthquake of 2032 had revealed fault lines under the mansion.

After securing the sub, he headed into his living quarters while stripping off his cowl and armor to take a cold shower. After hours of standing around at the Expo, it was time to work out. One of the challenges of his Genhance body was that he needed both exercise and stretching each day, otherwise his enhanced muscles began to stiffen and then cramp up. Missing just a single day made the next day twice as hard. Miss a week of stretching, and he'd be twisted up in knots so bad that only a Genhanced physical therapist could untangle them.

Prior to his enhancement, his working weight for the bench press had been 500 pounds, his max a bit over 800, and all without the Inzer shirts that competitive power lifters used to stabilize themselves.

As impressive as that had been, his working weight was now 8 tons — the weight of a medium-sized truck. That weight was about twice what the average Genhancee male could bench.

He was in the Legion gym, lying on his back, in the middle of doing a set of presses with that weight, when a slender arm adorned with a silver bracelet reached down to grab the weight, taking all the load off his arms.

He smiled and reached up to hold Cassie's strong arm, cupping her ball-like biceps as she effortlessly supported the weight. Despite his amazing enhancement, he wasn't remotely in Cassie or Diana's strength class. The quality and density of Amazon muscle was beyond the furthest dreams of scientists and geneticists. He'd once watched Cassie bench 50 tons, using the lightest weight in Kal's gym up at his Fortress of Solitude.

Cassandra "Cassie" Sandsmark had been born human, and grew up like most other American teenagers. Most of the kids in her high school would have labeled her a dork, given she was always a little behind the various trends that are so

important to kids that age. Her mother was a Professor who was the foremost authority on Amazon culture, and she'd often traveled on archeological digs with her. That had opened the door for Cassie to visit Themiscyra.

In the course of that visit, the Amazons were attacked by an old foe, Darkseid, a dark god it was said no man could defeat. As if to prove that legacy, Superman had tried and failed several times.

The battle grew desperate, with only Diana and her mother Queen Hippolyte able to stand up to Darkseid's minions. Cassie saw Darkseid rounding up some young Amazons, clearly intending to take them back to Acropolis to enslave them, turning them into his brainwashed soldiers, something he'd done before.

Out of desperation, she ran into the Amazon's museum and stole two artifacts that were sacred to the Amazons. Artifacts that Zeus had commanded that no one ever touch, lest their lives be forfeit.

Armed with Mercury's belt and the bracelets of Hercules, she rescued the captured girls from the ship that Darkseid had locked them into and flew away with them.

Darkseid realized that the purpose of his attack was now spent. As was his cowardly nature, he retreated, taking the surviving members of his minions back to Akropolis while leaving the dead and wounded with the Amazons.

In the days that followed, Zeus visited the Amazons to hear of their courage and sacrifice. Cassie was brought before him, accused of violating his law by taking the most sacred artifacts and using them.

While everyone dreaded his wrath, expecting him to strike Cassie down with one of his bolts, Cassie's mother argued in her daughter's behalf. She spoke of the girls lives Cassie had saved.

For reasons that no one could explain, Zeus listened to the human woman who had been so instrumental in glorifying the ancient culture of the gods. Her books and her displays in museums appealed to Zeus' pride.

Unexpectedly, instead of punishing Cassie with death as had been promised, Zeus decided to reward her unconventional bravery and grant her one wish.

Boldly, Cassie asked to be given the same powers as Wonder Woman.

The other Amazons gasped at Cassie's temerity, and storm clouds began to form over Zeus' head. But instead of throwing his deadly bolts of lightning, he began to laugh, amused that a mere human girl had such courage and determination. He was so amused that he granted her request.

"They don't call you the Girl of Steel," Bruce said as he held Cassie's arm with all his enhanced strength, finding no give whatsoever in her Amazon muscles, "but they should."

"I think Kara and Lara have that one covered, love." She reached down to slip her hand under his shorts as he started to sit up, wrapping her fingers around his sudden erection. "And speaking of steel, you're not doing so bad yourself."

His body surged with hot desire as he rose to stand behind Cassie, who was still bending over slightly as she held the massive weight in her right hand.

"So how are your powers of concentration today, love?"

"What do you mean?"

He reached around to unbuckle her red pants.

She smiled. "Oh. Let me guess? One of your little challenges?"

"Training. I want to make sure you don't make any mistakes when under duress. Pretend a child is beneath that weight. Don't drop it."

He struggled to work her leather-like pants down over her trim hips, revealing her perfectly-rounded athletic butt.

She laughed. "Is this really part of the Batman training manual for young superheroines?"

"It is now. If you think you're up to it?"

"I'm an Amazon. I can do anything. But..."

Bruce knew that tone of voice. "Yes...?"

"As much as I enjoy the sweet offer, love, I've got a problem. Actually, we both do."

Bruce released her and stepped back. When Cassie was working on a problem, she was all business.

She stood up, acting all the while as if his huge weight was nothing.

Bruce stared at her perfect backside, still as tightly rounded as a young teenager, watching her strong muscles work as she benched his weight. Her red pants pulled down nearly to her knees. A rush of hot desire washed over him, nearly taking the last vestiges of his self-control with it. Genhance arousal was far stronger than human, and even after a lot of practice, he still found it very hard to control. Especially around Cassie.

He was breathing fast, his skin hot, a bead of sweat running down between his eyes as Cassie turned to face him. She quickly pulled her pants up and buckled her belt. Her pronounced muscularity had disappeared like magic. She still looked fantastically fit, but also so young, slender and beautiful that it made his heart hurt.

It was easy to forget that she was really in her late forties. She barely looked eighteen.

And then there was her strength. That was such a huge turn on for a man who had fought crime for so long with his fists, his armor, his gadgets. He wished there was something heavy enough to challenge her in his gym, for he had more than a few sexy workouts in mind for her. There was something so deliciously kinky about

the thought of having sex with Cassie while she was demonstrating her full strength.

He'd struggled with that kinky desire ever since he'd met Kara, back when she was fifteen and obviously untouchable. But those desires had only grown stronger since his enhancement. Stronger still now that he'd fallen for Cassie.

The problem was that his favorite sexual fantasy required a suitable weight. Even if it was made of solid stone, any weight that could challenge Cassie would be the size of a small bus. He couldn't think of a way to get something that big through the tunnel entrance without drawing attention, given it would take a flatbed semi set up for overweight loads to carry it. The kind with a dozen axles.

Thankfully, he was able to come and go from that hidden entrance in the latest BatMobile without being detected. It was silent, thanks to superconducting electric motors, and it was very stealthy. Kal had helped him install a bit of Kryptonian science that bent the light rays around both the tunnel entrance and his latest BatMobile. The car was totally invisible at night, and it was very hard to see even in direct sunlight.

The hydraulically-actuated tunnel door was located inside a thick grove of trees, and designed so he could enter and leave at high speed. The single-track road that led to the entrance was served by a fast-opening electric security gate — the kind you couldn't smash a truck through. The entire grove was surrounded by high security fences topped with razor wire with cameras mounted in plain view. The fence was clearly marked with signs that said:

No Trespassing

Extremely Hazardous BioMedical Waste Site

Violators WILL be Mutated

Cassie said he had a weird sense of humor when it came to the signs — the mutation thing, that is — but the signs worked. The cameras and sensors had never detected anything bigger than a squirrel on his property.

“So... what’s the deal?” Bruce asked. Despite himself, he was a bit annoyed that his moment with Cassie was being trumped by the Legion. Surely they were entitled to a few private moments.

He pushed that thought away. Cassie was here because of the Legion. Besides, he was the one who’d established most of the operating rules and protocols for that organization. His most important rule was “Mission First”.

Cassie laid it out for him. “A newly-minted Spandie decided to visit an ex-girlfriend, she’s a Frail by the way, and her new boyfriend, also a Frail, took exception.”

Cassie had recently adopted the slang term of “Spandie” to describe the GenHancees, the name coming from the high percentage who wore Spandex outfits. It wasn’t a term of endearment. She used “Frail” to denote normal people. It wasn’t exactly politically correct either, but in many ways, Cassie still thought and acted like a very young woman. As fantastic as it was to have a body that didn’t age, having a mind that didn’t age either was a mixed blessing. Man’s world and her experiences in it simply didn’t penetrate very deeply into a Demi-Goddess’s mind.

“Where the hell was his sponsor?” Bruce asked. “Given they’re required now.”

Bruce had been instrumental in establishing a new protocol for handling newly-minted male GenHancees. The protocol required LuthorCorp to provide an experienced sponsor 24x7 for the first month. Between their extreme strength and the vast overproduction of testosterone and adrenaline, not to mention the euphoria of being healthy beyond ordinary human comprehension, a lot of male Spandies got into trouble.

Of course, LuthorCorp twisted that requirement around in their usual way. They’d encouraged a pool of female GenHancees to sign up to be sponsors. Some of the enhanced women enjoyed the company of men who were insatiable supermen, which is how a new GenHance started out. After a month, after their hormones dropped back closer to normal and some sense of balance returned, the “new-mint” women would move on to the next crop of newbies.

It wasn't at all what Bruce and the Gotham Police had had in mind for controlling newbies, but it generally got the job done.

"His sponsor had a modeling assignment," Cassie replied "Some bodybuilding magazine. She said she left him in her apartment. Asleep."

"What an idiot."

"Yeah. He woke, found that his sponsor was gone, and decided to pay an old girlfriend a visit. New boyfriend took exception and emptied a 9mm into old boyfriend, which really pissed him off. You know how much bullets sting a new Spandie. Anyway, new boyfriend died from a single punch that broke his neck."

Bruce frowned. "You'd think people would know by now that shooting them is worse than dumb. Its a good way to get dead."

Cassie shrugged. "You know how much men love their guns. And how rarely they think with their big head when a woman is involved."

Bruce said nothing. They'd had this discussion too many times already. It was a favorite Amazon theme.

"What we do know," Cassie continued, "is that old boyfriend was raping old girlfriend when Alura heard the screams. Guy didn't know his new strength, he'd only been with an enhanced woman, and was probably going to kill the poor thing."

Bruce winced. Most of the Genhanced men were super-endowed. He had no idea why those particular Kryptonian genes had made it into the matrix, but he did know that ordinary women couldn't handle a man of such size and power without discomfort, even injury.

"I gather it wasn't pretty."

"As you know, Alura goes as crazy on rapists as we Amazons do. When it was

over, the Spandie's arms and legs were all pointing in the wrong directions. His chest has two depressions in it — roughly C-cup sized. She obviously gave him one her famous bear hugs, and you know how hard a Krypt's body can get when they tense all those tiny muscles in their skin. Coroner said the bastard's ribs broke against the steel of her chest, and one broken rib pierced his heart. Game over."

"The guy deserved it. He likely would have killed his old girlfriend during the act."

"That's not how the DA sees it. He's bringing Alura up on charges of manslaughter. Story is that he's running for re-election and wants the publicity."

"And how does he propose arresting her?"

"That's where we come in. Said DA called the Legion and they called me."

"You can't arrest Alura. She'd knock you halfway to the Moon. Doesn't much like you, or so I heard."

"She doesn't like any females."

"Well, Kryptonite would slow her down, and you know I've always carried a spray bottle of Green-K dust on my utility belt. Ever since I first met Kal. Just in case."

"And here I thought he was your best friend," she laughed. "Yet you're prepared to blast him with the Kryptonian equivalent of pepper spray?"

"More than one baddie has figured out how to control a Krypt's mind. I need a way to end any confrontation with a Kryptonian, and quickly. Had to use it a few times on Kal. Once on Kara, too."

"Well, unlike Kal and Kara, I'm betting Alura wouldn't forgive you for using it on her. You seriously don't want her pissed at you."

"I do what I have to and let the chips fall."

“Well, my instructions are to find Kal and convince him to bring his troublesome daughter in. She’ll get off after a few hours in the clink — between her Interpol badge and various Good Samaritan laws, she’s within the lines on this one. Her lawyer will claim the testosterone-crazed Spandie was about to kill his old girlfriend; he’d already killed her new boyfriend. Alura was trying to restrain him, but he resisted. Everyone knows that new mints can go into those berserker rages until their hormones settle down.”

“And Alura likes the idea of lawyering up?”

“She’ll hate it. But she has to go through the legal drill or else they’ll declare her a fugitive from justice. That’ll be harder to make go away.”

Bruce sighed. “Well, Kal’s off-planet. He was planning to dive a half dozen wormholes to go out and check on Darkseid’s confinement. There’s no way to contact him and it’d take him weeks to return even if we could.”

“Damn. Then we gotta get Kara. Or Lara. No way Jor-el is going to do us any good. Alura will just twist him around her little finger.”

Superman’s son was fourteen, and that age, Alura was like a goddess in his eyes. Both Kal and Kara had been trying to keep those two apart. Half-siblings or not, Jor-el was clearly the gasoline to Alura’s fire — detonation would be assured. Kryptonian hormones were far more intense than a human’s at Jor-el’s age, and nobody trusted Alura to act responsibly. She wasn’t that much older, and her agenda, improving the genetic stock of her race, was the same as her mother’s.

“Well, Lara’s doing launches today down at Cape Kennedy. Four payloads going up today, two of them manned modules going to the Galactic Hotel. That’ll keep her busy all day.”

The Galactic Hotel was the nickname for a huge city that had been built in high orbit. Its primary function had started off scientific, but now it had several thousand hotel rooms and a couple of hundred insanely expensive condos for people who liked zero-G living. The place had grown to five miles in length and

half that in width.

Chemical rockets had been banned from the atmosphere in a treaty signed back in 2028. They were no longer needed.

An entire fleet of reusable modules, LiftMods, had been built that matched a Krypt's unique flight abilities. The huge, non-streamlined modules weighed up to two-hundred tons and could carry hundreds of passengers. They had several hard-points on the outer hull where a Krypt could grip them and carry them directly upward at sub-sonic speeds until they were out of the atmosphere. Once they were in relative vacuum, the Krypt who was propelling the module would accelerate to orbital or escape velocity.

They came down the same way; deceleration was mostly done while outside the atmosphere, and then they were lowered at subsonic speeds. The trip up for manned modules took six hours, the trip down about the same. Peak acceleration/ deceleration forces were kept under two G's, so anyone in decent health could go into space.

Of more interest were the interplanetary journeys. Recently, a colony had been established on Mars, with a heavier, radiation-shielded version of the Liftmods providing the transportation. The G-forces were initially higher on that route, but once the module was up to speed, they coasted for two months. While a module was coasting toward Mars, the Krypt who'd propelled it would race ahead, pick up a return module on the red planet and get it headed back to Earth.

Jor-el had started handling the Mars route six months ago. Given the long coast time, he had plenty of time to attend school and do all the other things a teenage boy did. Then, at the appropriate time, he'd take to the skies to either bring the module down on Mars or catch the one coming back to Earth.

NASA had developed software to keep everything timed right. It took Jor-el a bit over two days to reach Mars when traveling solo. Relativistic effects were a problem even for someone who could accelerate at 200 G's and there were no wormholes to dive through to bend space inside the Sol system.

It was a good job for the young Kryptonian teenager. It helped him develop a strong sense of responsibility along with detailed attention to task. Kara or Kal were always available if something went wrong, which it had several times.

Lara had done her duty on the LiftMods before Jor-el was old enough. She still helped from time to time.

Of course, nobody trusted Alura enough to invite her to participate, despite having her mother's telekinesis powers. Timing and finesse was everything. The modules were only equipped with small maneuvering thrusters and no heat shields or parachutes. If they weren't caught at the right time and place, they'd fly past Mars, Earth, Moon or their asteroid target and have to be retrieved on their way out of the solar system or into the path of another planet. Food and air only lasted so long. The acceleration forces had to be steady and smooth and not too severe. Something Jor-el had a true talent for.

Several more operations were located on the largest asteroids, with more coming every year. Given the way asteroids had been formed, you generally didn't have to dig deeply to find nearly pure ores. When it was necessary to drill deeply, Kara had learned how to fracture the small asteroids to get at their hearts.

The unmanned, non-reusable ore ships, which went up light, hollow and empty, but weighed nearly a million tons on the way back, used ablative aerobraking to slow down. Despite that, it took both Lara and Jor-el to guide them to a crash landing in the middle of the Australian desert.

The men and women of the Space Corps had grown very close to the Kryptonian teenagers, especially after Lara began to bring the astronauts fresh food and items from home during the long Mars voyages. She usually hung out with the lonely astronauts for a few hours, sharing a meal of fresh vegetables and fruit with them, which made the men pretty happy.

Lara had once brought an astronaut's young bride out in a singleton pod to celebrate her new husband's birthday. He was on his way to Mars for a three year mission.

NASA hadn't appreciated Lara's unscripted "conjugal support" mission, especially after the woman wrote a magazine article titled *A Dozen Ways to Make Love on the way to Mars*. Lara El's name was listed with the author's on the title page.

Kal hoped that was simply in recognition of Lara's rogue mission to bring the woman to and from the Mars spacecraft. He still thought she was innocent.

Whatever the case, the astronaut's wife and Lara had remained good friends. Supposedly the woman was working on a sequel to her book called *Zero G for Lesbians*, which her husband, now on Mars, wasn't so happy about for obvious reasons. Nobody knew what role Lara was playing in that story.

Sex in zero-G had become a huge attraction for space tourists, especially those who liked tantric sex. Athletic intercourse didn't work very well in space for obvious reasons. But long, slow, delicate lovemaking in zero-G had become a bit of art form. An erotic air-dance.

And given that nothing sagged and wrinkles mostly disappeared in zero-G, it was a great way for older couples to feel young again. A huge retirement complex for wealthy seniors was in the planning stage.

The good news was that the space industry was now vibrant and growing without draining the public coffers and without polluting the atmosphere. All the available money went into habitats for the colonies or space stations, not into insanely expensive booster rockets. Safety was nearly equal to that of an airliner, despite a couple of emergency retrievals.

"So its Kara then," Bruce said as he thought of the challenges of getting Lara to break free of her lift chores. Everything at the Cape was timed to the second. "But I thought she'd hung up her red and blues for politics."

"Its a waste of her time," Cassie said. "They'll never amend the constitution just for her."

"Stranger things have happened in American politics. And she and the people

who voted for her really want to make a difference. One that doesn't involve her flying around in Spandex."

"That's not what she wears. Her clothing came from Krypton."

"You know what I mean."

"So where can we find her, Bruce?"

He consulted his crime computer. It had a tracking module that maintained the whereabouts of all the Krypts.

"She's at her house in Big Sur."

"Then we go there. BatJet ready?"

"Always."

Minutes later, Bruce's scramjet-powered BatJet was gliding along at 80,000 feet, traveling at Mach 6. It crossed the country before descending and slowing to ordinary aircraft speeds over the ocean, finally touching down on the water just offshore of the Big Sur area of northern California. Bruce drove what was now little more than an awkward boat through the surf to beach it next to a group of astounded surfers.

Cassie put her flight skills to work to fly the two of them up to Kara's house. It clung to the vertical face of a tall cliff. The ceilings, walls and floors were all completely transparent, made of an advanced form of glass that was all but invisible. Instead of stairways, it had openings that went from one level to the next. The entire house had been designed exclusively for people who could fly.

Kara was sitting in her glass kitchen with Lara when Bruce and Cassie landed on the outside balcony and knocked on the glass. Kara rose to open the window. She was dressed as elegantly as usual — the various fashion houses always wanted

her to wear their latest creations for advertising reasons, so they were always delivering new ones to her door. This morning's long, silk gown was both conservative and gorgeous, but also very casual, thanks to her bare feet.

Lara was dressed in a torn, long-sleeve knit top that hung off one shoulder to end at her hips. Her hair was wet. Bruce remembered how she liked to swim in the Pacific for exercise. She swam so fast and deep (without using her flight power) that she actually had to put some muscle into it. He guessed she'd just finished swimming from California to Hawaii and back.

Bruce felt more than a little overdressed in his cape, armor and cowl. Kara's casual but elegant glass California house was a lightyear away from the grittiness of Gotham City. Looking around as his feet appeared to be floating on air, despite the reassuring weight on the bottom of them, he felt a flutter in his stomach. He ordinarily had no fear of heights, but it was disorienting to stand in a transparent house while the huge ocean swells crashed a hundred feet beneath his feet.

He focused back on Kara as she set a couple of cups on the kitchen counter and poured some freshly-made Espresso.

"To what honor do I owe this visit, Bruce? I believe this is your first visit to my home."

She looked at him warily, which reminded Bruce that he should have called ahead to let her know they were coming.

"Sorry about the home invasion. But we have a problem."

Lara excused herself to float up a couple of floors. Bruce's eyes followed her as she rose, noting that her knit top was all she was wearing. It briefly failed to maintain her modesty as she flew upward. Once she landed near the top of the house, the walls around her darkened as she polarized the glass to give herself some privacy.

He quickly looked back down at her mother, embarrassed by where his eyes had gone. Kara was looking at him curiously. She and Lara both had a way of

messing with his head without even trying. A lot of that came from their brief and sometimes nonexistent attire.

“We’ve got a bit of El family trouble,” Cassie said as Bruce tried to get his head back together.

Kara sighed. “Alura again, I presume.”

Cassie nodded as she took a sip of her Espresso.

She and Kara had known each other for more than thirty years. They’d grown up together, friends since the age of sixteen. Despite the passage of years, anyone seeing Lara, Kara and Cassie together would have guessed they were the same age. The difference was that Lara really was a teenager.

Bruce quickly summarized what Cassie had told him earlier.

“Have you tried to talk to her yourself?” Kara asked when he was done. “To explain all of this.”

“Why bother. She won’t listen to Bruce,” Cassie said with a quick shake of her blonde head. “She always thinks he’s trying to lecture her. And you know what she thinks of a human-born with Amazon powers like me. I’m not fit to wash her feet.”

Kara turned to look directly into Bruce’s eyes. He felt as if he was falling into those big, blue eyes. They had the remarkable clarity and innocence of a young child’s.

“Surprise surprise,” Kara smiled. “She doesn’t like the Batman. Maybe she’s got better taste than I gave her credit for.”

Bruce and Kara had had a number of falling-outs when she was young. She’d resented his way of dissecting everything. Of treating everything she did as a training exercise which required critical analysis. Of judging her every move, her every word. His eyes or his sensors had always followed her. She’d hated being constantly under his microscope.

It wasn't until years later that she realized how much he'd taught her. She'd learned how to stand up to the most nefarious criminals without being manipulated by them. She understood the fine line between protecting people and meddling in their lives. Between police work and vigilantism.

They were all things she could have learned from Kal if she'd been willing to listen to him. But decades had passed before the Kryptonian cousins had been comfortable in each other's company.

Of course, now she and Kal shared two children. He continued to live in Metropolis, but he was always welcome here in Kara's house. Raising Kryptonian children under the empowering rays of a yellow sun was a challenge, even for Supergirl. The kids had gained their super powers before they were even born.

Bruce smiled as he remembered the time when a very pregnant Kara had been sharing a drink with him in a crowded bar in Metropolis. She'd been in her Linda disguise, he as Bruce Wayne, so the two of them weren't drawing unusual attention. Suddenly without warning, she'd flown across the bar, knocking a half dozen people down before she crashed through the windows to land on her back in the street. Everyone screamed as a huge truck ran over her before she could get up.

Thump, thump, thump.

The truck skidded to a halt with its back wheels resting on the belly of an obviously very pregnant woman.

Linda merely sat up, lifted the fifty-thousand pound trailer off her bulging tummy, and then set it down as nice as could be. Her black wig was gone, wound around one axle, revealing her blonde hair, and part of her outfit was torn away, revealing her red cape with the big "S" in the middle.

Kara casually tore off the rest of her civvies and then returned to the bar, apologizing to the people she'd collided with. They were bruised but otherwise unharmed. She claimed her baby had just started to kick.

Everyone stared at a very pregnant Supergirl as she returned to join Bruce at his table, their eyes as big as saucers.

The next day the entire world knew that Supergirl, who'd strangely been out of the public eye for months, was going to be a mommy. A media storm followed her during the rest of her pregnancy.

It was also a given that Linda Danver's cover was blown.

Soon enough, Kal announced that he was the father. Which surprised exactly no one. Who else but the Man of Steel could have gotten an invulnerable woman pregnant? Presumably her ova were as bulletproof as her skin.

That night in Metropolis had marked the beginning of three difficult months for Kara. Not only could Lara kick harder than a proverbial mule, but she liked to fly in the womb. That made for some unusual moments as well, especially when Lara tried to fly while her mother was sleeping.

Kara had lived an open life from that day forward. She used the last months of her pregnancy to build the glass house they were now standing in. That amazed a lot of people, but as she explained it, "Just because my red and blues no longer fit doesn't mean I'm not still Supergirl."

She finished the house the day before she delivered. Her nest was ready.

Bruce blinked his eyes to bring his thoughts back to Big Sur and the problem at hand.

"We need you to convince Alura to give herself up, Kara," he resumed. "She'll be out on bail in a few hours. Charges won't stick anyway."

Kara swirled a strand of blonde hair around her finger as she looked down at the floor. Her eyes rose to meet Bruce's again.

"What makes you think she'll listen to me? Or that I even care about her. You do know she's been trying to seduce Kal. She'll focus on my son if that fails."

"That's ridic...I mean, she's his daughter?" Bruce said in a judgmental tone.

"You think that bothers Alura any more than it would have her mother? I've been trying to keep Jor-el out of her clutches, and she's not happy about that. Trust me, Alura's not exactly El family material, despite her mother's sperm donor."

The last said all that needed to be said about Kara's view of Maxima's ultimatum to Superman nearly two decades ago. Or the way Almercan females pursued Kal. Maxima had come to Earth to find Superman in a blatant attempt to improve her people's genetic base. She hadn't cared about anything but his sperm.

Still, Kara didn't sound like a woman who was worried about her mate's fidelity. Kal and Kara weren't exactly in love, at least not in the usual sense, and there was no legal bond between them. But they were very close now, both as cousins and parents. Which was odd enough on its own.

Bruce wondered what Kara thought about Kal and Diana trying to have children now that she'd passed the Wonder Woman baton to Cassie. His whole "repopulate the Kryptonian race with anyone who can survive the pregnancy" thing.

"Then you should bring her in against her will, Kara," he said. "Now that Kal's off-planet, you're the only one who can."

Kara shook her head. "That's not going to happen without collateral damage, even with Lara helping me. Alura's not as strong as either of us, but her TK powers are formidable. I don't think the police station would be standing afterward."

"Then get her off the planet for a while. I'm sure her lawyer can invoke some kind of ET protocol if she's not in the vicinity of Earth."

"Hmmm...there's this asteroid that the miners asked me to shatter out near Jupiter. They need to get at the ore that's in the center of it. Maybe I can convince Alura to do it."

“Good,” Bruce said.

“Whatever way it goes, keep me posted,” Cassie added “I’ve got to report back to the Legion.”

Kara nodded. “Why don’t you head back there now, Cassie. Have them find Alura’s whereabouts and get back to me. I’ll take Bruce back down to the his plane.”

Cassie looked at Kara, then at Bruce, and then nodded. “Right. You guys want to have a little talk. Fine.”

Cassie turned while floating up off the floor, and before Bruce could open his mouth to say anything, she shot up and out through one of the flight doors. Her shock wave rattled the glass house as she broke the Mach a few hundred feet later. She was traveling at Mach 3 by the time she crossed the Pacific Coast Highway, headed east.

“Hope I didn’t piss her off,” Kara said. “Amazons can be prickly, not to mention competitive.”

“She’ll be fine,” Bruce shrugged. “She’s more human than Amazon in some ways.”

“I’ll never understand why Zeus gave Cassie such power when she was so young. If he wanted to reward her, he should have waited until she was mature. That’s a tough age to suddenly turn into a goddess.”

Bruce smiled. “Spoken by a goddess who came to Earth at an even younger age.”

“Which is why I know how hard it is to grow up with everyone staring at you. To not be able to live like a normal girl. With everyone thinking you’re a goddess when all you want to do is sort out your new powers and figure out how to use them responsibly.”

“Is this what you wanted to talk about, Kara?”

She shook her head as she floated off her stool to head down the hallway. “Not exactly. Come talk to me while I get changed.”

Bruce followed behind her, finding it a bit odd to walk behind someone who was floating on thin air. Kara’s long blonde hair hung nearly to her waist. Her long, silk robe swished around her feet. She suddenly became a vision in gold as a shaft of morning sunlight found her as it came through a gap in the cliff. Her hair began to glow as if each strand was lit from inside. She was so unworldly beautiful that he found it difficult to breathe.

He was less impressed when they finally reached her bedroom. He’d been expecting a room that matched the grandeur of the house, but it was surprisingly small. A simple bed, impeccably made, was located along the outer glass wall. He was reminded that Kara didn’t sleep very much.

More interestingly, the room had several huge walk-in closets along the cliff face. They were tunneled deep into the hard rock. He recalled that Kara had cut these tunnels with her bare hands during the last days of her first pregnancy. She’d been carrying Lara for only six months, the gestation time for a Kryptonian living under a yellow sun, and she was going into labor when she started on these tunnels.

Kara slipped her gown from her shoulders as she headed toward one of the closets, and the silk dress slipped noiselessly to the floor. She stepped out of it, and for the briefest moment, Bruce found himself staring at Kara’s nude back. He noted that her butt was even cuter than Cassie’s, and that was saying something.

His heart, racing now, skipped a few beats when Kara returned wearing her famous red and blue uniform. It was the same outfit she’d worn since she’d arrived on Earth. As beautiful as Kara was in ordinary clothing, she truly looked like a goddess when she wore her red and blues.

And she still looked so young. But not unchanged from when she’d arrived on Earth at age 15.

She wasn't as painfully slender as she'd been back then. Her arms and legs were now shaped by hard muscle. She also had a much better figure, with high, firm breasts that were perfectly rounded, thanks to her two pregnancies. She'd gained more than a few inches where it mattered, but without a hint of a wrinkle. Gravity clearly had no hold on the Girl of Steel. She was so beautiful she made his heart ache.

She sat on the bed as she pulled on one red boot. She started on the second one, and then paused to look up at Bruce.



“Kal and I were talking before he left on his space mission, Bruce. He’s decided to approach Cassie about having a child at the same time as Diana. He figures they can support each other.”

Bruce swallowed hard as his stomach turned into a tight ball. So much for small talk.

“I’m not sure what you and Cassie have talked about,” Kara continued, “or what your plans are, but you deserve to know where Kal’s head is at.”

“Has he talked to Cassie?”

Kara shook her head.

“Then she might refuse.”

Kara tilted her head. “Kal can be very persuasive. And you do know that Cassie has always had a thing for him.”

Bruce frowned. “Yeah. Along with every other woman on the planet.”

She shook her head. “It’s different with Cassie. She’s powerful enough to... well, to deal with him, to put it delicately. He doesn’t just have to be a fantasy for her.”

“You mean, he won’t blow her head off when he comes,” Bruce said sourly.

“I was thinking more of her being able to carry a half Kryptonian baby. But yes, that too.”

Bruce suddenly felt intimidated. He clenched his fists as a wave of green jealousy washed over him. Cassie was his girlfriend. Kal had no right.

He took a few deep breaths before asking: “So what do you think she’ll do?”

Kara said nothing for a long moment. "Her heart belongs with you, Bruce. But her body is, well... its made for other challenges."

Bruce winced. Kara had always been very candid about her physical compatibility problems with humans. She'd had to discover what safe sex meant for a Kryptonian woman — controlling her enthusiasm during moments of passion and all that jazz.

But given the Earth tremors that were reported when she and Kal first got together, not to mention the shattered wreckage of what had once been a pretty little pocket canyon in Utah, it was fair to assume that her passion also came in far stronger flavors.

"You mean, Kal can give her a ride that I can't," Bruce said sourly. "Despite my being enhanced."

"Have you ever doubted that?" Kara asked. "He's Superman."

"I try not to think about it."

"Well, its time to. You and Cassie need to talk frankly. After the first time she's with Kal, she's going to want to see him again. Trust me on this. To put it indelicately, it isn't just his muscles that are more powerful than a locomotive."

Bruce's guts twisted, yet he couldn't help but smile. Talking to Kara was always such a trip. Not always a pleasant one, but definitely memorable. Despite her many years on Earth, she'd never learned the feminine subtleties of intimate conversation. The way to say what you need to say without saying it. He attributed it to her having grown up on Krypton.

"So, she'll be bored with dinky little 'ol me afterward?"

"Not at all. You're a superman in your own right. But her sexual life will begin operating on two levels. I'm sorry if that hurts, but it needs to be said."

"Great. After slumming with a softy like me, she'd share star-born ecstasy with

steel-hard Kal.”

“I doubt she’ll see it that way. Love and emotion are very powerful forces, especially given that Cassie grew up human. Most women are capable of having very different kinds of relationships with different men. Its not as simple as one always being better than another. Often, they’re just different. And different can be good.”

“Except that one of those ways literally makes the Earth move for her.”

“Actually, I was more worried about the challenges of you having a girlfriend who was carrying Superman’s baby. You’re a good man, Bruce, but you’ll be dealing with instinctual reactions and strong emotions that go back to the earliest day’s of humanity. It won’t be easy for you.”

“I love her, Kara.”

“And she loves you. Sometimes love does conquer all, but you need to keep your head together. You can’t let your gut or your instinctual feelings rule you.”

“Easy for you to say, Kara. Did you have a human lover when you and Kal decided to have children?”

Kara just looked at him with those baby blue eyes. She said nothing for a long moment. She finally nodded.

“Yes. A man who wanted very much to marry me. And I him. I thought we could deal with this. In the end, I could. He couldn’t. And he was a very good man.”

She stared off into the distance for a long moment before her eyes came back to Bruce’s.

“And even if he had stayed together, there would have been problems with him dealing with young Lara, or Jor-el later. Imagine an ordinary man, or even a Genhance like yourself, trying to chase a toddler who can fly faster than the Mach.

A child who has a hundred times a human man's strength by the age of five."

She finished pulling her second boot on as Bruce just stared at her, trying to imagine what she'd just described. He blinked as she stood up and adjusted her cape.

"I can help with a lot of that, Bruce. Perhaps her child can live here. Lara and Jor-el would enjoy a younger sister or brother. I'd love to raise another child, even it wasn't mine. The question is where you'll fit in as a father. How you want to fit in."

"I haven't thought about any of this," Bruce admitted. "Cassie mentioned in passing that S.T.A.R labs said she could probably carry a Kryptonian child, but it wasn't something I expected to face for years. If ever. She said that was Diana's thing. It was why Diana gave up being WW."

"Then I'd suggest you two talk frankly. You should perhaps seek out Diana as well for advice. Do this before Kal returns."

Bruce searched his feelings, struggling to get past the sexual jealousy. It wasn't easy.

"I think it would be exciting to help raise Cassie's daughter," he said. "A super-daughter. And as far as all the cave-man reflexes, you have to remember that I'm in my 80's. My body might not look that old, but I've lived a long life. I'm not some some twenty-something who gets jealous when a guy looks the wrong way at his girlfriend."

Kara smiled as she walked over to give him a kiss on the cheek. She slipped her arm around his waist to hold him close as she floated off the floor.

"That's the Batman I know and love. You won't let anything stop you. Mind over body. Emotions always in check. Things you tried to teach me."

He hugged Kara back, marveling at the way her body felt both soft and firm at the same time. Her blonde hair spilled over his shoulder, warm and fragrant. He was suddenly very aware that his emotions weren't always in check.

“Well, thanks for the heads up, Kara. And the coffee. Cassie would have had trouble starting this conversation with me, especially after Kal hits on her. So I’ll beat the Man of Steel to the punch, so to speak.”

“Do you want some advice, Bruce?”

“From you? Of course.”

“Talk to Kal before you talk to her. He’s your friend. Don’t let this get between you guys. He respects you. Perhaps enough to change his mind.”

Before Bruce could reply, Kara swept upward and out into the windy, mist-driven air just above the thundering waves. She carried Bruce along the cliff face toward the sandy beach where the Batjet rested. Once there, she dropped down to land in the middle of the crowd of surfers who’d gathered around the black plane.

The surfers began to cheer as he climbed up and into the cockpit. Kara waved at them as she rose to float overhead. She was a familiar sight to the local surfers.

Despite all the GenHancees running around these days, people still thrilled to the sight of the original superheroes. The greatest and most powerful heroes. The same ones their parents and grandparents had adored.

Batman was an important part of that legend. Dozens of books and movies had been made which depicted his life and exploits.

And Supergirl... her place belonged more properly in mythology. Possibly even theology. She was indisputably a goddess.

She was also the most beautiful woman who’d ever lived.

On Earth at least.

Late that same night

Cassie floated over the decaying, industrial neighborhood along the Metropolis River. The Legion had received some intel about a gang of Genhance criminals operating in this area.

Disturbingly, the Legion's analysis team had announced that there seemed to be more Genhances on the street than could be accounted for from LuthorCorp records. Two very violent combat-enhanced criminals who'd recently been captured by the Legion had no fingerprints on file, and the names they gave weren't listed in LuthorCorp records. Their DNA didn't match LuthorCorp's required hold back data either.

Clearly, somebody was enhancing people, using the highest-power profile, without going through the elaborate background check and psychological screening program that LuthorCorp was required to perform. The combat-mode enhancement was only supposed to go to military and police. Batman was the only documented exception to that rule.

When queried, LuthorCorp claimed that all their work was properly authorized and documented.. Then they came back a day later and said they'd discovered that someone had hacked into their computer systems and stolen the secrets to the GenHance process. They also reported a theft of genetic material and advanced retrovirus stocks from another location. The thieves had reportedly taken the genetically-engineered retrovirus that did the actual nip and tuck on a person's DNA, inserting the Kryptonian genes.

The Legion analysis team suspected Luthor was up to his old games. That the thefts were just a cover for their own illegal activities. Anyone who knew the Luthors knew they were all born with the desire to dominate and control.

Lionel and his son Lex had been blatant criminal masterminds, which made them the constant target of law enforcement, not to mention Superman. The current head of LuthorCorp, Alex Luthor, was the second generation of Luthor's who'd used corporate power to grow their wealth. He'd used his wealth, spending millions upon millions to influence Congress to rewrite the laws to their own benefit. The

current laws didn't require any politician to reveal their corporate donors.

From Kara's perspective, his crimes against the American people were all the greater for it. But given legal and political climate of 2047, LuthorCorp was largely untouchable.

It was something she'd had long wanted to fix. It's what had led to her to start her grassroots write-in campaign for President. Nobody had expected her campaign to go viral, but the majority of Americans had decided that writing her name on the ballot was a vote to restore balance and integrity in government. If there was anything that could be said of Supergirl and Superman, it was that they were incorruptible, at least by the usual forces.

But now it appeared as if even Supergirl was no match for the corporate-friendly power of Washington. The proposed constitutional amendment to change the birth requirement for President and allow her to be sworn in had been killed in committee. The existing political powers weren't going to allow a vote on it.

Her campaign had been an exciting whirlwind, but it had also driven a new wedge between the super-cousins. Kara had been publicly vocal about Superman's refusal to take sides in her campaign. She said he was betraying the people he claimed to protect by tacitly supporting mega-corporations like LuthorCorp.

Superman replied that he didn't make, influence or impose policy changes on the duly-elected government. It was his job to merely uphold the law and save lives.

Kara knew better. During his many long years working as reporter Clark Kent, he and his wife Lois Lane had been investigative journalists exposing corruption in government and industry. The Daily Planet had used their work and that of others to fight corporate greed, especially in cases where industry and government became too cozy.

The Daily Planet was gone now. It had been bought up by an Australian media mogul and then shut down, its voice silenced forever.

The elected members of Congress increasingly voted with the dollars of their wealthy contributors, and consumer protection laws had become weaker each year. Income disparity grew wider, the middle class shrunk. Corporations now possessed nearly unchecked powers. Yet you rarely saw a news story to that effect. Every media outlet was controlled by the big corporations.

With Clark Kent out of a job, Kal had only his Superman identity to fight back with. But as Superman, he claimed political governance was a matter for voters to decide, and it was the people's legally-elected representatives who had voted to weaken the consumer laws. When questioned on politics, Superman always claimed he had but a single vote, just like everyone else. It wasn't his job to change the government. That job belonged solely to the voters.

On that he and Kara agreed. The voters had to decide, but they needed a champion.

Unfortunately, all the candidates put forth by the two major political parties were lawyers in the pockets of the corporations.

That was when Kara decided to form her Citizen party and run for office. Her campaign was simple: she advised everyone who didn't like the major party candidates to write her name on the ballot. No corporation could buy Supergirl.

The major political parties fought back, hoof and nail. If there was one issue that united Democrat and Republican, it was the idea of losing their power. And when Kal refused to support his cousin's campaign, claiming he had to stay neutral on the issue of politics, the other parties used his refusal to support her as evidence that he instead supported their cause, despite the fact that Superman made no such claims.

It got messy like politics always did, and Kal and Kara's relationship suffered.

Cassie sighed. It wasn't as complicated as everyone made it out to be. Corporations provided jobs, and jobs were always in scarce supply. People were scared that hurting the corporations would only hurt their job prospects. They were voting for the dollars in their next paycheck, and not looking down the road.

Besides, as she saw it, corruption of one form or another had always been a part of human societies. The strong had always dominated the weak.

Sometimes she got so frustrated with things on Earth that she considered moving back to Themiscyra. If not for the universal lesbianism of the Amazons, she would have. She'd always been open about her heterosexuality, which insulted the Amazons, who had little trust in men and no desire for them. They'd use men to father their children, but that was the limit of their contact with males of the species. A night of sex where they dominated a male, often injuring them, sometimes fatally. She wanted nothing to do with that legacy.

Even more importantly, she was in love with Bruce Wayne. He was the finest human man she'd ever met, selfless and committed to fighting violent crime while refusing to sink to the level of his enemies. She'd made it her mission to fight along side of him.

The problem was that Bruce's definition of crime was no longer sufficient. On this she and Kara agreed.

Cassie pushed those depressing thoughts away and refocused on the job at hand. Lacking a Kryptonian's x-ray vision, or Bruce's sophisticated surveillance equipment, she was left with her Amazon senses. She could see nearly as well as a eagle and she could hear nearly as well as a dog.

Unfortunately, those were not very useful senses when floating several thousand feet over gritty factories where the criminals scuttled like rats, using the cover of rooftops and darkness.

She saw nothing worth getting involved in. Just the usual petty drug dealers and street-corner prostitutes. Street hawkers and whores had been around forever, and would be forever. She was hunting bigger game.

Her boredom was punctuated when she saw the lights of a patrol car come on. She free-fell toward that location, extending her arms to extend her glide a bit. As she approached, she spotted the two cops taking cover behind their car, both holding shotguns. The older cop and his younger female partner were watching a

half dozen men walking out of a warehouse.

Cassie swore. Given their bulky physiques and the huge boxes on their shoulders, they were definitely Spandies.

The cops were in real trouble. Despite the carbide-tipped magnum slugs they carried for dealing with Spandies, the most they could hope to do would be to knock a Spandie down. Maybe cause enough pain for the bad guys to leave. They couldn't actually injure or kill a Spandie.

Even worse, the most violent Spandies, the ones who never should have gotten through the screening, would go into berserker mode during a fight. Given the runaway surge of adrenalin and testosterone, they didn't feel any pain.

Cassie knew these two cops might as well be trying to stop enraged Grizzly bears with their bare hands.

This was a job for WonderGirl.

Cassie made no attempt to check her fall from a half mile up. She hit the pavement at terminal velocity, nearly 180 mph, landing halfway between the cops and the bad guys. Her feet cracked the old concrete as she soaked up the impact with her long legs, ending in a low crouch.

The men stopped and looked at each other as Cassie rose back up to stand at her full 5'10" height. She faced them confidently, her hands on her hips.

Yet she didn't feel confident. Despite being tall for a woman, she felt like a midget next to the Spandies, the shortest of which was 6'4. They each looked as if they weighed as much as three of her. Their partial Kryptonian genes would make it very hard for her to hurt them.

She heard the female cop breathe a sigh of relief behind her.

"Ok, guys," Cassie said, her voice loud and confident. "You know the drill. Drop the boxes and lay face down. Or else."

The leader of the men, a scar-faced monster who could be a stand-in for the Hulk, just laughed. He gestured toward the men behind him.

“Babe, there’s six of us and one of you. How do you think this is going to end?”

“Badly. For you,” Cassie replied, clenching her fists.

“Look, lady, we’re combat gens, Mod 2’s at that. One-on-one, any one of us could kick Batman’s worthless ass. You’re what, an Amazon-lite? The low calorie, non-filling kind of bitch. Unless, of course, we do the filling up.” He reached down to hold himself.

The men laughed at their leader’s crude joke.

“You’re threatening to rape an Amazon?” Cassie said, amazed by their arrogance. “Are you completely insane?”

The men surged forward as they dropped their heavy boxes. They circled Cassie, all of them grinning toothily.

“To be honest, me and the boys, we’re feeling mighty good,” the leader said. “I bet you’ll last long enough for us to have some fun. You think you can handle some real men?”

A sliver of pure, white rage pierced Cassie’s body. Could they not know that threatening an Amazon with rape was worse than threatening to murder her? She watched the men’s throbbing veins, so visible as they branched around muscles that were larger than any normal human and so vastly stronger. She could smell the stench of musk from their loins, the stink of sweat from their armpits and the sourness of hormone overdose on their breath. Their hearts hammered like jungle drums.

The only good thing is that the men were thinking with their oversized dicks, the blood draining from their head as it filled their loins. Kara often went out of her

way to flaunt her sexuality when facing such men, hoping for just this kind of reaction.

Cassie wasn't so sure that was going to work in her favor here. Rumor had it that the new Mod 2 twist on Genhance combat formula preserved the over-active testosterone and adrenalin response of a newbie. That huge surge of sexual hormones could push a man's strength and endurance to the limit. Given a combat Spandie already had nearly twenty times the strength of even the biggest bodybuilder, and were nearly unhurttable, they were very dangerous, even for her.

Her only hope was that their bulging dicks would make them overconfident and stupid. That their desire to fuck her would change the intensity of the fight,

They started to prove the stupidity part by forming in a circle around her, and then began closing in. This was an instinctive ploy that had been written into the genes of every man. While it might have worked when hunting wild game thousands of years ago, and it might terrify an ordinary woman today, it was something every Amazon had been trained to defeat.

Cassie closed her eyes as she concentrated on pushing her heart rate upward, quickening her body, sending new strength coursing through her veins. The tendons in her wrists creaked as she clenched her fists with her full Amazon strength. She waited, eyes closed, until the men were only a few feet away.

Then, in a burst of movement too fast to track with human eyes, she dove for the pavement while performing a forward flip. She came off the ground feet first, twisting herself in mid-air, her boots crunching into the first man's face. She then spun around inside the circle of men, smashing her feet into every man's face, her kicks sending each of them flying backwards a hundred yards.

She'd nearly made it around the circle when the last man, the leader, grabbed her ankle in his mitt-like hand. He began to swing her around like a hammer before shearing a fire hydrant off with her head. Then a light pole.

Dazed from the blows, Cassie tried to pull away using her flight power, but he was swinging her so fast that she was too disoriented to focus her flight power. He

finished by swinging her like an axe to shatter a concrete curb with the bridge of her nose.

Stunned, her vision filled with stars, blood running from her nose, Cassie barely had the presence of mind to lift one leg, placing it between herself and the man who was now throwing himself on her. She braced her shoulders against what was left of the concrete curb and thrust the man away. His body flew upward and out-of-sight above the street lamps.

She leaped to her feet, barely able to see from the streaming blood. She fought from pure instinct. Her fist connected with one man's chest — she heard the gunshot sound of a rib snapping — and a back kick sent another man crashing into the police cruiser, crumpling one side. She picked up a huge trash dumpster and batted away the next man, the thick steel container ripping apart as it was torn from her hands.

She threw herself forward to somersault past one man, and then sprang up to land on the next man's shoulders, squeezing his head between her thighs. She felt the wet crunch of his jaw breaking, only to be knocked away when another man swung one of the severed fire hydrants like a Louisville slugger, the blow catching one side of her head.

Her ears were ringing as she crashed face-first into the street, barely able to raise her arms before two of the monsters swung a car over their heads to smash it down on top of her. Everything went black for a few seconds, but when she awoke, she found herself on her back, her upper body pinned down by the car as two men pulled her legs apart. She thrust upward with both arms, sending the car tumbling down the street. She was rewarded by the sight of one of the men throwing himself on her, his oversized penis aimed like a sword between her legs.

She followed her training, and grabbed that hairy monstrosity with both hands and then squeezed hard enough to crush steel. The man screamed as his erection collapsed in her grip, sending a surge of blood racing back into his body to rupture the smallest blood vessels in his brain. His mouth opened wide and his eyes went fixed as he suffered a massive stroke, his arms and legs shaking violently before he collapsed limply into the street.

Cassie's vision cleared long enough to see one of the men lunging for the cops, bullets pinging from his steel-hard skin as they fired on him. She whipped out her lasso and tossed it hard, wrapping the end around the man's neck just in time to jerk him backward. He slide across the pavement toward her, on his back. She slammed her foot down hard on his chest, cracking the pavement beneath him. She followed with a powerful punch to his face that buried his head in the shattered pavement.

Another man grabbed her from behind before she could turn and face him, his hands tearing at her breasts. She spun around to embrace him instead, hoping to get her arms around him. Unfortunately, his chest was so huge that she couldn't lock her hands to get the best leverage. She hugged him to her chest anyway, hoping to break more ribs, but two men grabbed her hands to take the pressure off their buddy. A third man grabbed her pony tail to jerk her head back.

She punched and kicked the men with all her strength as the man lifted her feet off the ground. She knocked several of them down with her fury, but they kept getting back up and coming at her. Despite her greater strength, she was having trouble hurting them.

She cursed their Kryptonian DNA.

She managed to punch herself free of them men, and then backed away to get some fighting room. She stopped with her back against the partially-crushed police cruiser.

"Run," she called to the cops. "There's nothing your guns can do here. GO!"

She heard the cops feet racing away.

Reaching behind her, she grabbed the the reinforced door column on the cruiser and hoisted it off the ground. Two men dove for her, but she spun the car around and managed to get it between herself and the men. She thrust forward, using both her phenomenally strong legs and her flight power to plow the men across the street, flattened another two cars in the process. She gave the cruiser a

final mighty push, crushing it to pin the men to the wall.

She was about to reach through the wreckage and smash their skulls together when she was jerked backward. Another man had grabbed her yellow hair to swing her around his body, faster and faster. Cassie reached up to pull his hands free, only to have the man throw her into the front grill of a Peterbuilt truck. He began to pummel her back with his huge fists, kicking her ass as well, driving her body deeper into the framework of the truck. She heard the other men's feet pounding as they approached to help their buddy.

Desperate, she grabbed the block of the huge diesel engine, her feet tearing through the suspension arms to find the street. She slowly lifted the truck cab into the air before spinning around, swinging the twenty-ton truck-tractor like a gargantuan club to swat four of the men away. She tossed the truck on top of the fifth man.

The men quickly pulled the wrecked Peterbuilt off their buddy, and the remaining five of them began to advance on her. This time they were in a staggered line, trapping her against the wall.

A cold sliver of fear sliced through her — these men were capable of killing her. She couldn't hold back anything now. She had to risk using lethal force.

She leaped forward to tackle one man, and managed to wrap her arm around his neck. Desperate for a way to disable him, she flexed her steel biceps as it pressed against the small of his neck, pouring all her super-strength into that dramatic muscle. She twisted her arm with all her strength, and was rewarded with a loud POP inside the man's neck. He fell to the ground, unmoving, his eyes staring up at her.

She jammed her outstretched fingers into a second man's neck, struggling to get a grip on his trachea to cut off his air. Two men tackled her before she could finish the job.

She grabbed one of them with her long legs, wrapping them around his pelvis as she locked her ankles and squeezed, putting her strongest legs to work. His eyes

started to bulge from their sockets, his lungs unable to fill with air, his heart pounding frantically as she bent his ribs inward. She had him, his ribs ready to snap, when another man delivered a sledge-hammer blow to her head with his huge fist. She lost her grip for a brief moment, and a cruel hand closed around her breast as the brute dug his fingers into her with his super-human strength.

She cried out in pain as the man lifted her over his head, holding her by her boob as he drove his other fist repeatedly into her stomach. She gagged and gasped for air as the man threw her down to the ground and kicked her hard enough to send her spinning across the street.

She landed at the feet of the leader. Looking up, Cassie saw his sinewy hand closing around the neck of the female cop. She blinked, tried to focus, only to watch in horror as the monster drove her down over himself, his penetration nearly splitting her in half. His eyes were bloodshot with rage and he was howling like some kind of wild animal.

Cassie was spared more of that view as a hand closed around her pony tail to jerk her back to her feet. Someone hammered on her back to bend her over. She felt a man's hands fumbling with her belt as he tried to tear her pants away. She struggled to pull away, only to have the man smash his Hulk-like fist down on her back to bend her over further.

A final surge of power exploded inside her as an Amazon's greatest fear filled her. She let the man push her down further, opening her legs slightly as he waited for him to thrust himself at her. When he did, she clamped her thighs closed to trap the man's erection between her buttocks. She tensed her glutes with all her strength, trying to crush him. The man screamed in pain. She maintained her grip on him as she bent her legs upward behind him, putting her powerful hamstrings to work by digging her heels into the small of his back. She then flew backward with all her power to smash him into a wall.

The man fell limp behind her, but she hadn't felt or heard the snap of his spine. He was just stunned. She couldn't stop now. She spun around to wrap her legs around him, locking her ankles, pouring all her raw strength into a cruel scissors hold. The man's eyes bugged from their sockets and then something finally

snapped deep inside him. He slumped unconscious between her legs.

She released him to rise slowly back to her feet, blood filling one eye. She hid her right hand behind her, her bloody fingers wrapped around a baseball-sized piece of concrete. Measuring the distance carefully, she cocked her arm back as the leader continued to ravage the female cop, his berserker fury now fully upon him. He was starting to split her open with that sword of his, and was about to gut her like a trout.

Muttering an oath, she spun herself around Amazon style, accelerating with every spin until she threw the concrete at the speed of sound. It hit the man in the forehead with the force of a canon shell, snapping his head back.

He fell backward, dead.

Cassie walked stiffly over to lift the female cop from the street. She was alive but bleeding badly, her body torn. If she got her to the hospital quickly enough, she'd live.

She propped the cop up against the side of a building as she turned to look around for the last of the men. The man with the partially crushed trachea was getting back to his feet.

He and another man began to advance on her, murder in their eyes.

Cassie tried to lift the cop and run with her, but her legs began to shake. Her strength was deserting her. She fell forward to kneel in the street. She tried to get up again, but the men were upon her. Looking up, she squinted through the blood to see the men grinning at her in victory.

She had no doubt they were going to rape and kill her. She prayed not in that order.

Closing her eyes, she gathered what strength she had left for one final struggle, only to see something flash down from the sky to land just in front of her. Squinting, her vision fuzzy, she saw bare feet, long bare legs and a tiny green skirt.

Her savior delivered a punch to the closest man's chest, the blow so powerful that his body seemed to explode, the shock wave shattering windows up and down the street. The blast picked Cassie up and sent her flying to crash into a storefront.

Still struggling to see, Cassie caught a hint of flaming red hair as her savior grabbed the last monster's shoulders, his hammering fists having no effect on her. She dug her fingers into his shoulders until his faux Kryptonian bones crushed. The man screamed in pain, only to have his scream end in a shriek as she tore his body in half, tossing the two bloody halves down the street and out of sight.

Cassie tried to focus on the woman, but her eyes were too blurry to see anything but blobs of green and red.

"Alura...?" Cassie gasped.

The woman said nothing as she knelt in front of Cassie to help her to her feet. She wrapped one arm around Cassie and the other around the injured cop and then soared upward over the rooftops.

The last thing Cassie saw was the lights of the city fading away beneath her.

