



Superman: Birthright

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The entire modern day retelling of Superman — from his early days in Smallville with Lana Lang and Lex Luthor, to his first meeting with Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen and Perry White in Metropolis — is recounted in this lavish hardcover collection by writer Mark Waid and artists Leinil Francis Yu and Gerry Alanguilan! SUPERMAN: BIRTHRIGHT collects the best-selling, critically acclaimed 12-issue maxiseries of the same name and features an introduction by Smallville television producers Al Gough and Miles Millar, plus a sketchbook section showcasing Yu's development work in addition to notes by Waid. Witness the making of a legend, as Clark Kent learns the tough lessons needed to become the World's Greatest Hero! Also watch as Lex Luthor comes to Smallville, befriending Clark. But it's a relationship that may ultimately spell disaster for Metropolis and the Man of Steel.

Superman: Birthright Details

Date : Published October 2005 by DC Comics (first published September 2003)

ISBN : 9781401202521

Author : Mark Waid , Alfred Gough (Introduction) , Miles Millar (Introduction) , Dave McCaig (Colourist) , Gerry Alanguilan (Inker) , Leinil Francis Yu (Penciller)

Format : Paperback 287 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Comics, Graphic Novels, Dc Comics, Superman, Superheroes, Comic Book

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From Reader Review *Superman: Birthright* for online ebook

Brad says

There is a little over a decade of comic book writing I need to catch up on. I loved comics and collected religiously from my early teens to my mid-twenties, then I drifted away from comics for a long time. Only now, now that my kids are discovering comics, have I found my way back to this world I love so deeply, and now that I am back in comic book land, I get to come to fantastic works I missed out on the first time around. Enter *Superman: Birthright*.

With the possible exceptions of Batman, Spider-Man and the Hulk, Superman has the most well known origin story. Even those who've never read a comic or seen a superhero movie are likely to know the origin of Superman. They know he is the last son of Krypton (even if they've never heard of Jor-el). They know he was adopted by a childless farming couple in the American prairies (even if they don't know it's in Smallville, Iowa). They know that he goes to the big city and hides his alien identity behind a pair of glasses and a bumbling demeanour (even if they don't know he is a journalist named Clark Kent and that the city is Metropolis). They know he is the most powerful being on Earth.

We all know these things because it has been told and retold countless times, in comics, in cartoons, in multiple movies, in multiple television shows, in dime-store novels; we know these things because they have become the target of satire or criticism or celebration in sit-coms, comedies, plays, academic theses and even literary works.

So with that level of cultural saturation -- a saturation that goes well beyond the comic nerd sphere of influence -- how in the Multiverse can anything new be brought to the generative myth of Superman? Much to my surprise, very easily and with excellence.

The key is in the recognition, which has since become an integral part of Superman's existence, that no one on Earth would be too pleased with a sublimely powerful, indestructible alien wandering around doing good deeds. Superman / Clark Kent / Kal-el is simply not welcome around these parts. No matter how much good he does, he can be either a potential enemy to us all or an unwelcome *deus ex machina* who can only make our decisions -- even our destructive decisions -- meaningless because he has the potential to correct them and save us, against our will, from ourselves.

It seems like a small thing, perhaps, but it is far removed from the dazzling Superman, the perfectly good and beloved Superman, the completely accepted Superman, who existed from his creation to the Christopher Reeve films and beyond. He was the Superman that only the "bad guys" would fear because if you were a good guy you'd have nothing to fear from the Last Son of Krypton. But that's not the world we live in now. We live in a world of chronic xenophobia, paranoia and insecurity, and there is nothing secure about a super-alien who can do damn near anything.

In *Birthright*, Mark Waid recognizes the truth about Superman's near omnipotence, and he expresses it through the two most important human men in Superman's life: Pa Kent and Lex Luthor. The former tries to warn Superman of humanity's fears and convince his son to stay hidden and avoid conflict. The latter embodies humanity's paranoia, only ramped up to the levels that only a mad ultra-genius could attain, putting Luthor in a position to make a power grab using the best possible tool -- Superman himself.

Details of Luthor's power grab aside, Pa winds up being correct, and the world is not happy about the rise of

Superman, even less so when Lex Luthor's plans come to fruition, and nothing Superman does to thwart Luthor's plans for domination can overcome the damage done to his own trustworthiness at the hands of his greatest enemy (a man/boy with whom Clark Kent was once a friend).

It's powerful, it's refreshing, and it leads seamlessly into this summer's newest expression of the Superman origin in the *Man of Steel*. We've heard Kevin Costner's Pa telling Clark that maybe he should have let others die to remain hidden. Some have been appalled by that idea, but the idea was Waid's and for a legion of comic book fans who prefer to have their superheroes in a world like our own, it is an embracing of verisimilitude that will make Superman relevant once again. And no matter how good the movie is, *Birthright* already exists and has done the job for nerds everywhere.

Yep ... we'll always have *Birthright*, but wouldn't it be wonderful if *Man of Steel* was excellent too?.

Richard says

Mark Waid's classic graphic novel was an attempt to update Superman's origin for a modern audience, and it's considered one of the best Superman stories and the definitive origin tale. It was even used as inspiration for Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* movie. And reading it, you can totally see the influences. But I wasn't as smitten with this book as many others were. I found it a bit plodding and at times, actually boring, which is a real crime for a superhero book. I really disliked the art as well, not only ugly in its detailing and awkward in its rendering of action, but also failing to provide the sort of iconic imagery that one would imagine would fill a story about the Man of Tomorrow coming to Metropolis. But what I did like was some of the character work on Lex Luthor, which details some of his origin as well, and showed what makes him such a great villain in a super-powered world. And the climactic moments in the last act were fairly well done. But overall, I expected much more! But why they hired this artist to work on a Superman book, I'll never understand...

Anne says

This was what I was hoping for from *Superman for All Seasons*, but didn't quite get. One reason *Birthright* was such a good retelling of Superman's origin, was that it made his story much more modern and relevant. And it did this without changing the core of his *story* or *personality*.

Johnathan and Martha Kent helping Clark come up with his *disguise* was definitely one of my favorite parts of this book! Also, you can really see why Clark falls so hard for Lois in this one. Awwww! I'm such a sucker for stuff like that!

Sean Gibson says

I think it's safe to say that Mark Waid loves Superman like I love my children. And, I REALLY love my children. So, there's that.

Look, I'm a Marvel zombie. As a general rule, I'll take a mediocre Spider-Man book over a good Green Lantern book any day. To trot out a hoary old chestnut that's not necessarily true anymore, Marvel heroes are human, fallible, and relatable, whereas their DC counterparts are godlike, perfect, and aloof. They're just

more interesting.

But, here comes Waid, his writing cape flapping in the breeze (it's actually pretty dangerous to wear a cape whilst writing, as they tend to snag on one's chair, and you often trip over them when getting up to get some coffee...not that I know anything about wearing a cape whilst writing...ahem), giving us a Superman with heart, humor, and *gasp* hipness (well, square hipness). Sure, he's just as indestructible as ever, physically speaking (notwithstanding that kryptonite is to Superman as daycare germs are to my kiddos), but this is an emotionally vulnerable Clark Kent, a man trying to find his place in the world, navigate a complicated relationship with Pa Kent, and reconcile the fact that, for all of his powers, he just couldn't save Lex Luthor from going down a very bad path.

A few months ago, I attended a comic con* at which Waid was the Guest of Honor (not sure if we capitalize that sort of accolade, but it feels right, so let's go with it), and during a panel celebrating Waid's career, he was asked a question about Superman. And, just like I do on occasion when talking about my kids (because I'm tough), Waid literally broke down into tears talking about how Superman was always there for him through a rough childhood, even going so far as to cite a ridiculous story from the early 60s in which the IRS tries to nail Superman for unpaid taxes for all of the miraculous treasures he has recovered, coal he has turned into diamonds, etc. (side note: I'd like to be reincarnated as a comic writer in the era where one could basically do the gluteal equivalent of kegels while sitting on a typewriter and produce a story someone would publish). The upshot of that ridiculous yet ridiculously touching anecdote was that, at story's end, the moronic IRS guy's boss pointed out that Superman doesn't owe anything because he could make massive deductions by claiming everyone in the U.S. as a dependent because, well, we ALL depend on Superman...just like Waid did as a child.

I'm never going to feel THAT strongly about the Man of Steel (he's not going to supplant Spidey in my heart anytime soon), but after reading *Birthright*, I get it. I get why Superman was a life raft for Waid to cling to as a kid. I get how the combination of square-jawed heroism and almost pathological need to engage in do-goodery is appealing to a kid in search of something to believe in. I get how one can get chills just from seeing Big Blue streaking through the sky, and how one might take comfort in knowing that he's out there, always out there, watching over us all, ready to leap into the fray at the first sign of trouble.

And, now I want to read more Superman stories—a compulsion I've never really experienced before. (Suggestions welcome and appreciated, incidentally, Supes fans.) So, well played, Waid.

You know, it occurs to me that I've never seen Mark Waid and Superman in the room at the same time. Just sayin'...

4.5 Stars

**At that same con, I also discovered *The Perhapanauts*, which has proven to be a highly entertaining series. Worth checking out if you're in the mood for something different.*

Sam Quixote says

Wow, where do I start? The short review of this book is: *Birthright* is the ONLY Superman origin book you need to read, it's the book Mark Waid was born to write, and it is a true literary masterpiece.

That's the short version. The longer version that will now follow will read like a firebrand preacher babbling on about the Saviour, etc. because reading this book and being an atheist, I had the same reaction and feelings that I imagine religious people do when they hear stories about Jesus or whoever their deity of choice is - that uplifting inspiration that inexplicably chokes you up and makes your heart beat stronger. Yeah, it's Superman I'm talking about here guys, which might make some of you roll your eyes but he's more real to me than any world religious figure.

I don't want to scare any readers off though - if you're not a devoted Superman fan, this book is hugely accessible and you're going to have no trouble reading it. Hell, it's basically written so that anyone wanting to read a Superman book can pick it up without knowing a damn thing about the guy and still getting a lot out of it! But if you love Superman - LOVE Superman - then this book will take pride of place on your bookshelves, to be taken down many times over the years and read again and again.

Basically this is the Superman story we all know - the exodus from Krypton, landing in Kansas where the alien baby is adopted by childless farming couple Jonathan and Martha Kent, becoming Clark, realising his powers, moving to Metropolis, and becoming Superman. It's the classic origin - but it goes deeper than that. Waid doesn't simply go through the familiar motions with this character but explains WHY Kal/Clark becomes Superman.

If you're reading this after watching Man of Steel, there's a lot here that'll seem familiar to you - Jonathan telling Clark to hide his powers, that he'll scare people if they know who he really is. There's even some lines here that were used in the film like "you're the answer to 'are we alone in the universe?'". However, unlike Man of Steel, Superman isn't a murderous lunatic flinging his enemies into crowded city blocks with no thought to human life.

Clark leaves high school and goes travelling from then on, spending the next few years traversing the globe, slowly earning credits for his degree in journalism while filing reports wherever he goes. He winds up in an African country where he's reporting on a tribe that is looking for equal representation in the government run by another tribe, and without getting into particulars, learns why he must put his all of his natural abilities to use, that he can no longer hide, and that one man can make a difference - all this from an ordinary man fighting an insurmountable system. It's a breathtaking and emotional opening to the book that's perfectly suited to the story.

From there we see the persona of Clark being developed to hide Kal's true identity as Superman, we see a beautiful representation of Clark and Jonathan's relationship in a highly charged emotional scene, Lois is superbly realised and has some fantastic zingers, Superman's introduction in Metropolis is handled perfectly while Lex Luthor also takes a turn in the spotlight as Waid shows us why Lex became the way he did. He also writes the tragic friendship between Clark and Lex brilliantly. Great Caesar's Ghost, there's a lot to talk about! So I'll stop there because otherwise this'll go on forever, and just say this:

Reading Superman: Birthright doesn't just familiarise you with the talking points of Superman's origins - Waid writes the character in such a way that you understand him totally. You know why he thinks the way he does, you know why he must be Superman, why he does what he does. It's an origin story that goes beyond treading familiar territory and revitalises the character for a new generation while paying homage to the many creators, writers and artists that worked on the character, going right back to the teenagers who created the Man of Tomorrow, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. This is the old Superman and the new Superman in one flawless representation.

Leinil Yu's art is great as always, Waid's writing is perfect - there's no other word for it, he's leaving

nothing in the tank on this one; Birthright, like I said at the start, is a masterpiece. It's a truly brilliant comic with no mis-steps, a real emotional core, and a deep and profound understanding and respect of the character that is rarely seen with Superman.

You'll believe a man can fly - I sure do.

Bryan Nyaude says

I Still don't get how metropolis cant tell that Clark Kent is Superman. I mean, he is not even wearing a mask or something, just a pair of glasses and suits. Still a great read, nonetheless.

Cheese says

Wow, ANOTHER Superman origin story, because we really need one of these don't we.

I just don't get it. Superman's origin is boring AF. Why keep reimagining it, when instead like All-Star superman the writer could expand on his current universe. Yes we fucking know he's from a planet called Krypton that blew up. There are starving children in undeveloped countries that probably know that.

Why keep boring us with this same material. Here is a list of just some of the retellings of supermans' origin with twists and turns.

Superman Earth one
Superman: Secret Origin
Superman for all seasons
Superman Red son
The Man of Steel
Superman Secret Identity
Superman Action Comics - Men Of steel
Action Comics - New 52
Superman Birthright
Superman: Last Son of Krypton

Is there anything better than All-Star superman? I enjoyed Superman unchained, but even that wasn't as good.

Paz R.M. says

4.5 Stars

Let it be known that this was the book that made me a Superman fan.

This modern retelling of Superman's origin story is **everything** I never knew I wanted.

Granted, this is my second time reading a Superman solo book, so maybe I'll find better stories (~~looking at you All Star. The hype is real.~~) But the fact is, I connected to this story, I smiled, laughed, I even got emotional. **Mark Waid takes this invulnerable character and humanizes it in ways I wasn't expecting.** At the end, this book is the bittersweet story of a young man who loves this world, but who doesn't belong here. Of a man longing for answers and never quite getting them, but when Clark sees those images of his people wearing **the** Symbol, he knows what's missing in his life, is the hope that they all brought, **is the hope that he wishes to carry on here**, because, as a child of Krypton and Earth, that's his mission, his birthright.

Damn did I love this book. The beginning in Krypton, even though is well known, it is still heartbreaking, but how *Waid* connects both the opening and the ending of this book is beautiful. **The first time that we see Clark we're immediately seeing not only the joy and the inspiration he seeks to give everyone he cares about, but his doubts and insecurities too.** In the midst of Clark's job, trying to protect, write and learn from Mr. Asuru, a symbol of revolution, protection and equality in Ghana, there are beautiful illustrations of **Clark being free.** Of Clark, the young man, smiling while flying, laughing while playing with lions and thoughtful while learning about Krypton. It is a great introduction to his characters and it gives a great reason of why he isn't Superman yet.

Throughout the book, we see him finding his own identity, embracing both Kryptonian legacy, but also, always proud of being a child of Smallville, honoring both Jonathan and Martha Kent. And let me tell you, the relationship between that family makes me so damn happy and emotional. What a wonderful dynamic to keep Clark human, in the moments where he's lost or defeated he has his parents there. Also, what a perfect, positive and intimate way to build both Clark's identity, Superman, and his Clark Kent -Daily Planet employee- persona.

Of course, all the classic names are in this title. Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen, Perry White and Lex Luthor. **What's new and interesting is Lex's introduction to the story,** how he met Clark for the first time and their relationship, their parallel and connection. It gave this book another layer of complexity. Luthor was the only person who really understood Clark, who understood his pain of not belonging, of being isolated from everyone else. **A pain that's always there, Clark is always the outsider, just as Luthor still is.** Great stuff, really.

I don't know if I can keep writing about this book because I plainly loved it. And I don't have the proper words to explain why I loved it so much. Why I connected, why I'm so glad I finally gave this character a chance. It is never too late to appreciate what Superman means. If you haven't read much of this character, I wholeheartedly recommend this title.

Also, can I say how **beautiful** it was reading this book while listening to the *Man of Steel* soundtrack? Best thing ever.

Oh man, I just want to go back in time and punch me in the face anytime I thought or said that Superman was boring. **READ A FUCKING COMIC BOOK.** I would like to yell. Oh well, I'm doing it now and I still have five more Superman titles waiting on my bookshelf and I can't wait to dive into more.

I you plan to read this, here I'm hoping you can appreciate Clark and his journey as much as I did.

Terence says

"Here it is, the support group for people who hate fictional characters."

I walk in, sit down, and patiently wait my turn.

This is your first time here, right? Why don't you stand up and introduce yourself.

"Hi I'm Terence and I hate a fictional character."

Hi Terence the group says in unison.

"Hi, so the fictional character I hate is Superman."

Gasps, shocked faces, and the rustling sound of people sucking air sharply through their teeth is all I hear.

"Oh come on I can't be the only one. I mean yes you feel for old Kal-El when his parents send him away to save his life as a baby, but after that it's all downhill with Mr. Perfect."

The group stands up and file out of the room as though I said the place was rigged to blow.

"I mean come on, his disguise is glasses and a slumped posture. For all the technology available in the comics, facial recognition software apparently isn't one of them."

Superman: Birthright was touted to me as the best of the best Superman comics. Unfortunately I am predisposed to ~~highly disliking~~ hating Superman. I agreed to give it a try and I found what I always find when I experience Superman, I didn't like it...at all. Superman as a character has always been disinteresting to me because he's practically perfect. It grates at me deep within my soul and I can't ignore my frustration. For me the only time I want to read about Superman is when he's fighting Doomsday or Darkseid so that Mr. Perfect can have a real challenge.

Jonathan says

Definitely my new favorite Supe's origin (ever-so slightly ahead of Superman: Earth One, Vol. 1).

So here's the rundown. Luthor knows more about Superman's origins than he does.

And he proceeds to go out of his way to use all of this knowledge against Superman. It's actually quite genius. But just when everyone thinks Superman is going to throw in the towel?

Of course he has a little help from his greatest friend/admirer.

My favorite part was probably Perry's list of reasons to keep or fire Lois.

Well done, Mr. Waid. Well done.

David Schaafsma says

A superman origin story, and a very good one, fleshing out what you already knew, maybe, with some interesting twists, such as that Lex Luthor at one point knows more about Superman than Clark himself does, using this info against him in an epic Metropolis take-over attempt. It actually early on has a scene in Africa, with some social justice background for Superman's future work as journalist and superhero. We get to see background on how Luthor got to be the way he is, too; they were once sorta friends, then the arrogant super tech/science Lex turns. . . even more arrogant and power-hungry and vindictive against Supes.

It's sort of--just a little--like the Batman-Joker story in that both are remarkable, talented, isolated, and they are the way they are because of their upbringing. One turns dark, another light. We get to establish a solid Lois relationship which is always pleasant. Many of the other characters are sort of annoying: Perry, Mom and Dad Kent, the whole office, basically.

But I think it's really good, a really well written story from Waid and I thought the art was great. Some of the full pages are especially and dramatically impressive. If you want to read one Superman comic, this has got to be one of the best.

Jonathan Terrington says

Let me clear all the baggage out of the way in one bold claim: this is the best Superman story I have ever read, period. End of story. Sure, Geoff Johns wrote a pretty solid reimagining of Superman with *Superman: Secret Origin* and I've been told the Grant Morrison *Action Comics, Vol. 1: Superman and the Men of Steel* is meant to be grand but I don't care, I've encountered Mark Waid's vision and it is amazing.

For those who are new or have no clue in regard to the world of graphic novels, comic books and basic drawn superhero lore let me explain one quick thing. *Superman: Birthright* was part of the inspiration behind the recent *Man of Steel* movie. At least, most of the good ideas in that film were based on some of the breathtaking imagery and storytelling in this work of fiction.

To put it simply this is a fantastically amazing artwork. Not only are the pencilling and the inking jobs top class, but the plotting and story itself are so composed. There is a brilliant balance between the sheer joy of Clark Kent existing as Superman and Clark Kent; a wonderful retelling of the Superman legend; and also a further balance between subtlety, dialogue and melodrama. In short it is a work of brilliance.

WHY YOU SHOULD READ SUPERMAN BIRTHRIGHT

MARK WAID'S REVIEW OF MAN OF STEEL

In short, if you are any kind of a fan of Superman, do yourself a favour and get yourself a copy of this. Better yet, do what I did and buy it. It should only be around 20 dollars or so if you go to right place and in my view it was 20 dollars well spent.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

There were some creative changes I dug - like Clark Kent being an established reporter long before Superman came into Metropolis and the journalist donned his hat at the daily planet. This makes more sense of him passing his dual personas off without people catching on. His parents help him make the costume, even with a joke about the glasses not fooling anyone.

I like the connection with both parents living and the e-mails back and forth through the crisis's in The Daily Planet. After the intro of the book where Clark as a journalist finds other heroes in human form in Africa, he comes home for awhile to face some issues with his parents. It gave credibility to the story and their relationship.

I liked the prominent Daily Planet setting, Lois's character, Jimmy, Perry White. I enjoyed Lex was focused on quite a bit but I found a lot of that part rushed. I do like how they made Superman into a 'powerful Superman version' - some wimp him down a bit.

I disliked him not knowing his origins, no fortress, and the rushed feel with the main story-line. It makes sense the city wouldn't trust him fully at first, but the story started losing me a bit after awhile. I also didn't like the whole hack into Krypton thing, just felt weird for me. Lex felt a little hokey.

The art was great, I liked so much focus on heat vision. They captured most of what makes Superman Superman and Clark Clark. Anyone catch the little Batman figurine in one panel when he's in his room? Awesome. There's a little humor too - love the wink he gives Lois as a nod from the movies when they meet, and the Africa selfies e-mailed home to mom.

It's always interesting to see different interpretations of Superman's beginnings - this one took some risks, working with some of them but not pleasing me with others.

Rory Wilding says

After my disappointment with *Superman: Earth One, Volume One*, I felt the need to revisit other titles featuring the Man of Steel and what better way than to reread *Superman: Birthright* by Mark Waid and Leinil Francis Yu. I have previously discussed in a number of reviews about creators' fascination at reinterpreting Superman's origin and despite terrific revamps by Mark Millar and Geoff Johns, Mark Waid – who has written for many superheroes for DC and Marvel – shows he has the biggest fanboy hard-on towards the OG American superhero.

Showcasing his origin and updating him for the 21st century, Clark Kent decides to do something useful with his powers, having been inspired by the heroism within a West African conflict. Arriving into Metropolis as a mild-mannered reporter for the Daily Planet, Clark begins his career as a superhero as he must learn tough lessons including his friend-turned-enemy Lex Luthor and his alien heritage.

There are many Superman comics that can apply to newcomers, however *Birthright* feels like a definitive introduction for anyone who would like to start reading the Man of Steel. As a retelling of the origin, it certainly ticks the boxes, such as the destruction of Krypton, Clark's upbringing in Smallville, his arrival as both journalist and superhero, as well as the introduction of his arch-nemesis Lex Luthor. However in twelve issues, Waid takes the classic tropes of what is essentially an old-fashioned character and rejiggers them in a way that would fit nicely in the context of our current century such as Metropolis being monitored by surveillance drones, evoking our post-9/11 fears of terrorism.

As much as Superman has always fought for truth, justice and the American way, Waid establishes him as a citizen of the world with West Africa being a key part into why Clark would want to save people, as well as realising that he cannot save everyone. Amidst the super-heroics and science-fiction, Waid's greatest strength as a writer is the organic characterisation throughout, whether it is Jonathan Kent's fatherly fear of his alien son being exposed or Clark's rocky childhood friendship with Luthor which perhaps was the cause for the latter's villainy.

Known for his art style that is described as "Dynamic Pseudo-Realism", Leinil Francis Yu is not an obvious artist to draw Superman and yet he brings a modernity to the character and his supporting cast. With Yu primarily drawing in wide panels, you get the sense of cinematic scope from Superman interacting with the streets of Metropolis to the other-worldly technology of Krypton.

Much to Waid's displeasure towards *Man of Steel*, Zack Snyder's film (and no doubt its upcoming sequel) was influenced by *Birthright* which in its twelve-issue narrative tells a definitive version of Superman's origin with such warmth and humanity.

Brian says

This got 5 stars from me because I generally just don't care about Superman. Thus, like with the novel by Tom DeHaan, "It's Superman!" when a Superman story can interest me to a major degree, it's impressive. Of course, it's hard to tell that from what I've reviewed, but to be fair, All-Star Superman is also widely regarded as a masterpiece of Superman stories.

Birthright does a new origin story and yet isn't boring. The updated Daily Planet, the Smallville-esque way

of incorporating Lex into Clark's hometown (which has happened before, but not to as strong effect), and especially the way his "disguise" works are all finely honed here. Prior to this, I don't think anyone's been so forthright about WHY Clark's disguise works. It's not just glasses (though as a pop culture joke, it won't go away), it's tinted lenses, the way he carries himself, a higher voice, trying to purposefully blend in, never wearing t-shirts, etc. It's a really thoughtful look at what was (probably back when he was created) not a well-thought out disguise.

The one thing I wavered on was the use of the S symbol. I'd heard about this before, how someone decided to make the S stand for something other than Superman and this is that story. Luckily, there are some interviews at the back of the book that help explain. The goal was to have Superman carry on a symbol for Krypton as he's the lone survivor. It's marking him as a Kryptonian even as he attempts to save humans. It's a legacy. I'm still not sure that really works, but I can buy it with the detailed explanation.

All in all, apart from All-Star Superman, it's hard to argue that there's a better Superman story, or at least not a better origin one out right now.
