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M A N O F S T E E L



INSIDE THE LEGENDARY WORLD OF SUPERMAN

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INTRODUCTION

ZACK SNYDER

THE SINGLE POINT AT WHICH everything we know and everything we question exist in one place; the ultimate crossroads in the journey of discovering the true meaning of "self"; the collision point of science and religion, tangible and ethereal, physical and philosophical; the place where a question that may never truly have an answer can be embodied in a singular character—in many ways, that is the why of Superman.

In my mind, the coolest part about the character of Kal-El/Clark Kent is that his alien origins, combined with his Smallville upbringing, simultaneously make him entirely relatable and completely mysterious. This duality allows us to look at ourselves through the prism of Clark, embracing that which we understand and forcing us to acknowledge and accept that which we don't yet comprehend. Although the challenges facing Clark may be much more interplanetary than our own, the reality is that those sometimes overwhelming difficulties we each struggle to reconcile as we grow—especially throughout our youth—often feel just as immense as being from another planet.



ABOVE: Debbie Snyder and Zack Snyder during a break in filming on the Plano, Illinois set. OPPOSITE: Zack Snyder directs Henry Cavill while shooting the Battle of Smallville in Plano.

Seventy-five years ago, Kandor and Kansas collided, giving birth to one of the most storied characters of all time—Superman—a single character who calls into question everything we believe. Whether it is the belief that we humans are the apex of an evolutionary process, the pinnacle of God's creation, or anything else along the complex spectrum where science and theisms grapple for space, Superman challenges all of those ideas to their core. He forces us to look at ourselves as individuals, and mankind as a whole, through the filter of a being who looks very much like us but has the physical strength and abilities of a god. Yet, despite his corporeal strengths he is not omniscient, and therefore must venture out into the world on his own journey of self-discovery. No more able to see the future than any of us, and in many ways much less aware of his past than most, he is in essence a lost god. A deity forced to walk the Earth alone, seeking his own personal truth while inadvertently calling into question the very truths the rest of mankind cling to so tightly.

That was the challenge that I found most interesting when I decided to take on *Man of Steel*. I was enthralled by the amazing opportunity to place this helplessly divine figure firmly in our imperfect world. It was a chance to tell the complicated story of a struggling savior, a reluctant messiah, in a modern way. An opportunity to carefully deconstruct the classic godlike character, who we have often perceived as aspirational but also distant and divine at times. Allowing the audience to walk alongside Clark during his formative years—matching stride with him as a child, a teen, and ultimately a young man—creates a bond that perseveres even as that man becomes mythological in stature. That initial kinship is what lets us as humans experience the transformative process of the character from an incredibly close proximity, ultimately helping us to both understand and relate to the evolution of Clark Kent into Superman.

Making *Man of Steel* has been an amazing journey. As a filmmaker, I consider it an honor to have the opportunity to lovingly deconstruct and reassemble such a beloved character and rich imaginative world. I'm thrilled to have been able to immerse myself in seventy-five years of legend and lore, and I am now excited to share with you my own journey in building upon the already mythological world of Superman.



MODERN-DAY MYTHMAKING





THE SUIT

If you're working with Superman, you've got to start with the suit. But how can you completely reinvent one of the classics of costume design? For Zack Snyder, it was an easy answer: You don't.

Snyder saw no need to toss out the fundamentals, even as designers brought him ideas that veered into blue jeans and casual street clothes. In Snyder's mind's eye, the key elements remained: primary colors of red, yellow, and blue; a trim silhouette defined by a barrel chest and a hanging cape; high boots; and a triangular chest emblem inscribed with the familiar letter S.

One thing didn't survive, however. As Snyder notes, a big reason why the "underwear on the outside" look no longer seems fresh is the fact that it dates from the nineteenth century. "Strong men [would] have a flesh-colored leotard on," he explains. "Then they'd put the underwear over it, to make it look like all [they] had on was underwear. That's basically where Superman comes from; the reason why his underwear is on the outside of his pants is because it's a leftover from Victorian-era strong men. I couldn't make it consistent with the world we were creating."

With that minor tweak in place, costuming could begin in earnest. "We interviewed a number of costume designers and had boiled it down to two," Charles Roven explains. "Zack had worked with Michael Wilkinson on *Sucker Punch* and *Watchmen*, but Michael wasn't immediately available. James Acheson was and he was fantastic, and came up with a significant portion of the designs for *Man of Steel*, preliminary designs for the Kryptonian armor, and the whole concept of the [chest] glyph being both a family symbol and a Kryptonian symbol. And when for personal reasons he suddenly had to leave the show, fortunately Michael Wilkinson had become available."

For Snyder, interpreting the S symbol was like paging through an illuminated manuscript, an act deserving both reverence and care. Superman's insignia has gone through many variations over the decades, but Snyder found himself drawn to the version Superman wore during World War II, which featured graceful lines resembling art nouveau.

"I like to draw on that [era] as much as I can, because I feel he was born again after World War II," explains Snyder. "He came to represent the American fighting machine and the way America exported its morality to the world. I was drawn to that, and I wanted to get back to a slightly more elegant and more graphically sophisticated S."

THESE PAGES: On the inside, the Kryptonian scout ship resembles the innards of a living creature. Pods contain Kryptonian skinsuits, ready for use by the ship's crew.



HOUSE OF EL



LEFT: Designs for Superman's costume kept the classic colors and the hanging cape. The chest insignia would be one of many, with other Kryptonian families and guilds each possessing their own unique glyph.

ABOVE: The House of El's familiar symbol can be seen beneath the ornate filigrees adorning Jor-El's costume.



Lor-Em
THINKER GUILD



Council #2
LABORER GUILD



Council #1
WARRIOR GUILD



Ro-Zar
MEDIATOR GUILD



Ceremonial / Sapphire Guards
"CITY OF KANDOR GLYPH"



Aristocrat #1



Aristocrat #2



Aristocrat #3



Aristocrat #6



Aristocrat #4



Nam-Ek



Council #3
ARTISAN GUILD

When Michael Wilkinson picked up the baton from Acheson, he turned his artwork into a tangible supersuit with sheen and texture. "It's like what a chainmail suit is to the knights of medieval times," Wilkinson says. "If you look closely, it has the chainmail motif that covers the whole body. We looked a lot at medieval heraldry and the sort of iconic symbols of dynasties and guilds."

Other influences present in the finished suit include elements from Celtic and Japanese design. "We have a beautiful streamlined detail, [going] through the sides of his rib cage and the details on his cuffs," Wilkinson points out.

The costuming department also generated a digital body scan and produced a full-body cast, used for precise fitting to the actor's exact proportions. They also made a 3-D computer model of the suit to mirror various components and ensure perfect symmetry. "We could go in there and bevel every last 1/32 of an inch," he says. "We knew that the camera would see every last square inch of the Superman suit."

The detailing of the suit material might look like the interlocking links of a chainmail tunic, but the costume's backstory revealed its role as a sci-fi skinsuit that could protect its wearer from the vacuum of space. "It's a really high-tech kind of fabric, which I think is a nice departure from the spandex," says Debbie Snyder. The color choices

also underscored the theme of fathers and sons, with Jor-El wearing a similar ensemble. "The House of El, their color is blue, so Jor-El has this suit in blue."

These touches helped put the suit into the larger societal context of Krypton, and Zack Snyder felt that it served as a symbol of the lost heritage that a curious Kal-El sought out. "It's a cultural experience, finding his Superman identity," he says. "The costume is a cultural link; almost by default, it becomes his Super Hero costume. [But] Jor-El did not *design* him to be a Super Hero. How could he know that Earth needed a hero like that?"

Because Michael Wilkinson dressed Superman, he also faced the challenge of costuming Clark Kent. Both characters, of course, have identical body proportions, but Wilkinson aspired to make them distinct visual experiences. "We really wanted to have that sense of hiding," he says, in discussing Clark's look as he ventures into the frozen north. "He wears many layers. You don't really see who he is. He has his hat down low. He has his beard. He kind of really blends in with the rest of the world."

Of course, Clark is far from an ordinary guy. When he sheds his concealing layers, viewers get glimpses of the hero beneath. "He really has an interesting kind of visual arc throughout the film," says Wilkinson. "[The suit has] a whole different silhouette and it really affects how he walks and moves."



HENRY CAVILL S SUPERMAN

Actor Henry Cavill is British through and through, and yet, Superman, of course, is as American as apple pie. Superman, however, is also a strange visitor from another planet, and Cavill possessed a trustworthiness and decency that felt more integral to the core of the character than his birthplace or his chiseled physical perfection.

"Henry has traveled the world, and our Superman has traveled the world," says Zack Snyder. "Henry comes from a military family, and has a sense of duty." In Snyder's view, these elements helped give Cavill a sincerity that few others could pull off.

"We were always aware of Henry," recalls Charles Roven. "He had been the finalist in a previous attempt to do a Superman film, and he retained his desire to play the Man of Steel. But we did a thorough discovery, and not only the known actors. [Casting directors] Kristy Carlson and Lora Kennedy were involved in an exhaustive international reading and testing program. We wanted to be sure we didn't leave any stone unturned, because we knew if we wanted the movie to be as good as it could possibly be, we couldn't make a casting mistake. Henry always rose to the top, to the point where we finally did a film test with him. And he just knocked it out of the park."

After winning the role, Cavill read up on Superman comics to gain a sense of the character's history and establish a baseline on which to build his own interpretation. "He's far more complex than people think," he says. "He's not just this perfect character. He's an incredibly conflicted and lonely and lost person."

Christopher Nolan sees in Henry Cavill the same qualities that attracted audiences to Christopher Reeve, whose portrayal in 1978's *Superman* made him a hero of Nolan's childhood. "He owns the part," he says. "It was extraordinary to watch his first test, and then seeing the film and what he did with it. It's a very powerful portrayal, the way he conveys the strength and dignity of Superman. He rises to that challenge. And he's also Clark, relatable and vulnerable—somewhat ironically, for an alien."

As Clark Kent, Superman grows up in the rural environment of Smallville, Kansas, frustrated by having to prevent himself from lashing out at the peers who harass him. "I think any kid who's been bullied feels that way," Cavill says. "But it's just amplified by the fact that he really is powerless to do anything about it, while having all the power to do *everything* about it."

This quality of embodying two attitudes and two physical states at once is key to the Clark Kent/Superman dynamic. "He can fly—but he has to pretend that he can't," says Zack Snyder. Many actors can fill out a Super Hero's costume with a magazine idol's figure, but only Cavill nailed the sense of holding his immeasurable power in check at all times.



PAGES 32-33: Henry Cavill as Superman and Russell Crowe as Jor-El look out on Earth from Zod's damaged warship.

OPPOSITE: Henry Cavill had the right look for Superman, but it was his screen tests that won over the casting directors.

ABOVE: Clark Kent required a variety of costuming looks, including the outfits he wears in his job-hopping adventures and casual clothes for the more relaxed environment of Smallville.





NORTHERN JOURNEYS

When Clark Kent first appears in *Man of Steel*, he's far from the cornfields of Kansas or the newsroom of the *Daily Planet*. Viewers catch up to Clark during his quest to find his place in this world. As a spiritual tug drives him north, Clark earns meal money by fishing for crabs and busing tables.

"I feel like it was much more realistic to see him have these odd jobs," says Debbie Snyder. "In today's economic times, his kind of trajectory is much more relatable to the average American. Even though we'll never know what it's like to fly, if we can find a way to relate to him, we'll care more about him as a character. And at some point in everyone's life they're struggling to find out what they believe in, what their purpose in life is. We've all been at this crossroads and sometimes we feel a little lost."

Clark knows he's not like other people, but he hasn't yet learned that he's an alien exile from the planet Krypton. And, even though his adoptive father Jonathan Kent urged him to keep his powers under wraps, Clark can't ignore danger and injustice when he has the ability to set things right. "It's in his nature to help people," says Debbie Snyder. "But when people get too close and start to get suspicious, he has to move on."

During his time on the fringe of life, Clark signs on as a greenhorn crewman aboard the crab boat *Debbie Sue* to ply the Bering Sea. Filming for the sequence took place in the choppy waters near Vancouver Island.

"We actually brought that crab boat up from Seattle," says producer Charles Roven. "It wasn't that there weren't any crab boats in Vancouver; it was that Zack wanted a particular crab boat. One that had a certain kind of deck and a captain's wheelhouse."

Henry Cavill got a crash course in the life of a crabber before setting out on the water and had to fight back seasickness as he rode out thirty-foot swells. "I'm sure they probably looked at us like we had two heads at first," he says, of the *Debbie Sue*'s crew. "The things that film crews need, it's just so alien on a crab boat."

Vancouver Island also served as the backdrop for the oil rig explosion that forces Clark to abandon the *Debbie Sue* and do what he can to help those in danger. The oil rig's landing platform wasn't shot on stage, but out-of-doors in Vancouver, with strategic green screen backdrops inserted for later scenery fill-ins. "We built a whole platform for the helicopter to land on," says Charles Roven. "It was an amazing piece of engineering."

On the island's shoreline, the crew filmed the shirtless Clark's emergence from near-freezing waters. "It was quite tough just to keep a positive mental attitude when we were standing outside on a green screen for the oil rig stuff," says Cavill. "And we had the big Black Hawk coast guard helicopter come in. And when you're in sixty-, seventy-mile-per-hour winds, in the rotor wash with your shirt off, and its winter in Vancouver—I mean, I'm not one to complain, but goodness me."

The inner workings of the rig, including its pipe-and-valve architecture and the gouts of fire that menace Clark, provided another challenge for Roven's team. "We built that, too," he says. "And that was all shot practically."



THESE PAGES: The fiery ruin visited on this offshore oil rig presents the kind of challenge that can only be tackled by someone with Clark's unique abilities.

ABOVE: In this still from *Man of Steel*, Clark Kent tests the limits of what he can endure.

MAN OF STEEL™

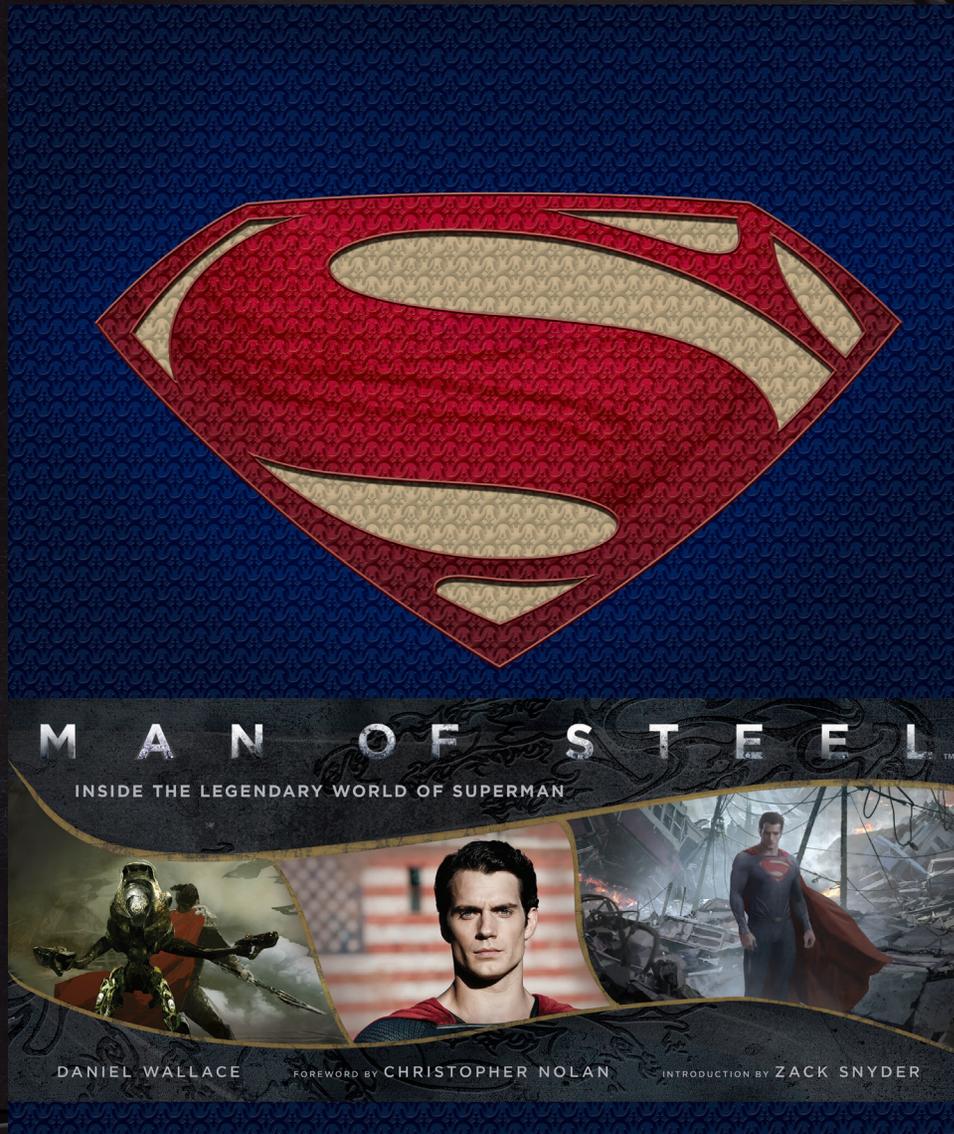
INSIDE THE LEGENDARY WORLD OF SUPERMAN

IN STORES JUNE 18TH

In *Man of Steel*, director Zack Snyder (*300*, *Watchmen*) and producer Christopher Nolan (*The Dark Knight Trilogy*) have delivered a stunning new vision of Superman that is both fresh and familiar. *Man of Steel: Inside the Legendary World of Superman* explores the remarkable creative process behind the movie and showcases the exceptional concept art that shaped its unique visual style. From the stark alien vistas of Krypton to the down-to-earth warmth of Smallville, this book uncovers the intensive world-building process that makes Superman's universe both thrilling and believable. Also featuring in-depth interviews with the cast and crew, and candid on-set photography, *Man of Steel: Inside the Legendary World of Superman* is the ultimate insider's look at one of the most electrifying movies in recent memory.

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