

**HUMANITY--AND SOMETHING
FAR LESS THAN HUMAN!**

THE MISSHAPEN **MONSTROSITY**
PRESSES DEEPER INTO THE SHADOWS
SURROUNDING THE SINGLE WOODEN
STRUCTURE THAT RISES FROM THE
BOG...

...AND HIS
PUZZLED
MIND
FAIRLY
CRACKLES
WITH
THOUGHT...

DARK GENESIS!

A NEW DC COMICS CONCEPT!
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THEY WILL **RETURN...**
THOSE WHO **KILLED**
ME! THEY WILL
RETURN...

...AND I
WILL BE
WAITING!



SILENTLY, THE CREATURE LURCHES FORWARD INTO A DRIVING WIND-- AND A RAIN FILLED WITH MEMORIES...

THAT HOUSE... THAT SMIRKING SHELL OF A HOUSE...

...STANDS THERE TAUNTING ME... LAUGHING...

...AS IF IT WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED HERE!



COLOR THE FIRST DAY A BRIGHT BLUE-- CRISP, SHINING-- FULL OF PROMISE AND OPEN-EYED DREAMS...

...ONLY A REFURBISHED BARN...

...BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH NOTICE OF YOUR COMING!

WELL, DOCTORS HOLLAND-- THERE IT IS...



WE UNDERSTAND, LT. CABLE-- WASHINGTON WANTS TO KEEP OUR PRESENCE HERE TOP-SECRET!

SEEMS WE'RE PRIORITY-ONE MERCHANDISE!

ALEC, PLEASE-- YOU MAKE US SOUND LIKE SOMETHING AT A SHOPPER'S SALE!

MAYBE YOU ARE, MRS. HOLLAND...



...THE WORK YOU TWO ARE DOING IN BIO-RESTORATIVE RESEARCH IS INVALUABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT!

THAT'S WHY WE'RE STASHING YOU HERE-- IN THIS SUBURB OF NOWHERE...

...TO KEEP YOU OUT OF THE HANDS OF OTHER PROSPECTIVE "SHOPPERS"!



OH, BY THE WAY--
IF YOU HEAR **TRAFFIC**,
DON'T LET IT **SPOOK**
YOU...

WOULDN'T
WANT TO
LOSE THE
"MERCHANDISE"!

ALEC,
LET'S GO
INSIDE--!

...THERE'LL
BE A
PATROL CAR
IN THE AREA
CONSTANTLY!

GLEAMING NEW DOOR HINGES WHINE OPEN
AS THE HUSBAND-WIFE RESEARCH TEAM
ENTERS THE RESURRECTED STABLE--THEIR
VOICES ECHOING HOLLOW AMONG THE
RAFTERS...



THOUGHT OF
EVERYTHING,
DIDN'T THEY? WE'VE
GOT ENOUGH EQUIP-
MENT HERE FOR A
DOZEN
DR. FRANKENSTEINS!

SILLY! I
ONLY HOPE THEY
REMEMBERED TO
STOCK A
REFRIGERATOR!

SEEMS
ALMOST A SHAME
WE'RE NOT BUILD-
ING A **MONSTER!**

...BECAUSE
RIGHT NOW,
THIS LITTLE
SCIENTIST IS
STARVING!



EVENING, A FEW DAYS LATER--AND THE PROJECT IS WELL UNDER WAY...

WELL, SWEETHEART-- WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ARE WE READY TO TRY IT?

THEORETICALLY, YES-- BUT I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO QUOTE ME!

I HATE TO BE PROVEN WRONG!



BUT IF WE'RE RIGHT, LARGER QUANTITIES OF OUR CHEMICAL WILL BE USED TO CREATE GARDENS OUT OF SWELTERING DESERTS...

...AND THAT IS DEFINITELY WORTH THE EFFORT!



WELL-- CAN I QUOTE YOU NOW?



THE COMPOUND WORKED BETTER THAN...

UH, OH-- OL' MATT CABLE AT THE DOOR!

WE'D BETTER LET HIM IN, LINDA!

KNOCK!
KNOCK!



DR. HOLLAND? MY NAME IS FERRETT!

MY ASSOCIATES AND I WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH YOU IF WE COULD...

...IN PRIVATE!



HOLD ON, FRIEND--
THERE'S SUPPOSED
TO BE A CAR
PATROLLING THIS
AREA!

JUST HOW
DID YOU AND
YOUR CRONIES
GET PAST--?

PLEASE,
DR. HOLLAND--
WE HAVE MORE
IMPORTANT
THINGS TO
DISCUSS!



WE THREE REPRESENT
A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION
INTERESTED IN PURCHASING
YOUR **BIO-RESTORATIVE
FORMULA...**

...SO INTERESTED,
IN FACT, THAT WE'VE
BEEN AUTHORIZED
TO OFFER YOU A
BLANK CHECK
FOR THE EX-
CLUSIVE RIGHTS...

...AND IF I WERE
YOU, DR. HOLLAND...
I'D ACCEPT OUR
OFFER!



BUT YOU'RE NOT
ME, FRIEND--AND OUR
FORMULA ISN'T
FOR SALE!

PERHAPS
YOU CAN BE
CONVINCED
OTHER-
WISE,
DOCTOR...

BRUNO,
CONVINCE
THE
GENTLEMAN!



YOU'D BETTER
SAVE
THE CONVINCIN',
FERRETT...

...CAUSE WE
GOT COMPANY!

THERE'S ANOTHER
CAR COMIN' UP
THE ROAD!



HATE TO CUT OUR
LITTLE CHAT **SHORT**,
DOCTOR-- BUT WE
REALLY HAVE TO
RUN!

WHY DON'T YOU
THINK ABOUT
ACCEPTING
OUR GENEROUS
OFFER?

YOU WOULD SAVE
US ALL A LOT OF
TROUBLE IF
YOU DO!

WE'LL BE
SEEING YOU,
DR. HOLLAND...
SOON!



THE SOUND OF ONE CAR MOTOR DIES AWAY TO BE REPLACED BY THE ROAR OF ANOTHER... THEN...

SORRY I'M LATE-- BUT THE PATROLMAN THOUGHT HE SAW AN UNREGISTERED CAR IN THE AREA...

CABLE! IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GOT HERE!

...WE WERE CHECKING IT OUT!



WELL, YOU SHOULD HAVE CHECKED HERE FIRST!

WHAT--? AND YOU LET THEM GET AWAY?

THREE VERY UN-FRIENDLY PEOPLE WERE JUST HERE-- ATTEMPTING TO BUY OUR FORMULA!

YOU SHOULD HAVE NOTIFIED THE PATROL GUARD IMMEDIATELY.



AFRAID WE WERE A TRIFLE BUSY AT THE TIME, LT.!

YEAH? WELL, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING...

...THAT CONVERSATION WE HAD ABOUT YOU TWO BEING MERCHANDISE WAS NO JOKE!

YOU'RE COMMODITIES, DOCTOR--YOU AND YOUR WIFE--TO BE BOUGHT, SOLD OR TRADED BY WHOEVER CAN MANAGE TO OWN YOU!



WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED HERE, DOCTOR--THE COUNTRY THAT CONTROLS YOUR FORMULA WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE WORLD!

THINK ABOUT THAT! THINK HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD DO ANYTHING TO HOLD YOUR SECRET IN THEIR HANDS--!



AND THINK HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD RATHER SEE YOU DEAD THAN TO LET THEIR ENEMIES HAVE YOUR FORMULA!

REMEMBER THAT, DOCTOR--THEY'D RATHER SEE YOU DEAD!

NEXT TIME YOU OPEN THAT DOOR, YOU'D BETTER KNOW WHO'S BEHIND IT!



DON'T YOU THINK
LT. CABLE WAS
BEING OVERLY
MELODRAMATIC,
ALEC?

I'M NOT
SO SURE,
LINDA!

THOSE THREE
GANGSTER
MOVIE REJECTS
DIDN'T THREATEN
US FOR PRACTICE!
THERE'S...



HEY! DO
YOU HEAR
WHAT I
HEAR?

SOMEONE'S
MOVING
AROUND
OUTSIDE!

SCRATCH
SCRATCH

BUT IT CAN'T
BE MATT CABLE--!
HE DROVE AWAY
TEN MINUTES
AGO!

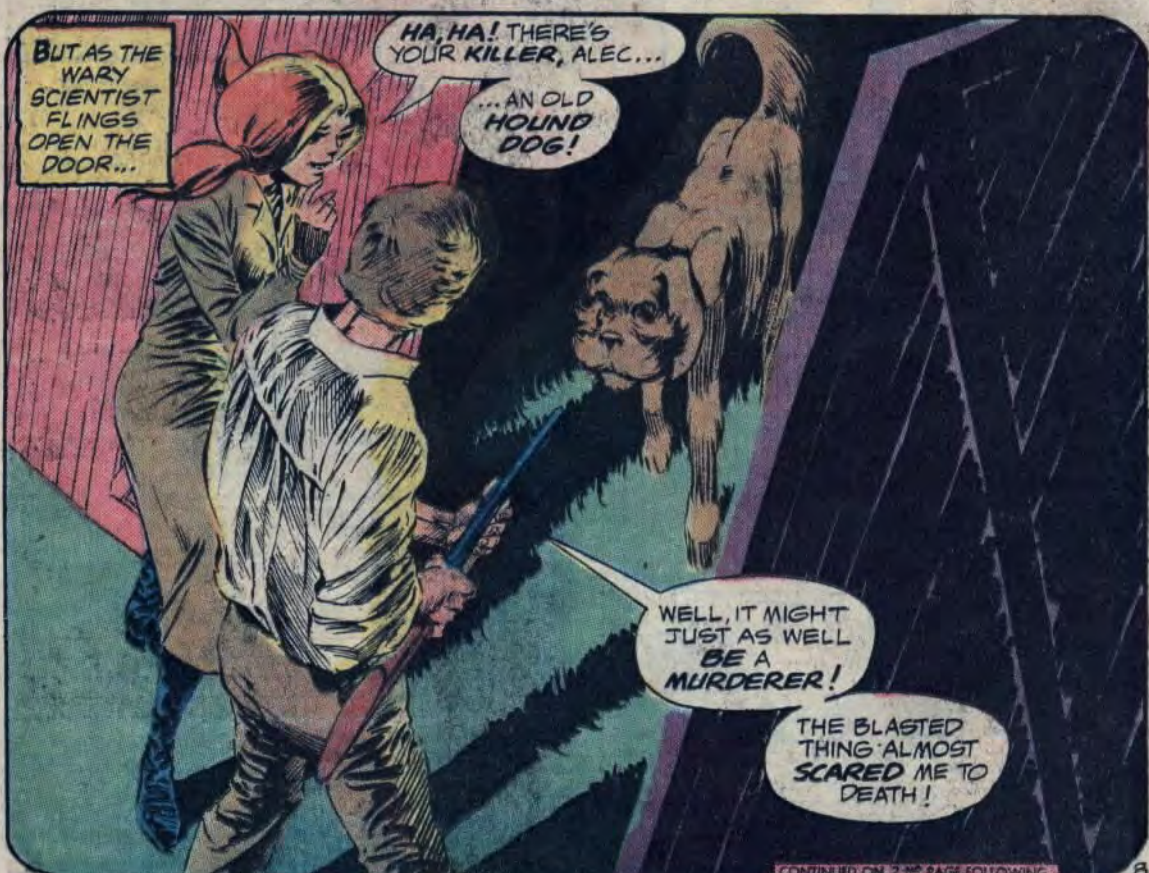


ALEC? WHAT
ARE YOU DOING?

JUST TAKING
PRECAUTIONS,
LINDA! YOU
REMEMBER WHAT
CABLE SAID!

THERE'S SOMETHING
OUTSIDE THAT DOOR--

AND I'M GOING TO
FIND OUT WHAT
IT IS!



BUT AS THE
WARY
SCIENTIST
FLINGS
OPEN THE
DOOR...

HA, HA! THERE'S
YOUR KILLER, ALEC...

... AN OLD
HOUND
DOG!

WELL, IT MIGHT
JUST AS WELL
BE A
MURDERER!

THE BLASTED
THING ALMOST
SCARED ME TO
DEATH!



ALEC, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

THE POOR DARLING LOOKS LOST AND HUNGRY!

CAN WE KEEP HIM?

ARE YOU KIDDING? WE'RE OFF-LIMITS...

...TO EVERYBODY!



I MEAN--LOOK AT THE MUTT! IT'S DIRTY... AND FLEA-BITTEN... AND...

...AND... DON'T LOOK AT ME WITH THOSE SOULFUL EYES! THE ANSWER IS NO!

I MEAN IT, LINDA! WE'RE NOT KEEPING THAT...

...OH, WHAT'S THE USE?



YOU KNOW--FOR A WOMAN SCIENTIST, YOU SURE FIGHT DIRTY!

YOU CAN HAVE THE SHAGGY MUTT...

...AND I OUGHT TO HAVE MY HEAD EXAMINED!



NO, DR. HOLLAND... YOU OUGHT TO HAVE THE DOG'S HEAD EXAMINED...

...OUGHT TO HAVE MY HEAD EXAMINED!

...THEN PERHAPS YOU WOULD FIND THE TINY RADIO TRANSMITTER WE PLANTED THERE!

PERHAPS-- BUT I DOUBT IT!



LOUISIANA BLUE
TO MISTER E.!
REPORTING AS
INSTRUCTED!

THE HOLLANDS
HAVE TAKEN IN THE
DOG AS EXPECTED--
ENABLING US TO
MONITOR THEIR
LAB AT ALL
TIMES!

EVERYTHING
PROCEEDING
ON SCHEDULE!



SPLENDID,
AGENT BLUE--
YOU HAVE DONE
WELL!

AS SOON AS
THE GOOD DOC-
TORS COMPLETE
THEIR EXPERI-
MENTATION, YOU
KNOW WHAT
MUST BE DONE!



SEND FERRETT
AROUND TO SEE
THEM AGAIN--WITH
A REPEAT OF OUR
OFFER!

IF WE CAN GET THE
FORMULA WITHOUT ANY
DIFFICULTY, ALL WELL
AND GOOD--BUT IF
NOT...

THE CONCLAVE HAS
MANY ENTERPRISES THAT
WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED
BY OUTSIDE USE OF THAT
COMPOUND...

THUS, IF
WE CAN'T HAVE
IT, NOBODY
WILL!

THE HOLLANDS
AND THEIR
FORMULA
MUST BE
DESTROYED!



BUT WHEN FERRETT AND HIS COHORTS ATTEMPT TO RENEW THEIR OFFER...

BUT, DR. HOLLAND--WE CAME TO YOU IN GOOD FAITH!

SAVE IT FOR THE BOYS IN BLUE, FERRETT!

MY WIFE AND I'LL SLEEP A LOT BETTER--KNOWING YOU THREE ARE BEHIND BARS!



SORRY WE CAN'T ACCOMMODATE YOU, DOC!

BRUNO-- TAKE HIM!

Wox!

UUNGG!



HE WILL NOT BOTHER US, FERRETT.

SWELL! THEN WE CAN PLANT OUR LITTLE "SURPRISE PACKAGE"...

...AN' GET THE HECK AWAY FROM THIS DUMP!

AGREED! I WANT TO BE MILES FROM HERE WHEN OUR GRACIOUS GIFT BLOWS!



FOR A TIME, DARKNESS REIGNS--AND WHEN DR. ALEC HOLLAND CRAWLS OUT OF THE SHADOWLAND AT LAST...

UUNHH... FEELS LIKE THEY DROPPED A MOUNTAIN ON MY HEAD! THEY'VE ...

HEY, SEEMS MY PLAYMATES HAVE DECIDED TO SKIP OUT!



OH... MY DEAR GOD!

THAT THING IS-- TICKING!

I WONDER WHY THEY...

TICK TICK TICK
TICK
TICK



GOTTA TRY TO DEFUSE IT BEFORE...

CRACK!

CLICK



**I M A G I N E P A I N -- S O I N T E N S E
I T D E F I E S D E S C R I P T I O N --
A S C O U N T L E S S U N C L A S S I F I E D
C H E M I C A L S S E E P D E E P
I N T O T H R O B B I N G , F L U M E --
E N V E L O P E D F L E S H ...**



OH,
MY
GOD...

OH, MY
DEAR,
DEAR
GOD--!

**I M A G I N E W H A T S U C H
T E R R I B L E S U F F E R I N G C A N
D O T O T H E F R A G I L E M I N D ...**



**...A S I T D R I V E S T H E S T R I C K E N
B O D Y F O R W A R D , C L A W I N G
D E S P E R A T E L Y A T T H E C O O L
N I G H T A I R I N H O P E S O F
S O M E S M A L L C O M F O R T ...**

**I M A G I N E R E L I E F -- A S T H E
S M O L D E R I N G M A N - S H A P E
R E A C H E S T H E S O O T H I N G
W A T E R S O F T H E E V E R - P R E S E N T
B O G ...**



HS
SS
SS
SS

**...T H E N D I S A P P E A R S S O U N D -
L E S S L Y B E N E A T H I T S
B U B B L I N G S U R F A C E ...**



A BITTER WIND WHISTLES PAST THE HANDFUL OF SADDENED FORMS WHO STAND TOGETHER BEFORE A FRESHLY-FILLED GRAVE...

P-POOR ALEC--! IF ONLY I HAD BEEN THERE--! MAYBE...

IT WOULDN'T HAVE HELPED, MRS. HOLLAND...LINDA...

...THE BOMB DESTROYED EVERY TRACE OF YOUR HUSBAND! IF YOU HAD BEEN THERE--

--IT WOULD'VE FINISHED YOU, TOO!

C'MON... LET'S HEAD BACK TO THE LAB!



LOOK AT THIS PLACE-- SPOTLESSLY CLEAN!

YOU CAN HARDLY TELL A MAN DIED HERE A FEW DAYS AGO...

...A GOOD MAN... MY MAN...

...MY POOR, DEDICATED ALEC--!

THEY PUT IT BACK TOGETHER AS QUICKLY AS THEY COULD, LINDA...

...DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE ANY TIME ON THE PROJECT!



OF COURSE-- THE PROJECT! THAT GOES ON, REGARDLESS... DOESN'T IT, CABLE?

NOBODY CARES ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE OR DIE HERE...

...ONLY THE MISERABLE PROJECT!

AFRAID SO, LINDA--BUT WITH ALEC GONE, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT WHO CAN HANDLE IT!

NOW WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF THE RAIN!



FUNNY--WHEN I WAS A KID, IT USED TO RAIN LIKE THIS--DARK, CHILLING...

AS IF THE SKY WERE ALIVE--AND LIVING, FELT PAIN!

IT FEELS THAT WAY AGAIN TONIGHT...AND, LADY, I DON'T LIKE IT!

RAIN: SOME SAY IT CLEANSSES THE ALL-TOO-IMPURE EARTH-- OTHERS PROCLAIM IT THE SORROW OF THE GODS, REGRETTING THE TRAGEDY THEIR GOLDEN HANDS HAVE WROUGHT...

...THE TRAGEDY THAT HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS MAN!

BUT THOSE WHO DWELL IN THIS TIME-LESS LAND CARE NOT FOR IDLE OPINION. THEY ARE CONTENTED TO BASK IN THE TEEMING TORRENT...

...UNTIL SOMETHING SUDDEN DISTURBS THEIR REPOSE...

...SOMETHING THAT CLAWS ITS WAY OUT OF THE GRASPING MIRE...

...AND INTO THE LIGHT ONCE MORE!

SOMETHING THAT PULLS ITSELF UPRIGHT ON UNSTEADY LEGS, SEARCHING ITS CLOUDY MIND FOR A FRAGMENT OF MEMORY...

...THEN PAUSES, STUDYING ITS GNAILED MISSHAPEN HANDS... EXAMINING THE CLUSTERS OF ROOT, THE CRUMBLING CHUNKS OF MOSS...

... AND
IN THAT
FRIGHTENING,
MIND-SHATTER-
ING SECOND--
KNOWS
WHAT IT HAS
BECOME !



A MUCK-ENCRUSTED,
SHAMBLING MOCKERY
OF LIFE... A TWISTED
CARICATURE OF
HUMANITY THAT CAN
ONLY BE CALLED...

SWAMP THING!



BUT TRAGEDY THOUGH IT MAY BE, THE CREATURE BREATHES--AND THINKS...

MUST BE LOGICAL... MUST GATHER MY THOUGHTS...

EXPLOSION SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME... IT DIDN'T!

WHY? WHY?

THE FORMULA... BIO-RESTORATIVE... ON THE TABLE WHEN IT BLEW...

...CHEMICAL MINGLED WITH MY FLESH... RE-ACTED WITH SWAMP OOZE...

...I SAID IT COULD MAKE FORESTS OUT OF DESERTS... AND IT DID... IT DID...

...TURNED ME INTO... INTO... WHAT?

THE LAB... STILL STANDS... AND LIGHTS ARE ON...

LINDA WILL BE THERE... SHE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO...

...SHE'LL... HELP ME...

DETERMINEDLY, THE MONSTROSITY LUMBERS CLOSER TO THE BARN-- CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE...

THAT REFLECTION IN THE GLASS... CAN'T BE... CAN'T BE...

AARGH!



STRANGE--
COULD'VE
SWORN I
HEARD
SOMETHING
OUT THERE!

PROB'LY
JUST THE
WIND IN THE
CYPRESS
TREES--
BUT I'D BETTER
WATCH IT!

I'M
LETTING
THOSE CHILD-
HOOD NIGHT-
MARES
GET TO
ME!

NEXT THING
YOU KNOW--
I'LL BE SEEING
BOOGIE-MEN
AND BUG-EYED
MONSTERS!



COULDN'T
LET LINDA
SEE ME...
NOT THE WAY
I AM!

... BETTER
TO STAY IN THE
SHADOWS... AND
KEEP WATCH
ON THE HOUSE!



THEY WILL BE BACK...
THE ONES WHO THOUGHT
THEY KILLED ME...

... FERRETT
AND THE OTHERS
WILL BE BACK...

... AND I
WILL BE
WAITING!



WAIT--
WAIT!!
YOU SILLY
DOG--COME
BACK HERE!
OHHHH--!

SAVE YOUR BREATH,
LINDA--IT CAN'T HEAR
YOU! GOT A FLEA IN
ITS EAR, I GUESS!

I'LL
GO FETCH
IT--BUT I
WANT YOU
TO BOLT
THE DOOR
BEHIND ME
WHILE I'M
GONE!

RLIN, DOG--
FOLLOW YOUR
MASTER'S
VOICE--!



UNAWARE OF THE SILENT COMMANDS DRAWING
THE HOUND ONWARD, MATT CABLE MOVES
THROUGH THE DOWNPOUR IN DETERMINED
PURSUIT...

YOU
STUPID
MUTT--
WHERE
ARE YOU?

COME BACK
HERE BEFORE
YOU KILL
YOURSELF!

THERE ARE
BOGS
IN THIS
AREA!
THEY...





...ALONE... IS THERE A MORE TERRIBLE WORD? ALL THIS WAITING... ALONE... NO ONE TO TALK TO...

...IF I CAN TALK, THAT IS! I WONDER IF...

AWW... OOOO...

THERE'S... SOMETHING OUT THERE... IN THE BOG...



LINDA'S DOG... SINKING IN THE MIRE...!

HOLD ON, LITTLE ONE... I'LL GET YOU OUT...!

YIP! YIP!



BLAM!

WOULDN'T WANT LINDA TO LOSE YOU, TOO! SHE'D...



NOOOO!



LINDA... MY LINDA... IF THEY'VE HURT YOU...



THE LAB... GOT TO GET BACK TO THE LAB...

...MAYBE IT'S NOT TOO LATE...



BUT WHEN THE SHAMBLING MONSTROSITY BURSTS INTO THE SILENT STRUCTURE...

LINDA!



LINDA...
LINDA...
IT'S MY
FAULT...
MY
FAULT...

...IF ONLY I
HADN'T GONE
FOR THE DOG...
IF I HADN'T
TURNED
AWAY!

THEN THE ROAR
OF AN AUTO-
MOBILE CHURNING
DOWN THE ROAD
CUTS THROUGH THE
SILENCE...



...AND THE MASSIVE MAN-MONSTER
ANSWERS ITS GROWLING CALL...

KAWRAMM!



STOP!

F-F-FERRETT--!
WHAT IS THAT
THING?



DON'T ASK ME
BRUNO--JUST
RUN IT DOWN!

STOP!



I SAID...

STOP!!





THEM AGAIN... FERRETT AND HIS FRIEND...

THAT MONSTER'S NOT HUMAN...NOT HUMAN!!

...THE ONES WHO KILLED ME...AND MY LINDA...



NOT HUMAN? NO...I'M NOT...

...AND YOU ARE THE ONES WHO MADE ME THAT WAY...

NO... NO--!!



FRAGILE BONE AND CARTILAGE SHATTER BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF A MOSS-ENCRUSTED FIST AND...

IT'S FINISHED BRUNO... BUT IT WON'T GET ME!



ALL RIGHT, YOU FILTHY MONSTER--TURN AROUND AND FACE ME!

I WANT TO SEE THE LOOK IN YOUR EYES WHEN YOU--DIE!!

BLAM!



C'MON, MONSTER--DIE!!

WHY WON'T YOU DIE?

BLAM!



DIE! DIE! DIE!

BLAM! BLAM!



CLICK!

OH... MY... GOD...



AND WHEN FERRETT'S SCREAMING HAS FINALLY STOPPED...

YOU CAN'T KILL A DEAD MAN, FERRETT...

...AND THE MAN I WAS IS MOST DEFINITELY DEAD!



MAYBE YOU'LL REST EASIER NOW, LINDA! MAYBE WE BOTH WILL--!

SNIP

BLAW

HUH?



IT'S CABLE... THAT BLASTED FOOL! I'LL...

OKAY YOU--YOU THINK I HANDS HIGH!

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST-- FOR MURDER...

...AND YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!



NO, CABLE... I'M AFRAID NOT!

MUCH AS I WANT TO... I CAN'T GO WITH YOU...



...AND, LORD HELP ME... I CAN'T TAKE YOU WITH ME!

COME BACK HERE, YOU MONSTER...

...COME BACK--!



ALL RIGHT, MONSTER-- YOU GOT AWAY FROM ME **THIS** TIME-- BUT WE'LL MEET AGAIN...

... AND **NEXT** TIME THERE'LL BE NOBODY TO SLUG ME WITH A SHOVEL...

NEXT TIME-- I'LL GET SOME ANSWERS!

DO YOU HEAR ME, MONSTER... DO YOU HEAR ME??



I HEAR YOU, MATT... BUT I HAVE NO ANSWERS TO GIVE...

...DR. ALEC HOLLAND HAD ALL THE ANSWERS...

...HE WAS AN INTELLIGENT MAN...



...BUT ALEC HOLLAND IS DEAD...

... AND IN HIS PLACE STANDS ONLY A...

SWAMP THING!

WHILE COUNTLESS MILES AWAY, IN A TOWER AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD...



THERE, MY PETS, IS THE ONE WE HAVE SPENT YEARS SEARCHING FOR...

THERE... IS THE ONE WE MUST HAVE--

FETCH HIM, MY PETS! BRING HIM HERE... TO **ME!**

NEXT: THE MAN WHO WANTED FOREVER!