

# LUTHOR, LEX

## SUPERMAN'S GREATEST ENEMY

**FIRST APPEARANCE** ACTION COMICS #23 (April 1940)  
**REAL NAME** Alexander Joseph Luthor  
**BASE** Metropolis; Washington D.C. (while U.S. President)  
**HEIGHT** 6ft 2in **WEIGHT** 210 lbs **EYES** Green **HAIR** None  
**OCCUPATION** Mastermind  
**SPECIAL POWERS/ABILITIES** Luthor is one of the smartest men on Earth, able to invent technological marvels or manipulate entire nations. He believes in brute force and is an unskilled fighter, relying instead on weapons and armor.

**LEX LUTHOR MAY BE** the most gifted man alive but rather than use his supreme intellect and skills for the betterment of mankind, the sociopath has continually sought power and influence without regard for the pain and suffering he causes. The gifts are also wasted on his single-minded hatred of a more pure and noble man, especially given his alien origins.



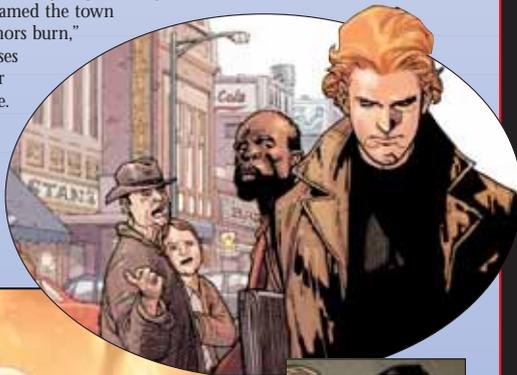
**EVIL GENIUS** Luthor's early attempts to kill Superman all failed.



**EVIL AND ALIENATED**  
 One glance at Luthor's I.Q. test results, convinced his parents that their little genius would make them rich. They were determined he should excel, but their soul-destroying "guidance" bred a sociopath who

engineered their deaths to capitalize on their life insurance. A budding astrobiologist, Lex then spent years searching for evidence of extraterrestrial life. His hunt took him to Smallville when he was 18. Lex befriended another seemingly alienated young man, Clark Kent. He turned his back on Smallville when a fire destroyed his lab and his scientific achievements, as well as his foster father. Refusing to take any responsibility for the accident, Lex blamed the town for "letting the Luthors burn," and to this day, refuses to admit he has ever set foot in Smallville.

**ONLY THE LONELY**  
 Deprived of a normal childhood, Lex hid his personal pain behind a mask of arrogance.



### THE RISE OF LUTHOR

Years later, Lex appeared in Metropolis and built his technology company, LexCorp, into a powerhouse. Financial success led to political power, and he was considered the city's most powerful figure. Then came the day that SUPERMAN appeared in the skies above Metropolis and turned Lex's world upside down. Superman openly accused Luthor of being a criminal mastermind rather than a benefactor of mankind. Unwilling or unable to link this "meddling alien" with the boy he had known a decade earlier, Luthor swore to bring down the Last Son of Krypton. Over the years, he has used his power and influence to plague the Man of Steel time and again.



### KRYPTONITE RING

Luthor got in his licks but continued to be thwarted by Superman both directly and indirectly. On one occasion, a ring Luthor had fashioned from kryptonite gave him cancer owing to the radiation inherent in the alien rock. Lex faked his death, and transferred his mind into the body of a clone, pretending to be Luthor's heretofore unknown son. This Luthor soon evolved to resemble the original, but continued to come second in his struggles with Superman.



### METROPOLIS DESTROYED

Lex showed his true colors by refusing to sacrifice himself to help reignite the sun after the Sun-Eater had snuffed out its energy. When Lois Lane (see LANE, LOIS) exposed his criminal dealings, Luthor triggered devices hidden within Metropolis that destroyed the city. Superman and his



**IN RUINS** Luthor destroyed Metropolis in a bid to avoid exposure by Lois Lane.

fellow heroes rebuilt Metropolis and the battle between Superman and Luthor continued. His manipulations extended to Metropolis's citizens, who sided with Superman over Luthor.



**CLASH OF WILLS** Perry White and Luthor never got along and it chafed when Luthor came to own Perry's beloved Daily Planet.

### FRONT PAGE NEWS

Lois found out that Luthor had known of ImperieX's threat earlier than stated. He demanded that this be the story the Planet killed, but the savvy reporter tricked him, giving her notes to Clark Kent, who wrote a scathing piece, exposing Luthor for the criminal he was.



**WAR SUIT** Luthor finally took matters in his own hands, attempting to destroy both Superman and Batman.



### LUST FOR POWER

Realizing the need to muzzle the press, Luthor bought and then sold the Daily Planet to Perry White (see WHITE, PERRY) on condition that Lois Lane killed any single story of his choosing. Feeling safe from exposure, Luthor ran for U.S. President to gain the power needed to bring Superman down. Surprisingly, he served the U.S.'s interests well, strengthening or forging relationships with many nations from Atlantis to Russia, and rallying the troops when IMPERIEX arrived to destroy Earth (see Great Battles, pp. 320-1).

### KEY STORYLINES

- **SUPERMAN: PRESIDENT LEX** (TPB, 2000): The world looks on aghast as Luthor becomes U.S. President, following the most controversial election of all time.
- **SUPERMAN: BIRTHRIGHT #1-12** (September 2003-September 2004): Dating back to their childhood in Smallville, Luthor's tortured relationship with Clark Kent/Superman is redefined and explored.
- **SUPERMAN/BATMAN #1-6** President Luthor becomes a kryptonite junkie and goes insane.
- **LEX LUTHOR: MAN OF STEEL** (Issue nos? p/b?? 2004): Luthor's recovery from his downfall.

**ADVANCE WARNING**  
 Luthor had secretly known of ImperieX's invasion plans, but ordered Lois Lane to kill the story. However, Clark Kent printed the full truth, marring Luthor's term as U.S. President.



**U.S. PRESIDENT** Luthor was quite effective in his post, improving diplomatic relations with Atlantis and other countries.

### ACT OF MADNESS

Luthor's presidential power still could not bring about the end of Superman and his costumed friends. When an asteroid neared Earth, Luthor detected kryptonite radiation and used that to try and turn the public against the Man of Steel. He even sent costumed champions after Superman, but this gambit also failed. Finally, he donned a LexCorp war suit and tried to take down not only Superman, but BATMAN as well. His efforts were in vain and his deception was made public. Driven from the presidency, Luthor was thought to have died but limped to freedom, an angry, vengeful man. RG

