

Alpha and Omega

First plot

Written by Jim Shooter

January 24, 1991

In the VH2 Universe, Frank Seleski was in search of "the footprints of God". That was the feeling I got when this document was placed in my hands.

This is the first draft to Alpha & Omega written on January 24, 1991, the plot which was handed to Barry Windsor-Smith (which has been well documented in previous interviews) that he loved and rejected because it was too much to handle. I kinda see that. Upon my first read of this plot I laughed out loud when I read (margin page count) page 23- "Big effect page. We reveal the secrets of existence. Note: This we may need to discuss" because that was how it was back then for this brand new company called VALIANT Comics- there were no limits, he wrote the impossible and they pulled it off.

Anyway, you can see the first thoughts that went into creating a Universe right here. You can see the advantage of not having 25 years of continuity to keep faithful to, a luxury Marvel or DC do not have, regardless of how many times they may attempt it. It is here you can see for the first time the footprints of god. You can see the vision for doing something right with the controls set for the sun itself- simply put, never has there been a more ambitious story written until this one came along in 1991.

As you see, this is the first version of the plot. On the left margin you can see what were the first and second page counts for the story. If I had to guess, I'd say the straight lines are the first page count, 40 pages, then later redone for 32 pages- one of many ideas for what to do with this story. As Jim states:

"This was back at the beginning of all the premiums, promotions, giveaways that people were doing to sell comics, we were co-inventors of that- we came up with this idea for Magnus where you buy the first eight issues and you get the trading cards and you get Magnus #0 for free. We of course didn't invent zero issues, I think that was R. Crumb who had the first zero issue, but no one else was doing it at the time. So we wanted to do it again, but we didn't want to do the same thing again- we

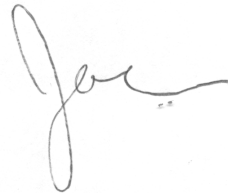
tried it with Harbinger and the free zero issue, but we kept trying to do it different ways- like serialize a story and put it in the middle, with Archer and Armstrong: just publish the damn thing, number the first one zero (laughs), we kept coming up with variations just to keep people interested, and we hoped it would drive sales and fortunately it did."

Lucky for us VALIANT fans, we ended up with 68 pages encompassing what is undoubtably one of the best stories ever written in this entire medium.

As I write this intro, I am about to embark on my own journey into that medium. Perhaps it is the editor in me, but I couldn't help but take mental notes as I read this plot, like ask "if it was his brother's baby and he was so emotional over it, when why was he in a nightclub?" or ask "why does Gayle have a rad badge?" and realize it is my desire to go back in time and wish I had been there, sticking post-its on Jim Shooter's newly written story, throwing around ideas for this new series and that is the kind of feeling I'm sure you will get after you read this plot as I have.

Loved that VALIANT.

Enjoy!

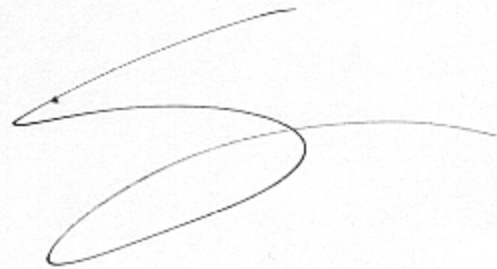
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

3/28/01

DEAR JOE,

HERE'S THE FIRST
INSTALLMENT.

MORE AS SOON AS I CAN.

A stylized, handwritten signature consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

"Alpha and Omega"

1 (Full-page splash): Doctor Phillip Seleski sits bolt upright in bed, suddenly awakened by an immense explosion at the nearby Edgewater nuclear facility. He looks utterly horrified. He's wearing pajamas, by the way.

Seleski half-runs, half hops out the front door of his small apartment building, pulling on his pants as he goes. He still has his pajama top on, and is wearing slippers. He still looks horrified. Other people are looking out windows, stumbling out of doors half-dressed. The scene is harshly lit by brilliant light from the continuing explosion. The other folks, who don't really understand what's going on, look merely frightened and confused. A sign visible, bg says "Entering Muskogee, Oklahoma, Home of the Edgewater Advanced Atomic Energy Research Center" In the distance we see the source of the light -- the ruptured containment building of "the Edge." Make it look like we're seeing the prelude to the end of the world.

2 Seleski rushes into the control room. Seleski's slippers are in his pocket now -- it's easier to run barefoot. Present in the huge control room are Doctor Erica Pierce, Doctor Clarkson, and numerous technicians. Pierce is wearing her normal work attire -- dull but impeccable. Clarkson is wearing a lab coat over what are obviously the first casual clothes he could find. Clarkson is the calmest of the group. He speaks briefly to Seleski, trying to bring him up to date. It looks very bad, possibly catastrophic. Some technicians, who were on duty already, are properly dressed for work. Others are in states similar to Clarkson and Seleski. A few, like Seleski, are just arriving. Everyone is working frantically, trying to figure out how to shut down the reactor.

Pierce interrupts them, virtually accosting Seleski. Shouting to be heard above the din of the event, she apprises Seleski (and us) of pertinent data in a way that says "your fault."

Gayle enters, pulling on a lab coat over inappropriate (but not sleazy evening clothes. Though Pierce is still talking to him, Seleski looks at Gayle, as if seeing her for the first time.

Suddenly, the event intensifies. The control room is shaken as if it were the epicenter of an earthquake. Pierce, steadying herself, looks at a monitor with an "Oh, my God, this is it" expression.

Clarkson is directing efforts to control the reactor. Pierce is slipping away, leaving through a door, bg. Seleski stands alone amid the chaos, oddly calm, contemplating.

3 Note: During this entire section, we will subtly show that Seleski had turned his back on human-ness -- he has no life -- to pry at the secrets of the gods. Gayle's arrival brings home the point of his own loneliness and detachment from humanity. The price of his quest for godly knowledge will be paid by others. He loses little, and, therefore, his choice of self-sacrifice makes sense.

Seleski exists through the same door Pierce did. As he does, panic is overwhelming the control room crew. Some flee, uselessly. Some hold each other. A few pray. The reactor is about to blow

3 Seleski runs through the anteroom where radiation suits are kept. In the bg, hardly noticeable, we see a figure (Pierce) sulking up.

Exiting the airlock, Seleski races toward the reactor. It is spectacularly, horrifyingly close to blowing up.

Inside the containment, Seleski tries to manually halt the reaction. He tries to use the electromagnet controls to diffuse the reaction field, but the controls do not respond.

During this futile effort, his clothes begin to burn, his flesh begins to boil away and he is blinded. The metal shell of the reactor is disintegrating. The reaction, which has been like a solar flare till now, is becoming a fireball. Note: We should see a distinctive conduit or gadget that is sparking noticeably. Later, this will turn out to be the failed part that caused this. Frustrated, maddened by pain and despair, he hurls himself into the fireball.

↪ Spectacular effect panel. Seleski, who's being reduced to component sub-atomic particles sees someone (a vague figure that is, in fact, our Earth's Pierce, though that should not be apparent) through the searing plasma.

Close up of whatever is left of Seleski. He is wishing this would stop.

4 Four people in radiation suits find Seleski's body in the now cold, inert reactor. One of them has a modern radiation detector that's indicating astronomical levels of high-end radiation.

They carry Seleski out. The one with the rad-detector notes that this will surely kill them all.

Suddenly, the radiation ceases. They're shocked. They think the machine broke. Seleski suddenly seems much heavier, too. They can't carry him. They'll have to get a cart.

5 Seleski awakens in a large, private hospital room. He has a large number of sensors taped to his body, but no I.V.'s. The room is cluttered with high-tech (but real) monitoring equipment -- EEG, EKG, oscilloscope devices, etc. Also in the room are several medical doctors, technicians, nurses and Doctor Clarkson. Everyone is reacting to Seleski's awakening as if it were the event of the century. It is. Seleski's bed, by the way, is heavily reinforced to support his incredible weight.

Clarkson speaks first to Seleski -- says it's good to have him back. But, we see Seleski's view of Clarkson (and some of the room behind him). Seleski is receiving all kinds of energy, not just light. His view of Clarkson and company is a special effect/ x-ray/posterized view. Or whatever.

5 Same p.o.v. Seleski struggles to see. The effect changes, but it's still weird. During this, Clarkson is explaining that Seleski has become... different.

Same p.o.v. Seleski finally finds the right spectrum and sees normally. What he sees is Clarkson and the others looking at him. Their expressions betray amazement, disbelief, and, perhaps, even a little fear. Clarkson is telling him to relax. They'll need to take tests. Seleski is overjoyed to be alive. He's cooperative. There is an ominous feel to this whole scene, however.

The next day, Seleski is in a different room, standing, wearing only a hospital gown, still wired up to various equipment. A number of M.D.'s are present. So is Clarkson. Seleski is watching one of the gauges as he tries to change his radioactivity by will. An M.D. is saying that Seleski seems to be able to influence his own radioactivity. They wonder if he might have done so right after the accident.

Pierce enters in her usual stiff mood, but as Seleski explains that he wished himself to stopped radiating back then. He's sure he can manipulate his internal energies. "Hey, Pierce," Seleski says, noticing her enter. "Watch this!"

Facing Pierce, Seleski concentrates and makes his nose glow like Rudolph the Reindeer's. The M.D.'s and Clarkson rush to their equipment, taking this phenomenon very seriously. ~~Pierce doesn't know what to think.~~

→ Pierce almost cracks a smile as she tells Seleski he looks ridiculous. Seleski is hugely amused with himself. He's a changed man, very glad to be alive.

Pierce sternly insists that he behave. He is looking down inside his hospital gown saying he thinks he can do his nipples, too.

6 Note: During all this, incidentally, in the dialogue, we will explain that his body is like a fusion engine, etc. We'll also advance the theories that he somehow shut down his body's radiation and the reactor by force of will.

Days later, Seleski is alone in the hospital solarium. He is wearing a regular bathrobe and slippers (and nothing else), and is staring out the window. It's a gloomy, cloudy afternoon.

Seleski arranges a few cushions so they approximate a person sitting on the couch.

Seleski stands near his pillow person -- whom he calls Mrs. Lumpfluff -- and speaks to her, clowning around. "Yes, dreadful day, Mrs. Lumpfluff. Too bad there's no sun. Perhaps I can help."

6 Seleski yanks open his robe in the "flasher" gesture and pours out sunlight from his entire body all over Mrs. Lumpfluff. At the same time Pierce enters.

Embarrassed, Seleski shuts down and pulls his robe closed. Pierce makes a remark about how he seems to light up whenever she enters a room. She's trying to be cold and snide, but can't help being amused.

Seleski sits on the arm of a chair with his robe pulled off of his shoulders (but still around his waist) so that Pierce can take some readings with various hand-held devices. As this goes on, Seleski explains that he's not crazy, he's just lonely. Now that he's had his brush with death, he wants to live, not be cooped up.

Pierce looks troubled. She begins to pack up, and says that Seleski's relationship with Mrs. Lumpfluff constitutes a fuller life than hers.

7 As Pierce is leaving, Seleski says he's sorry and expresses sympathy. Pierce looks like she's almost ready to turn around, but keeps going.

Days later, in the lab, Seleski is inside a three-sided cinderblock enclosure, dramatically using his sun-like powers to melt steel beams (or whatever). He's also burning off the hospital gown he's wearing. The attending scientists, including Pierce wear dark goggles to shield their eyes from the glare. They're all impressed, but have long since recovered their scientific cool with regard to Seleski.

Minutes later, Pierce is taking the same kind of readings as before, standing very close to the bare chested Seleski, whom, we suggest, is naked now. Everyone, including Seleski, is utterly unruffled by this, due to the recovery of their clinical cool and the fact that it happens a lot. Someone is bringing Seleski a robe, bg. As Pierce examines him, she's smiling and friendly -- what a change! Seleski is also smiling, making jokes (that she interprets as flirtation).

Later, Seleski stands alone in his room, staring out the window. It's dark and lonely. a contrast to the light, bustling lab. Seleski sees Gayle getting out of a car in the parking lot, carrying flowers and a gift. Gayle!

Seleski joyfully tells his bed pillows, which are arranged into another Mrs. Lumpfluff that he thinks he's getting a visitor. And, of course, it couldn't be a better one. He's been thinking of her almost constantly.

→ Seleski preens a little, sort of comically.

8 Note: Since the accident, Seleski's body has been changing subtly, from a rather dumpy build to a more athletic one. His mind has been altering his body to suit its subconscious self-image.

Seleski waits. No one comes.

Hours later, Clarkson, an M.D. and Pierce enter to take readings. Seleski looks depressed, lonely and angry. Clarkson asks what's wrong.

8 Seleski asks why he never gets any visitors. Clarkson tells him he's off limits to visitors.

Seleski is furious! He rages at Clarkson and the M.D. -- how dare they assume such control over him. Energy flickers around him as he does this. Objects in the room may shake or move.

Seleski slumps into a chair, his mood shifting from anger to despair. Don't they understand, he's lonely? He wants a life. Companionship. Something more than tests and monitors. Pierce is paying too much attention to this, sort of reading it as a personal message to her.

Clarkson says calming things and begins to take a reading.

Something seems to be wrong with the device. It won't register. Seleski, not looking up, says the device says anything he wants it to i.e, nothing. They won't get anything out of him tonight. Get lost.

Hours later, Seleski sits alone in the dark by his window, miserable. A voice from behind him (Pierce) softly says his name... probably "Doctor Seleski" since that's all she's ever called him. She's reaching out to touch his shoulder. He hardly moves, but looks surprised.

9 Seleski stands and turns to face Pierce. He looks embarrassed and surprised. She however, is too busy coming on to him -- and this is hard for her -- to notice. She is pressing herself against him...

Seleski pushes Pierce away -- not too roughly, but firmly. He thinks Clarkson and co. put her up to this to placate him. He's appalled.

Now it's Pierce's turn to be surprised -- and hurt. She says nobody put her up to this. She... misunderstood him.

Straightening her clothes, struggling to regain her dignity, Pierce opens the door to leave. Seleski, bg, is frozen by confusion.

Seleski is alone again in the dark.

The next morning, dressed in normal work clothes, Seleski strides into the lab at the Edge, reporting to work. Clarkson, Pierce and Gayle are present. Gayle is pleasantly surprised to see Seleski and greets him cheerfully. Clarkson says what are you doing here? Pierce, too, looks surprised. Seleski says he works there. What's the problem? Clarkson can't think of a reason why he shouldn't be there. He's not a prisoner...

Pierce says, well, if he's here, then he should get to work on analyzing what went wrong with the reactor. Her manner betrays no emotion either way. Business as usual. Seleski is relieved.

Late that evening, Seleski is inside the containment. It's eerie, being at the site of his accident -- a feeling reinforced by the melted, fused equipment, the charring and other damage, and the harshness of the temporary lighting.

Seleski pokes around. He notices a conduit that he remembers seeing sparks coming from during the event.

Seleski peels apart the thick metal casing with his bare hands, peering inside.

Seleski hears a slight noise behind him. It's Gayle. She looks the way you'd expect someone to look if they'd just seen someone rip apart metal with their bare hands.

Gayle is there to tell Seleski that it's past quitting time. Seleski thanks her, then holds up the broken bolt he found. He says that this was the cause of the event. A defective bolt, overlooked by probably a dozen inspectors -- a simple, human error. A lesson, perhaps, to mere humans who dare to delve into godly realms.

Seleski approaches Gayle. He's asking Gayle if she'll have dinner with him. He doesn't have to eat, of course, but he can. His body simulates all normal functions "for old times' sake." Gayle declines politely, but is clearly nervous and a little afraid. She's already retreating.

Alone again, Seleski feels like a dodo -- suddenly realizing that the "...all normal functions" comment he made could be taken wrongly.

At home, Seleski sits staring at the phone. The phone book is open to Gayle's number.

Instead of dialing, he picks up a couple of pillows....

The pillows are stacked in the Mrs. Lumpfluff manner -- but Seleski is calling them "Gayle"... practicing his speech to her.

As he's talking something gets his attention. Leaning out his window, he sees that the house at the end of his block is on fire and fire trucks are arriving.

The scene of the fire. It's intense. Seleski stands among the crowd. Someone shouts that kids are trapped inside.

Seleski enters the blazing house. A fireman sees him, but too late to do anything about it.

Seleski finds two children huddled in a corner.

12

Seleski starts to roll them up in a carpet. One asks, "Are you God?"

Seleski shoves aside flaming, collapsing debris and emerges, carrying the carpet.

Later, Seleski has a fireman's coat draped around his shoulders. The kids are being cared for, bg, and the fire is mostly out. People crowd around. Reporters ask questions.

The next day, at work, Clarkson cautions him. This sort of publicity could be trouble. Newspapers are in evidence with headlines about Seleski's "daring" rescue. They've dubbed him the "fireproof man."

Gayle, however, thinks what he did is truly admirable, and tells him so. She's seeing him with new eyes.

Seleski apologizes for coming on too strong in the containment yesterday, and begins sputtering through the speech he rehearsed to his pillows. Gayle interrupts asking him if his offer to simulate eating with her is still open.

Later, at a moderate restaurant, Gayle and Seleski are having a glass of wine before dinner. Gayle says that she rarely drinks. Seleski says he doesn't either... but now it has no effect. Might as well be gasoline. Can he taste it? He... thinks so.

The conversation turns more serious as they discuss his human-ness, or the lack of it. Gayle still has reservations about this guy. Who wouldn't? As Seleski tries to explain to Gayle that he's as human as he wants to be, a young girl yells, at another table, "Hey, it's really him!"

13

People from many tables crowd around Seleski and Gayle's table, seeking autographs, asking questions, gawking, offering congratulations. Seleski is a local celebrity/hero. Seleski looks uncomfortable. Gayle merely sits politely.

Moments later, they drive away in Seleski's car. He apologizes. Gayle says she isn't hungry anyway. Seleski says neither am I. Ever.

Seleski pulls over. His own words have given him pause. What is he doing courting her? He's not even human, really. He apologizes for troubling her, and... Gayle interrupts him, saying that she understood that he's as human as he wants to be. Right?

They kiss.

The next day, at the Edge, Clarkson enters Seleski's office. The shades are drawn but we can see from the light leaking in that it is a sunny day outside. Seleski is hovering several feet above the floor. Various objects in the room are orbiting around him. He is generating a beam of light with his left hand and "rolling it around" with the fingers of his right hand -- playing with it, scattering it into smaller beams, breaking it

14

into rainbows -- like a child playing with water streaming from a hose. He's looking at what he's doing, not at Clarkson. Clarkson looks astonished. Seleski can control gravity? Seleski says this is nothing. He was really walking on air last night.

Seleski tells Clarkson that he doesn't want to work on fusion research anymore. He feels that it's more important to investigate... well, himself. He feels that he should learn more about what he can do so that he can use his abilities to help the world. Clarkson agrees -- about the importance of the research. Besides, pressure from anti-nuke groups and politicians is forcing them to put the fusion project on hold, anyway.

Clarkson tells Seleski (possibly this should be a close-up of Clarkson) that he should be very careful about "helping" the world. It's dangerous.

Outside Seleski's door, Pierce is waiting for Clarkson. "Did you see what he was doing?" She asks. Yes, says Clarkson. And it's troubling. He'll have to be closely watched from now on.

Pierce agrees, peering in through the door which is still open a crack -- but her expression should reveal fascination, incredible curiosity, and lust of a sort.

Note: Pierce is not lusting after Seleski in the usual sense. She's not that shallow. It's just that she is a scientist, after all, and he literally embodies the answers to the mysteries of the universe.

That night, at Gayle's place, Gayle is on the phone having one of those difficult "I met someone else" conversations with Harold, her previous boyfriend, while Seleski lounges in mid-air in front of the TV, watching the news. The room is mostly dark, lit only by the TV and light from other rooms. The newscast contains the usual collection of horrible stuff.

Gayle continues to argue with Harold, who isn't taking this well, bg. Meanwhile Seleski looks like he has an idea. He's looking at the rabbit ear antennae on the TV pondering. The news drones on.

Seleski generates light from his fingers which projects the same image as is on the TV onto a wall (overlapping a picture, curtain or piece of furniture, perhaps, to show that it's projected). Seleski has figured out how to receive TV signals. Seleski wants to tell Gayle his breakthrough -- and so, finally notices that she's having a hard time with this belligerent guy, Harold, who insists he's coming over to beat the new boyfriend up.

Casually, but with spectacular effects, transports Harold through the phone lines and materializes him right there in Gayle's living room, Star Trek transporter-like. Harold is, needless to say, stunned. So is Gayle. Harold is a guy who works in a gas station, and is dressed for work. He's a solid, rugged-looking, big guy.

Hovering in the air, glowing with power, looking awesome and menacing, Seleski introduces himself to Harold as Gayle's new boyfriend, the Polish Sun God.

15

Flabbergasted, confused, afraid, disoriented, Harold retreats out the door in haste.

Seleski gets normal again. Wide-eyed with shock, Gayle asks him how he did that. Seleski says it's just a matter of moving energy. He's been making an effort to perceive the world in human terms since he woke up in the hospital. How, he's learning to accept and understand his broadened senses. He can shape it, mold it, use it... move it. He can do anything, because everything is energy.

Seleski, feeling pleased with himself and flushed with victory (however small a victory) takes Gayle in his arms and asks Gayle what she was doing hanging around with a jerk like Harold. She says something to the effect that she was lonely and that he made her feel good. (I will imply that it was an earthy, satisfaction-of-human-needs relationship.)

16 Gayle looks apprehensive "Am I just energy?" she asks. Seleski says she should never be afraid of him. He loves her.

The TV is still on. More news. It catches Seleski's attention. They're talking about an overseas military operation something like the Gulf War. Gayle asks him what's wrong. He says now that he's discovered the true extent of his power he's got to plan what to do. Maybe she can help him.

The next morning, at the Edge, Gayle is at her desk, drinking her coffee and reviewing some computer printouts, beginning her day. Gayle doesn't have an office - maybe a partitioned area in a large room. Clarkson approaches, and asks her where Seleski is.

Gayle says Seleski went to the Mideast to put an end to the war there. Clarkson looks stunned.

Much later, Clarkson nervously watches (or at least listens to) CNN. He's in his office. He's doing something to betray his anxiety -- maybe biting his nails, pacing, smoking, or all of the above. The CNN reporters are reporting what would really be reported -- at first, only that there is a strange silence from military spokesmen...

Later, more pacing, more cigarette butts, more empty coffee cups, and vague reports of huge explosions and heavy fighting from inside the occupied territory -- but against whom?

17 ~~Later,~~ ^{There is} speculation that the invaders fought among themselves, or perhaps blew up their own munitions. Some observers report signs of troop withdrawals from the occupied territory. Others call it "flight in terror" from the occupied territory.

Suddenly, Seleski enters. Seleski says that when he got home Gayle told him that Clarkson wanted to see him right away. Clarkson is shocked.

Clarkson expresses great concern over what Seleski has done. Seleski doesn't realize what he's getting into. Seleski replies that he'll be careful -- but he's doing what he feels he must.

17 Later, at home, Gayle takes Seleski's jacket. She says "you must be tired." No. He isn't. Ever. He suggests they go out and celebrate. She can teach him how to dance.

At a bar/dance club, where Gayle and Seleski are among the oldest patrons, a young guy, Ed, angrily strides toward Seleski who's trying to dance. Ed's date is trying to hold him back. Ed is not a particularly muscular or tough type. He might even be overweight.

Ed recognizes Seleski as the "Fireproof Man." He angrily demands to know why Seleski didn't save his brother's baby, who died in a fire only a few days ago. Seleski says he didn't know about it...

Ed is irrationally angry and probably drunk. He lunges at Seleski. Whose babies are dying tonight while you're out partying? He screams.

18 Seleski, a little angry himself, does his Polish Sun God routine and levitates Ed. Everyone reacts with shock, fear including Ed. Seleski is saying that he saved more lives today than Ed can imagine.

Seleski and Gayle leave. Gayle asks if Seleski is going to let Ed down. Seleski says once they're away. He'll settle to the ground.

At home, Gayle is cuddled up to Seleski on the couch. He looks preoccupied. She is saying she'd rather be home alone with him anyway. He says nothing.

Gayle, still cuddled, but looking worried, says she sometimes feels he's growing distant. That gets his attention. He says he's sorry... it's just that what Ed said got to him a little. He'll be okay.

Later, about 4:30 A.M., Gayle wakes up still on the couch, still dressed, and notices sleepily that Seleski's gone.

Gayle turns on the television. On CNN, a newscaster is talking about the abrupt end of the Gulf War -- still unexplained, though wild rumors abound. But a new story is breaking -- a hostage drama is unfolding in Queens, New York, where CNN reporter Kathryn Lord is on the scene.

19 Show the TV screen. Lord is explaining that a gunman is holding a dozen hostages inside a Wendy's restaurant. He has already killed three people. The restaurant is visible a respectable distance behind her. She explains that the hostages have been forced to lie down behind the counter, where the gun man is also crouching -- so, from the outside, the place looks empty, except for bodies on the floor. Some of the windows are smashed. The place is surrounded by police, SWAT teams

19 and rescue vehicles. I see this as out in Queens Village -- very suburban, lots of open area around the place.

Suddenly, there is a commotion. People are pointing above the restaurant. Seleski is floating down from above.

4 The TV cameras focus in on Seleski as he descends. Lord speculates -- is he being lowered from a 'copter... or a blimp. Is he a policeman?

There is a flash of light almost obliterating the TV picture.

The cameras zoom in, giving a grainy, closer view. The entire roof of the Wendy's is gone -- disintegrated. Seleski is seen pulling the gun away from the perpetrator, who was startled/half-blinded by the flash of the roof being disintegrated.

Still on TV, we see the SWAT guys rush in. They grab the perp. Seleski soars into the air.

Lord does the predictable reporter's noncommittal amazement.

20 Seleski comes in through the front door, startling Gayle. He's apologizing for not leaving a note. He tells her that he went on a few "errands." Then that hostage thing came up... (he can hear TV and radio, of course).

21 The next day, in his office, Clarkson and Pierce confer. Clarkson is visibly shaken. Pierce is reading a paper, one of many in evidence with headlines about "Doctor Solar." It seems that last night Seleski destroyed chemical weapons plants in Libya, detoxified and sealed more than a dozen defective nuclear plants in the Soviet Union and somehow eradicated an oil spill off the California coast. Clarkson is explaining that one of the attending Doctors at the hospital has spilled his guts to the press and hundreds of people have come forward with evidence. It's all over the news. The phones at the Edge haven't stopped ringing. All over the world people are now aware that a superman exists.

Where is Seleski now? Pierce wants to know. Clarkson says he asked if he could use the containment for his experiments -- said he needed the room. He spent the day changing it around to suit himself. Seleski and Gayle left a short time ago.

Seleski and Gayle arrive home at Gayle's house in his car only to find a large crowd waiting.

21 As they get out of their car, they are mobbed. There are several TV crews -- one of which pushes through the crowd which immediately engulfs Seleski and Gayle. Seleski is asked if he did the things they claim, how, who he is, etc. People shout demands, questions, even accusations. Gayle, meanwhile, is being virtually crushed. Seleski is telling people to stay back. Fat chance.

Seleski picks Gayle up and carries her into the air. The crowd gasps.

21

Seleski carries Gayle high into the air and away from the scene. He'll take her to her cousin's house tonight. She's very upset/frightened by all this.

The next day, in the containment, Seleski experiments with his powers. Big effect panel. He's probing secrets of the universe. In the bg, Gayle enters.

Seleski warmly greets Gayle. He's glad to see she made it to work today (from her cousin's place). She's shaken, disturbed. He tells her he rid New Jersey of a number of toxic waste sites last night. She says she heard.

He asks what's wrong. She says that this is getting to her. Her home has been ransacked. Even her cousin treated her strangely. On her way in, people begged her to bring Seleski notes. Newsmen wanted to interview her. She didn't sign up for this. He doesn't understand.

7 She tells him she loves him -- the "real" him. She doesn't know or understand what he is becoming. Seleski says he can show her reality as he sees it. Then she'll understand.

22

Seleski sells hard. He wants Gayle to know the joy of his experience, to be in love with him on all levels of being. Gayle declines. This is more than she can take. In the close foreground, we can see Pierce, unseen by Seleski and Gayle.

Gayle leaves right past Pierce.

Pierce approaches Seleski, who looks upset, disappointed. She asks if he can really show someone else the secrets of the universe.

Challenged, in a mood to show off, and a little miffed with Gayle, Seleski says yes. Does Pierce want to go for a ride? Yes, she does.

Seleski merges her and him into a sphere of energy (or somesuch).

23

Big effect page. We reveal the secrets of existence.

Note: This we may need to discuss.

It's over. Pierce and Seleski end up standing where they were when the journey started.

Pierce is awestruck. She feels naked, exposed, intimately handled. Seleski feels foolish.

Seleski leaves, flying. Pierce stands there, still dumbfounded.

24

Note: By flying, I mean traveling through the air, probably in an upright, relaxed pose, not a comic book "diving" pose. But you probably knew that.

24 Seleski sits alone on a hilltop.

With a wave of his hand, Seleski molds some earth into a crude figure...

... and speaks again to "Mrs. Lumpfluff" -- no, to Gayle. He tells "her" his conflict -- the same one he's had all his life: live his life in this world, or seek upon worlds beyond. Ironically, his attaining access to worlds beyond (in the accident) he also acquired a thirst for life in this one. It is clear that he cannot be both god and man. He must choose.

Meanwhile, Pierce walks zombie-like, still not fully recovered from her experience, into Clarkson's office, where she has been summoned. Clarkson is there with several senior government officials. Clarkson asks where she's been. She says something cryptic.

One of the government types continues explaining that after reviewing the data presented, authorities on the highest levels have decided that Seleski is a threat that must be eliminated. Clarkson asks if they mean to kill him.

25 They say yes. Clarkson, very upset, argues. Pierce interrupts. She coldly says that he must be killed. And she knows how. He showed her what she needs to know.

Days later, Gayle is in a small motel room, writing a letter. She is looking up to watch as, on TV, a reporter talks about the fact that Doctor Solar hasn't been seen for days -- and a promo promises a special on religious cults springing up, deifying Solar.

Gayle breaks down and begins to cry. The phone rings.

It's Seleski. He needs to talk to her. He tracked her down by dunning her mother, to whom she's been writing. The world he discovered with her means more to him than anything. He wants to see her. She enthusiastically says yes.

Seleski, who's at a phone booth at Harold's gas station, says he'll be there soon, the old fashioned way -- on foot.

Seleski thanks Harold for lending him a quarter. Harold says it's the least he could do for a Polish Sun God. He adds "be good to her."

26 Walking happily along, Seleski arrives at the oddly deserted street on which Gayle's motel sits. He doesn't really notice.

Suddenly, helicopters swoop in to the attack. Troops charge out of hiding. Even an armored attack vehicle appears, bursting out of the back of a parked semi. Seleski is beset by a hail of ordnance.

Seleski fights back, as gently as possible, trying not to injure anyone.

Meanwhile in a command center far away, Pierce, military officers and a couple of the government officials we saw before listen to reports.

Back at the battle, as Seleski is crackling with energy, tapping his power, soldiers aim a device reminiscent of the accelerators we saw on the fusion reactor at the start.

27 They fire.

Seleski is hit. His energy starts to drain away.

Seleski crumbles. Where is the power going? A huge flare, again, like the one from the containment at the beginning, erupts skyward from the vehicle housing the accelerator-type device.

Seleski writhes.

Back at command center, a soldier with headphones on relays the news that it's working. Pierce says it's all a matter of moving energy.

Clarkson, who has been quietly brooding in a corner says, can't we let him live? Pierce says no. The officers agree.

28 Seleski lies still.

The headphone soldier reports that Seleski appears to be dead. The flare has faded to almost nil. Instruments say Seleski has no more energy.

Pierce says do not trust the instruments. Keep attacking.

Seleski lies still.

Clarkson pleads, "that's enough." Pierce says no.

The instruments say he's dead. Over Pierce's objections and in answer to Clarkson's pleading, they turn the device off.

Seleski lies still. Soldiers approach cautiously.

Suddenly, Seleski's battered body floats into the air, limply.

In a hail of bullets, the ravaged Seleski soars away.

Back in the command center, "headphones" reports. Clarkson smiles. Pierce screams. Clarkson knew Seleski could alter instrument readings! He did this on purpose.

29 Seleski, grievously injured, flies to the Edge.

29

Inside, with his last strength he smashes open cannisters containing plutonium, radium, whatever.

He feeds on the radiation.

Later at the Edge, technicians clean up the mess. Pierce, still angry with Clarkson berates him. This is his fault.

Clarkson fires back that Pierce had a thing for Seleski, that her hostility is some kind of jealousy/revenge trip. Pierce is stunned. It's not true. She legitimately believes that Seleski is the end of the world. She says this with sincerity. She honestly thinks Clarkson has doomed them.

30

A report comes in. A nuke plant nearby has been sucked dry of energy. Clarkson and Pierce exchange ominous looks.

Re-powered, travelling through wormholes of his own devising, Seleski journeys to Alpha Centauri.

Spectacularly, Seleski drains the star of energy...

... leaving a cold black husk. He turns homeward.

Gayle has been escorted to a government residence. She is held there under guard "for her own protection."

Suddenly, there is a commotion outside. Guards' weapons and vehicles are disintegrated by Seleski in his Polish Sun God look, but more powerful-looking than ever before. They flee.

31

Seleski enters in human form. Gayle is glad to see him, but frightened by this whole thing.

Seleski explains that he obviously has gone too far to turn back now. His only choice is to be what he is. But, he's come to ask Gayle to come away with him. He's acquired so much power now that they couldn't possibly harm him. They'll be able to travel the world and live, at least some kind of life together, safe under his, well... nuclear umbrella.

Gayle loves him desperately. But does he really think they'll ever have peace anywhere? She would only be his downfall, somehow, sometime, someplace -- his Achilles heel.

Seleski is distraught. She'll be a prisoner if she doesn't come with him. They'll try to use her against him anyway. He pleads.

32

She wavers. They embrace.

Seleski notices her rad badge on her jacket, draped over a chair nearby. It's well into toxic/fatal ranges. He's leaking rads. Killing her.

32

He shuts down. Hard.

Too much power. he can't control it. Too much density.

His gravity well rips her to atoms.

Then, spectacularly, he destroys the world. (This is the panel which will be the poster shot on the backs of the pages.)

Then, there is silence and emptiness.

The end.