

# FOREWORD



**B**atman has Robin, Aquaman has Aqualad, Hawkman has Hawkwoman (or Hawkgirl, as she was called in the less-politically-correct Silver Age), and for a time, our hero, J'Onn J'Onzz, the Manhunter from Mars, had Diane Meade (or "pretty patrolwoman, Diane Meade"; welcome to the Silver Age, girls).

When the police chief's daughter joined the police force, she was paired in her first case with Detective John Jones (secretly our hero, the Martian Manhunter). Despite some initial awkwardness — she smoked, which did not please Jones, whose Martian vulnerability to fire robbed him of his super-powers — Diane proved to be as smart and capable as any policeman (or should we say brawny boy in blue?), and our hero found himself as much attracted to her inner qualities as her outer beauty. (But, he mused, would she find him attractive if she knew he was really a Martian?) She returned a couple of years later and became Det. Jones' full-time

partner. They would have many adventures together, including the ones you'll read in this volume.

As already stated, these stories are from a less politically correct, or, to be blunt, more sexist, age. Despite Patrolwoman Meade's bravery, loyalty, intellect and all the other fine qualities she possesses, the writers (Jack Miller and possibly some anonymous others) often insist on reminding us that she needs a man's help. The best, or worst, example is this volume's first story, which ends with Diane fuming at Det. Jones because she finds out he's been secretly helping her all along. "You again! My one chance to solve a really big case — and you have to interfere!" And our hero winks at us readers and thinks, "Lucky for you I spent the *whole day* interfering with you, Diane." Take that, ya' dizzy dame!

When DETECTIVE COMICS' "John Jones Manhunter from Mars" back-up feature expands to 12 pages, beginning with issue #300, the threats have to become more powerful, so that it takes

twice as many pages for our hero to beat them. Diane is along for the ride in most of these stories, but what can a mere Earthling, male or female, do when faced with a would-be dictator with a magic ring, giant robot animals, or an entire army of invading Martians, all with the same super-powers as our hero? Other than getting captured by the bad guys so that J'Onn can rescue her, not much. In these more perilous times, the hero's sidekick also needs super-powers.

One solution is to make Diane super. A couple of stories toy with this idea. The first appeared in the previous *MARTIAN MANHUNTER ARCHIVES* volume, *DETECTIVE COMICS* #282's "The Girl with Martian Powers". A meteorite that conveniently falls just a few feet from Diane turns out to be made of the rare Martian element, Rhodium. As J'Onn explains, "When inhaled, Rhodium fumes are known to impart super-powers." But the whole thing is a hoax. The "meteorite", thrown near Diane by J'Onn himself, is just an ordinary boulder, covered with a luminous paint to make it look radioactive, and J'Onn secretly uses his powers to make Diane appear super. If you've read the previous volume, then you know J'Onn had his reasons for doing this. If you haven't read it, then I won't spoil it for you.

In this volume's final story, *DETECTIVE COMICS* #316's "The Bandits with Super-Powers", a real Martian meteorite gives Diane real super-powers. Both meteorites and comets have

been banes of our hero's existence. In a couple of early stories reprinted in our first volume, a comet robs J'Onn of his powers. In this volume we have two meteorite stories. The first is "The Last Days of J'Onn J'Onzz" from *DETECTIVE COMICS* #306. As J'Onn explains, "It's giving off rare solar rays, which contain the same basic elements as *fire!*" Ten issues later, another meteorite renders J'Onn powerless — this time without even a vague, pseudoscientific reason — but now there's a twist: ordinary humans gain super-powers! But remember, this is the early sixties, so our male writer cannot allow even a *super-Diane* to defeat the bad guys on her own. But what can J'Onn J'Onzz do without his Martian powers? Simple: he assumes his Earthling guise, as John Jones. Now that he's an ordinary human, he also gains super-powers. Step aside, pretty patrolwoman, super-heroing is a man's work. This is the only time Diane would actually have super-powers. There was no intention of ever making a Diane a super-heroine who could fight side-by-side with J'Onn. In fact, the sidekick problem had already been solved in a previous story.

Five issues earlier, in *DETECTIVE COMICS* #311, J'Onn J'Onzz battles "The Invaders from the Space Warp". The other-dimensional invaders can cause minor earthquakes by vibrating their bodies, and if that's not menacing enough, they're also armed with ray guns. Upon arriving on Earth, their first

act is ... to hold up a grocery store. (It's moments like this that make me think the Martian Manhunter would have been more at home in a comic called TALES TO UNDERWHELM.) An other-dimensional lawman is able to follow the criminals to Earth through the space warp before it closes, and following the lawman is a Zook, a diminutive demon with powers of his own: he can change shape and project heat and cold. You can read the story to find out how the invaders are defeated, and how J'Onn is able to return both the criminals and the lawman to their home dimension. But am I really spoiling anything when I reveal that Zook is accidentally left behind on Earth, and that J'Onn adopts him as a pet?

Editor Jack Schiff and his writers now have what they consider a worthy crimefighting companion for our hero. But don't worry, Diane Meade fans, your favorite curvaceous cop still has a role to play, even if it is, in most stories, as damsel in distress.

— Wade Greenberg  
*WADE GREENBERG is the author of several books, both true and fictional, about his favorite red planet. The latest is Martian Murderland.*